Women’s Literature - English 335 - Fall 2014

MWTThF 10:00-10:50
L&L 358

Dr. Sutphin
Office: 403E, ext. 3433/ sutphinc@cwu.edu
Office hrs.: M: 3:45-4:45
W: by appointment
Th: 11:00-12:00
Fri: 12:00-1:00
Handouts will be posted on Canvas.

Texts:

Little Women, Louisa May Alcott, Penguin edition (reproduces original 1868 and 1869 editions)
Many editions of LW exist (including e-books), but you’ll need to have this edition for the version of the text and the introduction and notes.
The Color Purple, Alice Walker
Woman Hollering Creek, Sandra Cisneros
Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit, Jeanette Winterson
Purple Hibiscus, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Packet available at the bookstore includes the following theory and literature:
Theory overviews:
Chapters from Literature and Feminism, Pam Morris (This book is currently out of print, but it is still the most accessible introduction I’ve found. Now that Blackwell has been taken over by Wiley, the publisher has made it too expensive to reproduce the whole book.)
Chapters from A Handbook of Literary Feminisms, Benstock, Ferriss, and Woods
Contemporary example of canon issues: Wolitzer, Maran, Rappaport
Summaries of various feminist approaches

Literature:
Theory related to specific texts:
Additional packet materials:
map of Nigeria, chronology of Nigerian history, instructions for citing works in anthologies and collections
Purpose of the Course:

Women's Literature is designed to introduce students to significant works by women in the context of literary/historical traditions that have shaped them as writers. The course operates on the examined assumptions that, while women writers are more frequently included in literature courses than ever before, they are still under represented in the curriculum and that studying women writers together provides important insights about women and literature as socially constructed, insights that are not always fully explored even in the most integrated courses. In Women’s Literature, we will read a range of literary works and examine a number of critical approaches that have influenced the reading of literature. We will not, of course, be able to study every feminist literary approach; instead, the texts and approaches read this quarter will serve as an introduction to a large and complex field. The course is designed to make us all more conscious readers, questioning the assumptions behind literary theories, literary texts, and our own readings of them.

Women’s Literature addresses the following program outcomes for the Comparative Cultural Studies Strand:

Understand and discuss the relationship of culture to literary expression, critique, and evaluation.
Locate a literary piece in its general cultural time-frame by identifying features that are both typical and reactions against the typical literature of that cultural time-frame.
Be familiar with and be able to discuss some significant characteristics of a specific ethnic, regional, oral, or gendered tradition in terms of specific works.
Discuss a text’s/writer’s difference and specificity, including the culture/s in which and/or against which a text was written, read, critiqued; the text’s or writer’s commonality--aesthetic and political--with other similar texts/writers; the ways in which constructions of such specificities as gender, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation shape texts and writers.
Write at least one literary essay exploring issues of culture and difference.

More specifically, Women’s Literature is designed to meet the following outcomes:

Students will
– gain knowledge of the works of significant women writers
– become familiar with literary, historical, and genre traditions in which women write
– explore questions of both commonality and diversity in women’s writing
– gain knowledge of, articulate and apply various feminist/gender critical theories to women’s texts
– write two thesis-driven papers that employ feminist/gender theory to analyze women’s literary texts.
Requirements and Policies:

Reading, Discussion, and Attendance: Since this is primarily a discussion class, it is essential that you keep up with your reading, attend class, and contribute to discussions. In addition, you will belong to groups who will count on you to participate. Read carefully and actively; write questions and responses in the margins of your texts or in a notebook. These questions and responses will serve as the basis for both class participation and papers.

A note on attendance and participation:

Four absences may reduce your final grade by one degree (B to B-; B- to C+).
Five absences may reduce your final grade by one full letter (B+ to C+).
Six or more absences may cause you to fail the course.

There are no excused absences, but of course, I understand that emergencies do arise. If you establish a pattern of conscientious attendance and turning in assignments on time, your credibility increases, and when you have an emergency, I can assume that you are a responsible person and are doing everything you can to meet your obligations. If you establish a pattern of absences, late assignments, and continual excuses, you damage your credibility. While coming to class every day is important, simply being here doesn’t earn an “A” in participation. Being here is a basic requirement. You exhibit the level of your participation through the thoughtfulness of your questions and comments in large and small groups; the degree of reflection and care you give to your writing; your tone and attitude in regard to your work and the members of the class; your commitment to the course. November 7 is the last day to drop without petitioning. Seriously consider dropping if you have missed three classes by Nov. 7 or know that you will miss more than three class periods before the end of the quarter and/or if you missed the due date for the first paper or didn’t participate in the critical approach group. Don’t just disappear if you decide not to attend class and fall behind in your work. Withdraw to avoid receiving a failing grade.

