

Love & Relationships

PART TWO, PROGRAM TWO: Love and Relationships in the New Old Age

Version One (Here there will be only one alternative syllabus since the total number of quality works to select from is smaller.)

Class One Introduction: We will make up a DVD to distribute to partners containing all the clips we will use to introduce our theme in this opening presentation and discussion.

Class Two **Harold and Maude** (*young man/old woman—comic*) This cult classic was way ahead of its time in its upbeat portrayal of the aging woman. But what are we to make of her sexual initiation of the much younger Harold?

Class Three **Innocence** (older man/older woman—serious and upbeat) Perhaps the most honest and detailed portrayal yet of a September-September romance—it even includes a sex scene. But what are we to make of its romantic? convenient? ending.

Class Four **The Gin Game** (old man/old woman—disastrous) A grim but fascinating cautionary tale, Here the two meet for the first time in a senior residence, and after a fairly auspicious start, revert to old habits and reveal the bitterness that has characterized their lives all along. The ending is shocking.

Class Five **Red** or (**The Last Good Time** or **Nelly and Monsieur Arnaud**) all three are variations on old man/young woman All three also present us with intriguing non-judgmental appraisals of the may-september affair. Perhaps it has its place after all.

Class Six **The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone** or (**Death in Venice** or **Sunset Boulevard**) (*Grim but realistic accounts of two aging women and one aging gay man desperately seeking love in all the wrong places*) More cautionary tales, this time about a man and two women who all suffer the ultimate sexual humiliation because they can not accept their own aging and seek desperately to deny it.

Class Seven **Something's Gotta Give** (*old man/old woman—comic but realistic*) This may be Hollywood's first screwball comedy about late life lovers rather than young ones. It's long for a comedy for it takes so much time for them to shed their fears and misconceptions and see themselves and each other for what they really are.

Class Eight Conclusion and discussion of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, **Love in the Time of Cholera** or **Schmidt Delivered**) The first is a wonderfully romantic saga of love in very old age. Is it a sexist and exclusively male

fantasy? Or is a story of a man whose love lasts and ripens in old age, redeeming his old lover in the process? The second is about an older man giving up his young girlfriend, which means that he delivers or is delivered. We'll let our students decide.

Note: In addition to the novel to be discussed in the last class (either ***Love in the Time of Cholera*** or ***Schmidt Delivered***); students will be assigned photocopied versions of selected short stories throughout the course.