Syllabus

English 4315/5315

**20th Century American Women's Poetry**

Dr. Mary Ruth Marotte; email:  mrmarotte@uca.edu (best way to catch me!)

cell: 501-269-9428--I will not respond after 9 pm

Office: 407 Irby; office hours: Monday and Wednesday 8-10 am; Th 10:45-12:45

This semester we will analyze 20th century American women’s poetry through the varieties of women's experience in contemporary society. We will consider how gender relations may be changing, and investigate the historical social, political, economic, and cultural forces that shape our lives relative to gender. We’ll explore how women have been perceived in different cultural contexts, as well as relations of inequality organized along lines of race, ethnicity, nationality, class, sexuality, ability, appearance, and age.

In this course, you should be prepared to:

1. Examine the development of gender norms, identities, and roles as they are shaped by historical, political, and social factors, such as the representation of women in writings or art, whether philosophical, literary, etc.

2. Understand and decipher the way society and literature impact one’s gender development, and vice versa.

3. Consider our own lives, as either males or females, and be empowered to think critically on topics such as cultural and political values and norms.

Please read the selections before class, not during or after class. The focus is on reading closely and thinking carefully about the nuances of the poetry.

Required Texts: *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, Volume 2, Gilbert & Gubar

You should be prepared to share your opinions and work through your difficulties with each text. Participation is vital!

**August**

Th   24    Introduction to course

T    29    Gilbert and Gubar, p. 1-29--introduction; excerpt; Virginia Woolf, from

*A Room of One’s Own, p. 237;*Rich, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as

Re-Vision," p. 982

Th    31     Amy Lowell, p. 128, "Madonna of the Evening Flowers," p. 131; "The Sisters,"

p. 137.

**September**

T    5    Olsen, "One out of Twelve: Writers Who Are Women in Our Century"--handout;

Elinor Wylie, p. 268-; "Full Moon," "To a Lady's Countenance," "Pastiche"

Th    7    H.D., p. 280-; "Eurydice," "Fragment Thirty'-six," "Helen"

T    12    Marianne Moore, p. 307-; "Poetry," "Silence," "The Paper Nautilus"

Th    14    Marianne Moore, continued

T    19    Edna St. Vincent Millay, p. 444-; "First Fig," "Second Fig," "[I, being born a

woman and distressed]"

Th    21   Peer review workshop for papers

T    26    Millay, "[Women have loved before as I love now]," "Rendezvous,"

"[I will put Chaos into fourteen lines]";**1st PAPER DUE**

Th    28   Dorothy Parker, p. 487-; "Resume," "Song of One of the Girls,"

*from* "A Pig's-Eye View of Literature"

**October**

T    3    Louise Bogan, p. 504-; "Medusa," "Women," "Cassandra"

Th    5    Elizabeth Bishop, p. 604-; "Roosters," "The Fish"

T    10    Bishop, "Invitation to Miss Marianne Moore," "In the Waiting Room"

Th    12   Bishop, "One Art"; Gwendolyn Brooks, p. 780-; *from* "The Womanhood"

T    17    Muriel Rukeyser, p. 644-; "More of a Corpse than a Woman," "Night Feeding,"

"Myth"

Th    19    **Fall Break**

T     24   Brooks, "The Bean Eaters," "We Real Cool," "Bronzeville Woman in a Red Hat"

Th   26    Anne Sexton, p. 918-; "Her Kind," "Sylvia's Death," "In Celebration of my Uterus"

T    31    Adrienne Rich, p. 962-; "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers," "Diving into the Wreck"

**November**

Th    2    Rich, "Power," *from* "Twenty-one Love Poems," "The School Among the Ruins"

T     7    Sylvia Plath, p.1044-; "The Disquieting Muses," "The Colossus," "Mirror"

Th    9    Plath, "Lady Lazarus," "Daddy"

T    14    Audre Lorde, p. 1069-; "Coal," "On a Night of the Full Moon," "Now That I Am

Forever with Child," "Kitchen Linoleum," "The Electric Slide Boogie"

