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In this class we will survey major works of 20<sup>th</sup>-century U.S. fiction, and we will end the semester by reading several contemporary texts that revive, update, and challenge certain themes from the last century of U.S. fiction. I am calling this class *bad romances*, as we will seek to construct a genealogy of romances—and bad romances, in particular. This is about pleasure and love, but it is also about social norms, feelings of empowerment and estrangement, treasure hunts, migrations, and how people recover from wars (or not).

This course will hinge on our in-class discussions, and therefore I require that you attend class regularly and consistently, having read and prepared to discuss each day's text. The reading load for this class is stout: almost a novel a week, every week. Our conversation will accumulate over the course of the semester, and we will make links and discover pathways between the texts as we go. Please make sure that you are prepared for this commitment to heavy reading, cumulative imagination, and lively discussion.

Here is a preliminary course outline, to be solidified by the first week of class:

Day one:

Kate Chopin, "The Kiss"

Day two:

F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Three Hours Between Planes"

Week 2:

Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives*

Week 3:

Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

Week 4:

James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room*

Week 5:

Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*

Week 6:

Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer*

Week 7:

Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*

Week 8:

Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*

Week 9:

Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*

Louise Erdrich, "The Red Convertible"

Donald Barthelme, "Game"

Week 10:

Octavia Butler, *Dawn*

Week 11:

Lucy Corin, "My Favorite Dentist"

Annie Proulx, "Tits-Up in a Ditch"

Week 12:

Angie Chau, *Quiet As They Come*

Week 13:

Don DeLillo, *Point Omega*