

**Women’s Literature**

**English 4370/5370**

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Required Texts:

*The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, 3rd edition (Volumes I, II);

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice,* Norton edition

Welcome to Women’s Literature! This course will examine women’s literature through various thematic lenses: Women and Politics, The Body, Marriage and Motherhood, and Race, Class, and Ethnicity. I have selected images of women as presented by female authors in selected novels, drama, and poetry from diverse historical periods and cultures. Focusing on the social construction of gender and its influence on writers, characters, and readers, the course will explore commonalities and diversity in the lived experience of women. This course will also examine societal expectations of women and the roles they have been assigned both historically and today.  How do such expectations affect women's involvement in their own lives as well as the lives of their communities? This is a reading and writing intensive course. I take for granted that you are here because you want to explore women’s issues; therefore, I consider this class a community where we work together to learn as much as possible. You should be prepared to share your opinions and work through your difficulties with each text. Participation is vital!

**Syllabus**

**Women and Politics**

**August**

Th 18 Introduction to course

T 23 Margaret Cavendish, “Female Orations,” p. 160-164, Queen Elizabeth,

“The Doubt of Future Foes, “Speech to the Troops at Tilbury,” p. 65-66, p. 67-68

Th 25 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (excerpt)*,

p. 370-390.

T 30 Abigail Adams, letters, p. 315-321; Anne Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman,”

“What Time of Night It Is,” “Keeping the Thing Going,” p. 509-513

**September**

Th 1 **Volume II**: Virginia Woolf, p. 212-216; from *A Room of One’s Own*, p. 237-244;

“Professions for Women,” p. 244-247

T 6 Churchill, *Top Girls*, Act I, p.1136-1165

Th 8 Churchill, *Top Girls*, Act II, p. 1166-1191

**The Body**

T 13 Harriet Jacobs’ excerpts from *Incidents in the Life of a*

*Slave Girl*, p. 618-629; Alcott, “My Mysterious Mademoiselle,” p. 1131-1140

Th 15 Meridel LeSueur’s “The Annunciation,” p.533-54; **Volume II:** Carson McCullers,

“The Ballad of the Sad Cafè,” p.739-779;

T 20 Finish McCullers; **Paper 1 due**

Th 22 Flannery O’Connor’s “Good Country People,” p. 892-907

T 27 Margaret Edson, *Wit*, p. 1453

Th 29 *Wit*

**October**

T 4 *Wit*

Th 6 Eaven Boland’s “Anorexic,” p. 1290-1291, “Degas’s Laundresses,” p. 1292-1293

T 11 **Midterm Exam**

Th 13 Fall Break—no class

**Marriage and Motherhood**

T 18 Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, “A New England Nun”—handout; Bradstreet, “To My

Dear and Loving Husband,” p. 152, Elizabeth Barrett

Browning’s “Mother and Poet,” p. 555

Th 20 Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening*, p. 1251-1270

T 25 *The Awakening,* p. 1270-1300

Th 27 Finish *The Awakening*

**November**

T 1 Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

Th 3 *Pride and Prejudice*

T 8 Finish *Pride and Prejudice*

Th 10 Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, “The Revolt of Mother,”

p. 1344-1357; **Volume II**: **Paper 2 due**

**Race, Class, and Ethnicity**

T 15 Edith Wharton, “The Other Two,” p. 43-55; Louise Erdrich, “The Shawl,” p.1408

-1413;

Th 17 Phyllis Wheatley, p. 358, “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” p. 359,

“To His Excellency, General Washington,” p. 361 Wheatley, “To the Right

Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth,”p. 359, “To S. M., A Young African

Painter,”p.360

T 22 **Volume II**: Anna Yezierska, “The Lost Beautifulness,” p. 201-212; Zora Neal

Hurston, “Sweat,” p. 347-357

Th 24 ***Thanksgiving Break***

T 29 Leslie Marmon Silko, “Yellow Woman,” p. 1332-1339; Sandra Cisneros, “Woman

Hollering Creek,” p. 1399-1408

**December**

Th 1 Gish Jen, “Who’s Irish” p. 1436-1445; Jhumpa Lahiri, “A Temporary Matter,”

p. 1498-1510.

**Dec. 5-9 FINAL EXAMS**

**Grade Distribution:**

**Reading Responses: 20%**

**1st Paper: 20%**

**2nd Paper: 20%**

**Midterm Exam: 20%**

**Final Paper: 20%**

**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 works 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 texts and effectively use outside sources to support your ideas. The first paper should be 4-6 pages long, with at least 3 outside sources. The last two papers should be 6-8 pages, with at least 4 outside sources. **Graduate students should write 6-8 pages for the first paper, with at least 4 sources, and 10-12 pages for last two papers, with at least 6 sources.**

**Midterm Exam**: This exam will be a combination short answer and short essay. Note-taking is essential in this course, as you will be held accountable for what you read, what I say, and how well you are able to synthesize and analyze the texts. I will design a different exam for graduate students, with a take-home portion.

**Reading Responses/Participation**: 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 texts you’ve studied. These responses are a very important way to prepare to write your papers, and I treat them very seriously. Participation is rolled into this percentage of your grade. You should aim to be an active contributor to the class discussion. You may be asked on any given day to read part or all of your journal entry for the day. This participation in the learning process is key to our on-going dialogue with regard to each work. By contributing orally in class, you can share and expand your ideas and learn from others. One typed page, double-spaced, 12 font, will suffice.

**Graduate Students**: Obviously I expect more from your analyses of each text, and your contributions both written and verbal should be decidedly more sophisticated than your undergraduate classmates’. Apart from that, I do expect that you prepare and teach one class during the semester. See me as early as possible so that you can select an author and work that interests you.

**Attendance**: You will be allowed three absences, after which I reserve the right to drop you from the class. The three allowed absences include excused absences; therefore, there is no need to contact me to explain your absence (although you are welcome to do so if you'd prefer). An extended illness would create an exception to these rules: please let me know as soon as possible if you will be missing a significant number of classes due to illness or other long-term problem (i.e. 2 or more).

**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, automatically fail the course. **Conferences**: These are difficult texts. If you are unsure about the reading, want feedback on 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.

**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.*