ENG 427A Women in Literature
Wintermester 2018

Number of Credits
3

Instructor
Christina Camarena

Catalog Description
Women writers and the ways in which women are portrayed in literature. (General Capstone and Diversity course.) (Formerly ENG 433/633; implemented Fall 2005.) (Same as WMST 427A)

Prereq(s): CH 201; CH 202 or CH 203; junior or senior standing.

Required Textbooks/Materials
The following texts are required material in this course, and are subject to change:

Dorothy Allison, Two or Three Things I Know For Sure
Natalie Diaz, When My Brother was an Aztec
Jhumpa Lahiri, In Other Words
Maile Meloy, Liars and Saints
Toni Morrison, Beloved

Note: The above books are being ordered through Sundance Books.

The following list of authors will also be read:

- Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- Simone Beauvoir
- Flannery O’Connor
- Betty Friedan
- Alice Walker
- Audre Lorde
- bell hooks
- Gloria Anzaldua
- Susan Faludi
- Judith Lorber
- Rebecca Walker
- Anne Fausto Sterling
- Alice Munro
- Cathy Linh Che
- Claudia Rankin
- Claire Vaye Watkins
- Roxane Gay
- Janet Mock
Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

• demonstrate familiarity with foundational feminist and gender theories, as well as their history;
• speak knowledgeably about how diverse social positions and experiences are reflected (or not) in and reinforced by texts;
• write an analytical paper that integrates ideas from feminist and gender theories with literary interpretation, using a variety of sources;
• differentiate between and understand basic interpretative approaches to various literary genres including poetry, fiction, and film;
• articulate close readings of selected passages of literature in support of larger arguments in brief analytical paragraphs and in class discussion; and
• articulate connections between literature, theory, personal experience, and other subject areas in which you have expertise.

First Week of Materials/Assignments

The following schedule is subject to change:

January 2:  In Class: Introduction to the class, syllabus and schedule, and assignment sheets; Brief history of feminism; Discussion, What does it mean to be a woman?; Sign up for Team Teaching readings

Homework: Excerpt from A Vindication of the Rights of Women by Mary Wollstonecraft; “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin; “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman; Expert from The Second Sex by Simone Beauvoir; “A Good Man is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor; Excerpt from Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan; “The Politics of Housework” by Pat Mainardi

January 3:  In Class: General questions and issues; Team teaching (x7)

Homework: Beloved by Toni Morrison; Three Threads and a Thesis (TTT) 1

January 4:  In Class: Introduction to Morrison; Discussion of Beloved; Activities

Due: TTT 1 (on Beloved)

Homework: “In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens” by Alice Walker; “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” by Audre Lorde; “Talking Back” by bell hooks; “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” from Borderlands by Gloria Anzaldúa; “When Sexism and Racism Are No Longer Fashionable” Guerilla Girls; “Riot Grrrl Manifesto by Kathleen Hanna; “Introduction: Blame it on the Feminism” from Backlash by Susan Faludi; Reading Response (RR) 1 (Beloved)

Course Description

During this mini-term, we will read a variety of contemporary writings, including many different women writers and characters, and including scholarly and creative writings. We will look at writings within the genres of essay/non-fiction, short and long memoir, short and long fiction, and poetry. We will aim to ask and answer one main question through our readings, writings, and discussions: What does it mean to be a woman? With the follow-up question: How has this definition changed and/or stayed the same over the past decades? Through our reading, writing, discussions, and efforts to define what it means to be a woman, you will enhance your writing and critical thinking skills.
We will also ask and try to answer a few other general questions (among many) about our readings:

- What issues do we see reoccurring that are specific to women?
- How do these writings connect with current times and issues and how do they change over time?
- Do these writers fit into our definitions of what it means to be a woman? Why or why not?
- How do they represent women in their writings?
- How do we reclaim what it means to be a woman through literature?

**Features of this Course**

The structure of the course emphasizes active, participatory, and empowering education. The class is designed as a seminar. We will focus on short presentations by the students, class discussion and exercises, and writing projects. This will **not** be a course in which you listen to lectures and repeat the content of the lectures or readings back on exams. Instead, the course is designed to emphasize the importance of collaborative learning, writing and critical thinking skills, active participation, and the open exchange of ideas. My role in the course, as the instructor, will be to guide, inform, encourage the learning process, and assess your work.

Peer learning and student participation are the central features of the course. Student involvement will include active participation in class discussions and exercises, making group presentations, and reading and giving feedback on one another's work. Peer learning is a process that involves students sharing information, insights, and expertise, based on your readings and prior knowledge. This approach relies on active—rather than passive or disengaged—learning and students taking responsibility for their education.

**Assignments**

Assignments in this course are as follows:

- **Three Threads and a Thesis (TTT):** These prepare you for classroom discussions of the readings as well as your response papers.
- **Reading Responses:** Three- to four-page response papers on three of the six books we read.
- **Team Teaching:** You will sign up with a partner to lead class activities and active discussions for three of the short reading assignments.
- **Final Paper:** This is a conference-length paper (seven pages in length) regarding the ways in which females are represented within some aspect of popular culture.
- **Presentation:** A ten- to fifteen-minute presentation of your final paper.

**Grade Breakdown**

The percentage distribution for the course assignments is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three Threads and a Thesis (TTTs)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Teaching</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The percentage distribution for the course grade is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94–100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90–93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87–89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84–86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80–83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77–79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74–76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70–73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67–69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64–66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60–63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>