If you need disability related educational accommodations, contact Disability Services at 2102 or DS@cwu.edu. Please let me know about any accommodations made through DS.

Due dates: Written work is due in class on the due date on the schedule. Late assignments are not acceptable unless you speak with me about an extension and I agree that your circumstances warrant it. Extensions should be arranged in a timely manner. Too many extension interfere with my schedule, so ask for them only when you have genuinely good reason. Do not e-mail assignments unless you have an arrangement with me.

Expectation of hours committed to course preparation: For a five credit course that meets four 50-minute periods a week, the expectation is that a student will spend about 11 hours on course preparation. These hours should be concentrated reading, study, research, writing, revision, etc., not work undertaken while texting or engaging in other activities.
Tests: The course includes five tests to check your reading. In addition to the texts of the assigned literature, tests will include material from theory/critical assignments and class presentations and discussions. Test dates are on the schedule, but I reserve the right to change test dates if discussion seems to be flagging due to people’s not keeping up with the reading. In such an event, the test questions would still cover only the reading on the schedule up to that date.

You may make up one test during the quarter if you take it within two class days, so if you miss a test on Monday, you must make it up before class on Friday of the same week. To make up a test, go to the English Dept. Office and request your copy. It will be in a file with your name on it, and you take it at the desk outside the office. If discussion during the make-up period covers material on the test that would give you an unfair advantage over your classmates, I will have to eliminate that material from the test.

Interpretation groups: You will belong to a discussion group that will choose passages to interpret from the literature we are reading. You’ll be asked to identify the theory that helps you interpret the passages and engage in discussion with your classmates.

Reading/research/discussion groups on Purple Hibiscus: You will also belong to a reading/research/discussion group that will choose passages of Adichie’s novel to discuss with the class. The group will also look up information on historical/cultural references in the text. A separate handout will explain this assignment in more detail.

Written Work: two papers and a take-home final are required.

The first paper assignment asks you to choose one of the approaches we’ve studied up to that date and use its insights to write an interpretation of a literary text or texts we've read up to that date.

The second paper assignment, like the first, requires that you choose an approach (this time, from the middle portion of the class), and use its insights to write on a text we've read (from the middle portion of the class).

These papers should be around 4 pages (1300 words) in length. Directions and suggestions for writing appear on a separate handout.

The take-home final will require you to write two shorter essays (around 3 pages each): one about Purple Hibiscus and one that will ask you to reflect on your use of theory. The final will be explained in more detail later on a separate handout.

Using and citing sources for papers and avoiding plagiarism: Because our course includes a number of theoretical and critical sources, I’m not requiring you to do independent research. You will, however, need to incorporate some of our theoretical and critical reading into your papers. Be careful to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism hurts me because it wastes my time: I’m searching for and documenting the plagiarism and reading a bogus assignment that can’t receive genuine comments or a grade. Plagiarism hurts you because you’ve lost a learning opportunity, a grade, and your credibility. Professors do check sources and report cases of deliberate plagiarism to Student Affairs. More precise directions about citing sources are included in the handout with suggestions for the first paper.
Paper Format: Papers should be typed, double-spaced, on standard 8 ½ x 11 paper. Leave about an inch margin on all sides. Number your pages. Use a staple or paper clip (no plastic folders please). Consult the *MLA Handbook* (7th ed.) for rules on punctuation and quoting from a text or consult Purdue Owl at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11 (or look up Purdue Owl on Google). *Proofread carefully both before and after your paper comes out of the printer!* 

Paper Revision Policy: If you receive a grade of C- or lower, you may revise your paper. However, in order to be fair to others who do not have a chance to revise, your revision grade can be no higher than a C (76%). If you decide to revise, you must meet the following conditions:

1) Take the paper with my comments to the Writing Center and consult with someone there. That person will notify me that you have there and when.

2) Demonstrate in your revision that you have attempted to deal with the problems mentioned in my comments and meet the expectations of the assignment as outlined in the paper guidelines given out in class.

