



MASTER COURSE OUTLINE

Prepared By:

Date: September 2017

COURSE TITLE

Women's Literature

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Dept.: ENGL

Course Num: 261

(Formerly:)

CIP Code: 23.1401

Intent Code: 11

Program Code:

Credits: 5

Total Contact Hrs Per Qtr.: 55

Lecture Hrs: 55

Lab Hrs: 0

Other Hrs: 0

Distribution Designation: Humanities HU

COURSE DESCRIPTION (as it will appear in the catalog)

This course aims to study women's unique literary voice as a reflection of their history, their place in society, and their role in a changing world. In this survey literature course we will read fiction, memoirs, and poetry written by prominent women authors that take on topics of women's health care, reproductive rights, motherhood, women in the workplace, domestic violence, body image, gender performativity, and sexuality / gender identity. Emphasis is on the development of critical thinking skills through a series of papers and projects that draw into question the development of differences between the sexes, the acquisition of gender roles, and the maintenance of gender stereotypes.

PREREQUISITES

None

TEXTBOOK GUIDELINES

3 or more novels or memoirs and 5 or more poets. Limitations and substitutions:

- at least one of the book-length texts should be fiction and one should be nonfiction (in other words, instructors should not teach 3 novels or 3 memoirs but some of each)
- at least 1 of the course's primary memoirs or novels should be written by a non-Western writer, and at least 4 of the primary texts (poems, short stories, essays, novels, or memoirs) should be written by non-white writers.
- at least one of the primary texts (novels, memoirs, or poems) must be published post-2000
- a play may be used in place of one of the novels
- a series (3 or more) of short stories or essays (short works of non-journalistic creative nonfiction) may substitute 1 of the 3 book-length texts
- 1 film or episode from a TV series can be taught as a companion piece to one of the primary texts (but not as a replacement)
- a number of short theoretical essays (like an essay from bell hooks' *Feminist Theory* or Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*) may be taught in addition to the literary texts to enhance students' understanding of historical context and feminism / social justice; though the focus of the course and the bulk of the readings should be literature not theory-based

Overall, texts should be selected to represent a diverse array of experiences, cultural difference, and time periods (race, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, etc).

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to demonstrate the following knowledge or skills:

1. Distinguish between main plot points and minor details in literature written by women
2. Use textual, critical, social or historical analysis to identify main themes and significant passages in literature written by women and how those themes relate to current social or political issues
3. Construct a working definition of “feminism” and distinguish between first-wave, second-wave, and third-wave feminist-thinking as well as trace the changes throughout history in mainstream reception of the feminist movement
4. Identify and critique conventional gender roles and stereotypes as well as the “gender binary”
5. Identify literary devices and analyze their effect on readers
6. Classify a variety human experiences/narratives according to the appropriate cultural and historical contexts with the goal of speaking and writing with a nuanced sensitivity to multiculturalism
7. Develop a central claim (thesis) in response to a literary text and support/illustrate that thesis clearly and logically
8. Situate original ideas as related to, but clearly distinguished from, the ideas of critics’ (including the ability to paraphrase, summarize, and correctly cite and document borrowed source material) and recognize their place as a participant in an academic “conversation” about a particular text.
9. Accurately proofread their own writing in order to produce writing that maintains the conventions of published English
10. Develop and improve habits of lifetime literacy

INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES

IO1 Communication: Students will be able to communicate clearly and effectively.

COURSE CONTENT OUTLINE

1. The course will situate the selected texts within their historical context of the feminist movement and can either be taught chronologically (with an emphasis on the progression of women’s rights and acceptance of varied expressions of femininity) OR thematically (where students would examine two or more texts within each thematic unit and compare / contrast the different author’s unique perspectives on that theme). Suggested sequence: Unit 1) origin stories (Eve & Medusa), Unit 2) motherhood and women in the workplace, Unit 3) bodily trauma and body image, Unit 4) gender codes and performativity.
 - a) If organizing the course chronologically, instructors may choose to begin the quarter with a contemporary text that draws the gender binary (or gender stereotypes / performativity) into question to refer to as a “springboard” or “lens” that jumpstarts the overarching socio-cultural critique of the course.
 - b) If organizing the course by theme rather than chronologically, instructors should select texts that grapple with at least 5 of the following themes: women’s health care, reproductive rights, motherhood, women in the workplace, domestic violence, body image, gender performativity, and sexuality / gender identity.
2. Discussion of the selected texts will go beyond plot-summary and evaluating the merits of the narrative. Instructors may choose to direct discussion toward elements of theme, characterization, authorship / reflection (for nonfiction texts), or the use of literary devices like point of view, tone, structure/fragmentation, and figurative language.

3. Students will write at least 3 different formal literary analysis essays (and instructors may assign either a fourth essay or an essay-exam). Essays may focus on a variety of modes of literary analysis, but each of the following must be considered at some point throughout the quarter:
- a) creating and sustaining an argument about the meaning of a work of literature using evidence taken from the text
 - b) describing technical aspects of written texts as stylistic choices made by authors and articulating ways in which the conventions of literary texts affect interpretation
 - c) situating an original interpretation of a literary text in response to and as different from another literary scholar's interpretation of that same text
 - d) appreciating and using a vocabulary of feminism, femininity, and the gender binary which supports and encourages detailed analysis of women's literature

DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES (*optional*)

- One YA text may be taught in place of one of the four book-length texts at instructor's discretion.
- Students must generate at least 9 pages (2500 words) of original analytical writing throughout the course.
- Grades will be established through consideration of the three required essays, essay exam(s), reading quizzes, and attendance. At least 75% of the overall grade will be based on the essays and essay exams.

PO4 should be assessed: Students will be able to recognize or articulate personal/interpersonal aspects of, or connections between, diverse cultural, social, or political contexts.

DIVISION CHAIR APPROVAL

DATE