Th   16    Sharon Olds, p. 1278-; "The Language of the Brag," "Rite of Passage,"

"The One Girl at the Boys' Party," "This"

T    21    Louise Gluck, p. 1283-; "The School Children," "The Drowned Children,"

"Widows"

Th    23    **Thanksgiving Holiday**

T    28    Jorie Graham, p. 1374-; "History," "Orpheus and Eurydice"

Th  30    Julia Alvarez, p. 1341-; "Bilingual Sestina," The Master Bed,"

"On Not Shoplifting Louise Bogan's *The Blue Estuaries*"

December

T    5    Rita Dove, p. 1384-; "The House Slave," *from* "Thomas and Beulah," "Rosa,"

"'I have been a stranger in a strange land"

Th    7    **2nd Paper due**

FINALS- week of  Dec. 11-15

Grade Distribution:

Reading Responses: 20%

First Paper: 20%

Second Paper: 20%

Presentations/participation: 20%

Take-home final exam: 20%

**Reading Responses**: I will collect reading responses each day at the beginning of class, and your grade will depend upon your thoughtful consideration of the day’s reading. You should respond to these readings by working through any difficulties you might have with either the reading or the genre or both. These responses should avoid personal reflection in the manner of a diary or some such biographical project. Instead, venture into the critical as much as possible. What do you think the author is trying to get across with regard to their work? As the semester progresses, you might want to compare/contrast the various poems we've studied. These responses are a very important way to prepare to write your papers, and I treat them very seriously. You should aim to be in class and to be an active contributor to the class discussion.

**Papers:**  I will distribute three or four writing prompts that you may use for your papers.  These writing prompts will challenge you to engage with the poems that we are covering in the course, how they may or may not coalesce in ideology or theme, how they engage you as a reader, and how they hold up as scholarly works.  Your papers should show me that you can both critically and imaginatively engage with the poetry and effectively use outside sources to support your ideas.  **Each paper should be 5-7 pages long, with at least 3 outside sources. Graduate student papers should be 8-10 pages, with at least 5 outside sources.**

**Presentations:** You will be responsible for 3 short presentations on 3 different critical articles over the course of the semester. You will choose a critical article, send me the link to the article so that I may read it before class, then summarize and comment on the article for the class. These presentations are aimed at familiarizing you and your classmates with the scholarly conversations going on about these poets/poems. You will become a part of this conversation during the course of the semester. Please look over the syllabus and decide which poets/poems you are most interesting to pursue. **Graduate students will also lead one class discussion and should see me as soon as possible to decide on the poet they’d like to study further.**

**Take-home final**: This exam will ask you to synthesize both the poems and the theoretical readings that I’ve assigned throughout the semester. It should show that you’ve thought carefully about how these female poets have grappled with the form and thematic challenges of the genre.

**Attendance**: You will be allowed three absences. If you miss more than three times during the semester, your grade will drop by one letter grade. After the fifth absence, I will drop it another letter. You get the picture. You WILL NOT make an “A” in this course if you miss more than three times.

**Academic Dishonesty**: Plagiarism does not refer only to flagrant copying; it includes also the uncredited use of any phrases, quotations, or ideas. Please be sure to cite any outside sources which you use. That said, I will not tolerate cheating in this class. If you are caught plagiarizing or otherwise cheating, you will immediately lose two letter grades off your final grade. If the assignment in question a major assignment, you will automatically fail the course.

Conferences: These are difficult texts. If you are unsure about the reading, want feedback on an weekly writing, or would like to talk about a text or idea, please come to my office for a conference. If you can't make it to my office hours, feel free to make an appointment with me.

University Policy and Disabilities: If you have any questions about a university policy, including Academic policies and the Sexual Harassment policy, please see the Student Handbook. The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, contact the UCA Office of Disability Services at 450-3135.

Evaluations: Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the twelfth week of instruction [insert date] through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

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**Emergency** **Plan**: An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**Title IX disclosure**: If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved.  Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation.  Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances.  The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator.  For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>.  *\*Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*