

**Power, Wealth and Marriage (506:401:03)**  
**Spring 2018**  
**Professor Chie Ikeya**

**Tuesdays 1:10-4:10**  
**Scott Hall 215**

Marriage is the union of two consenting adults in love. Right? Many would argue “yes” and view arranged marriage and polygamy as backward. Yet, the idea of marrying for love is a relatively recent one and the conjugal couple is not so traditional at all. So when did love conquer marriage, and why? Are romantic love and freedom to marry viewed everywhere as normal ways to organize intimate lives and relations? Why are some forms of intimacy outlawed or stigmatized, while others are deemed legitimate and normative? Is same-sex marriage challenging “compulsory heterosexuality” or consolidating a regime of “compulsory matrimony”?

This seminar addresses these and other questions about marriage from a multi-century and global perspective. It explores how ideas and practices, and laws and customs surrounding marriage have been formed and transformed in a variety of contexts, from ancient Rome to French Vietnam. It considers scandals and controversies such as anti-miscegenation laws in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century US and child marriage in 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial India. In so doing, the seminar will ask students to think critically about the role of marriage in the production and reproduction of political power, economic wealth, labor systems, and social difference.

The primary goal of this seminar is to give students the opportunity to design their own independent research projects related to the history of marriage and using primary source materials. Students may pursue projects with any geographic and chronological focus, and are encouraged to work with a wide range of primary sources. By the end of the semester, students will produce a substantial research paper based on intensive primary research.

In class, we will think carefully and critically about the process of research and writing. Our goal will be to understand the challenges and strategies of producing original scholarship. In the first several weeks, we will concentrate on the issues involved in starting and developing a research project, including defining a historical problem, framing questions historiographically, and finding and analyzing sources. We will then think about how to organize our ideas and begin writing. In the second half of the semester, we will focus on the process of writing, revising, and peer review.

Assignments: The major assignment for this seminar is the research paper (due early May 2018), which must be based on your own primary research. The numerous smaller assignments required during the semester are intended to guide you in this process and ensure that you are able to complete your paper by the first week of May.

During weeks 2-10, we will have two to three common article-length readings. These articles are all available in the “Resources” folder of the course Sakai site. Often, we read historical scholarship for content. But we will read these common readings somewhat differently, to think also about how the author made her argument, how she marshaled evidence, how she structured the essay, how she situated herself in the historiography and so forth. The idea is not that you should see these authors as models to emulate, but use their work to think about the process and the practice of writing history.

Attendance and participation: Attendance and engaged participation are basic expectations of the course. If you must miss a class, please contact me before that class meeting for approval. One focus of this course will be learning to talk about our own work with others and learning to talk about others’ work in a critical but constructive manner. You should be prepared to spend some portion of each class talking about your progress and posing questions that can assist others in approaching or rethinking their topic.