3) Turn in the revision **one week** from the date you received the original paper back at 12:00 at my office or in my department mailbox.

4) At the time you turn in your paper, you also turn in the graded copy with my comments. I may not have time to comment on the revision, but I will grade it and see whether I can justify raising the grade to a C.

**Paper Workshops:** A workshop gives you the opportunity to have a draft of your paper read by your peers so that you can share your ideas with them and get feedback. On the workshop day bring a 2 ½ to 3 page typed draft to class. Be sure to show me your paper before you leave class, so that I can give you points for the draft. In addition to bringing your paper and discussing it with your readers, your responsibility includes being a thoughtful reader of others’ work. Workshop dates are on the schedule.

Your grade is determined by the number of points you earn over the term. I do not keep a running tally of your grades or calculate the totals during the quarter. Keep track of the points you earn so that you can determine what percentage of the possible points you have earned at any given time.

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<tr>
<th>Tests ..................................................</th>
<th>75 pts.</th>
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<tr>
<td>1st paper ........................................</td>
<td>70 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd paper .........................................</td>
<td>70 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-home final ....................................</td>
<td>80 pts.</td>
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<td>Workshops .........................................</td>
<td>20 pts. (10 pts. each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading class discussion on reading with a critical approach</td>
<td>35 pts.</td>
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<td>Leading discussion on novel ........................</td>
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<td>Attendance and participation ....................</td>
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<td><strong>Total: ..................................................</strong></td>
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Schedule

Wed., Sept. 24  Introduction to the course, including issues of text selection: aesthetics, canons, and themes
“`Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers” and “Crazy Courage” (packet)

Thurs., Sept. 25  “Re-`vision: Reading as a Woman” from Literature and Feminism and “The Opening” (both in packet)

Fri., Sept. 26  Principles of some feminist reading strategies: anxiety of authorship, gynocriticism, and appropriation: See Feminist Approaches to Literature at the end of packet. (The history of these theories is summarized very briefly in the chapter “Feminist Literary Criticism and Theory” from A Handbook of Literary Feminisms 153-160 (packet 25-29).) Poems in the packet used as examples: “Her ‘last Poems’ and “I Think I Was Enchanted” - Emily Dickinson (gynocriticism); “The Sisters” - Amy Lowell (anxiety of authorship)
Start reading Little Women as soon as you can.

Mon., Sept. 29  Continuation of Friday’s discussion of theory and “Easter 1916” - William Butler Yeats; “In Memory of Countess Markiewicz” - Patricia Beer; “A Prayer for My Daughter” - W. B. Yeats; “A New Prayer for Daughters” - Jean Leblanc; “Witch” - Jean Tepperman; and “Érato Erratum” - Verna Safran (appropriation)
Complicating the theories: “For an Asian Woman . . .” - Nellie Wong; “I’m Ceded . . .” and “I Dwell in Possibility” - Emily Dickinson; “Night Madness Poem” - Sandra Cisneros
Little Women and The Color Purple groups assigned

Wed., Oct. 1  Read “The Second Shelf” by Meg Wolitzer and two letters that follow it (packet). If you have time, read “Challenging the Canon and the Literary Establishment” from Literature and Feminism, but make “The Second Shelf” and LW your priorities. Bring your packet to class, and I’ll go over the main issues in this chapter with you.

Thurs., Oct. 2  Little Women 1-174, Chapters 1-16
Little Women and expectations for white, middle-class women: the female bildungsroman (genre theory); the “cult of true womanhood” (historical theory); the construction of gender (see The Construction of Sexuality, Sex, and Gender in “Critical Intersections” from HLF 183-186).

Fri., Oct. 3  LW 175-205, Chapters 17-20
Mon., Oct. 6  
*LW* 206-72, Chapters 21-27  
First group uses theory or theories we’ve discussed to interpret passages from *LW*.

Wed., Oct. 8  
*LW* 273-344, Chapters 28-33  
Second group uses theory or theories we’ve discussed to interpret passages from *LW*.

Thurs., Oct. 9  
*LW* 345-76, Chapters 34-36

Fri., Oct. 10  
*LW* 377-413, Chapters 37-39  
theories of race, class, and sexuality: See Feminist Approaches at the end of packet. (The history of these theories is briefly summarized in “Feminist Criticism and Theory” from *HLF* 160-64 (packet 29-31). See also “Critical Intersections” from the same book in sections on Sexualities (including the construction of sex and gender, queer theory); Subjectivities (including identity politics, and race, ethnicity, and nationality”; Ideology and Culture (including Marxism and feminism)179-208 (packet 38-46).)

Mon., Oct. 13  
*LW* 414-91, Chapters 40-47  
Ideas for papers handed out on *Little Women* and *The Color Purple*

Wed., Oct. 15  
Test on *Little Women*, anxiety of authorship, gynocriticism, appropriation  
*The Color Purple* 1-42 (short pages)

Thurs., Oct. 16  
*The Color Purple* 43-85 and “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens” (packet)

Fri., Oct. 17  
*The Color Purple* 85-125  
Review theories of race, class, and sexuality; see note for Oct. 10 above.

Mon., Oct. 20  
*The Color Purple* 126-207  
Third group uses theory or theories we’ve discussed to interpret passages of *TCP*.

Wed., Oct. 22  
*The Color Purple* 208-294  
Fourth group uses theory or theories we’ve discussed to interpret passages of *TCP*.

Thurs., Oct. 23  
Test on *The Color Purple*, theories of race, class, and sexuality  
While you’re working on your papers outside of class, I’ll talk about French feminisms: See French Feminisms in Approaches at end of packet and **bring your packet to class**. My major sources are chapters from Morris’s book that are no longer in the packet. If you are interested in French feminisms, I can lend you a copy. “The Construction of Gender”; “‘Writing
as a Woman': Helen Cixous, Luce Irigaray and *Ecriture Feminine*”; and “Identities in Process: Poststructuralism, Julia Kristeva and Intertextuality.”


Mon., Oct. 27  Paper workshop

Wed., Oct. 29  Continue French feminisms

Thurs, Oct. 30  Stories from *WHC*: “My Friend Lucy Who Smells Like Corn”; “Eleven”; “Barbie-Q”; “Woman Hollering Creek”; “Never Marry a Mexican”

Fri., Oct. 31  **First papers due**
“Little Miracles, Kept Promises”; “*Bien Pretty*”
See Chicana Feminism in Approaches at the end of the packet. Review Material on class, sexuality, gender in *HLF* and in Approaches.

Mon., Nov. 3  “La conciencia . . .” - Anzaldua (packet) and stories in *WHC*

Wed., Nov. 5  Test on French feminisms, Cisneros’ stories, Anzaldua’s essay, Chicana Feminism
“Exiting the Patriarchy” - Zimmerman (packet)

Thurs., Nov. 6  *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* - “Genesis,” “Exodus” (46)
Review material on class, sexuality, gender in *HLF* and packet Approaches.
See Lesbian Theory (not sure why I gave this a different title than the others) in Approaches.

Fri., Nov. 7  *Oranges* - “Leviticus,” “Numbers” (34)
Ideas for papers handed out on *Women Hollering Creek* stories and *Oranges*

Mon., Nov. 10  *Oranges* - “Deuteronomy,” “Joshua,” “Judges,” “Ruth” (75)

Wed., Nov. 12  Test on *Oranges*, Zimmerman, lesbian theory
*Oranges* and Cisneros’ stories, theory, ideas people are writing about

Thurs, Nov. 13  Thesis and theory: prep for paper

Fri., Nov. 14  **Paper workshop - 3-4-page draft due on WHC or Oranges**
Mon., Nov. 17  “African Feminism: A Definition” and “Paradigms of African-Feminist Literature,” Susan Arndt

Wed., Nov. 19  *Purple Hibiscus* 4-70 - first research/discussion group

Thurs., Nov. 20  *PH* - 71-139 - second research/discussion group

Fri, Nov. 21  “Coming of Age,” Heather Hewett (packet)

**Second papers due for groups 3-5**

Mon., Nov. 24  *PH* - 140-205 - third research/discussion group

**Papers due for groups 1-2**

Wed., Nov. 26  Thanksgiving break

Thurs., Nov. 27  TG break

Fri., Nov. 28  TG break

Mon., Dec. 1  *Purple Hibiscus* 206-253 - fourth research/discussion group

Wed., Dec. 3  *Purple Hibiscus* 257-307- fifth research/discussion group

Thurs., Dec. 4  Test on *Purple Hibiscus*

Summing up discussion / extra time in case we get behind

Fri., Dec. 5  Discussion of take-home final

Please remember to do on-line evaluations.

Finals due: Tues., Dec. 9 at 2:00