

English / Women's Studies 108E "Women in Literature"

MC 4058 Wed/Fri 9:30-10:50 am

Professor Heather Smyth

HH Rm 268; x 36027

hsmyth@uwaterloo.ca

Office Hours: Wed/Fri 11:15am-12:15pm, or by appointment

Aims of the Course:

This course investigates the roles of women in literature and the changing representations of gender in literature through history. We will be studying a selection of novels, poetry, short fiction, drama, and essays by women and men from the 16th to the 21st centuries. A core theme for this course will be an exploration of what constitutes the category "woman." With this in mind, we will explore a range of cultural stereotypes about women as well as challenges to these representations; we will look at the roles imperialism and racialization play in the construction of gender mythologies in literature; we will investigate the challenges faced by early women writers as they took up the nontraditional vocation of writing; and we will study literary explorations of how gender may be transformed by alternative sexualities, crossdressing, and transgenderism.

The format of the course will include lectures and class discussions. I will be using the LEARN site for this course.

Outcomes:

Students in this course can expect:

- To improve their skills of critically reading literature and literary essays;
- To gain practice and strength in framing a research problem and expressing ideas and insights through the form of the analytical essay;
- To learn the roles of genre and literary form as contributors to meaning;
- To identify the historical and cultural context of images of women and men in literature;
- To learn about women's literary traditions and the broader literary traditions that surround them;
- To understand the diverse aesthetic practices of women writers.

Texts (required):

Aphra Behn, The Rover

Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre

Jean Rhys, Wide Sargasso Sea

Course Readings: sold in Campus Bookstore

Assignments

15%: Participation, Attendance, and Quizzes

15%: Short diagnostic essay (3-4 pages; due January 29)

40%: Long Essay (8-10 pages; due March 26)

5%: Found performance poem and report

25%: In-class exam, April 4

Participation (5%), Attendance (5%), and Quizzes (5%)

Students are expected to attend class, to do the readings thoughtfully and ahead of time, and to participate fully in the class discussions. Much of the content of this course is generated through class discussion and debate. At periodic intervals during the semester students will complete a short quiz at the beginning of class. Questions will be based on course readings and will be easy to answer if the student has kept up with the course material. Students who arrive late or are absent from class will not have an opportunity to make up the quiz unless they provide satisfactory medical documentation.

Essays (#1, 15%, due Jan 29; #2, 40%, due Mar 26): Essays for this course will be analytical essays, shaped around an argument and the defense/illustration of that argument using textual or other evidence. Essays will follow standard MLA format. They will be double-spaced, typed/wordprocessed in 10-12 point font with no more than 1 inch margins, and will have a title, works cited list, and numbered pages. Failure to meet these specifications may result in a reduction of the essay grade. Criteria for evaluation of essays include the strength, coherence, and organization of the argument; demonstration of original thinking (distinguish your ideas from your secondary sources', if used); a stylish and polished presentation of your ideas and effective use of evidence; and a firm grasp on the mechanics of writing (they should be free of grammatical, syntactical, and editing errors). Some essay topics will follow in a separate handout; a full grading rubric will be included on the essay handouts. If you pick your own topic for Essay #2 it should be relevant to the course. Essays are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due, and late penalties (5% per day including weekends) start being calculated at the end of that class. Medical reasons for lateness require a detailed and satisfactory medical note, and problems must be communicated to the professor promptly, ideally within 24 hours. I do not accept essays attached to emails. I cannot take responsibility for essays not directly handed to me; please note that essays put in the department assignment drop box after the office closes on Friday will be datestamped with Sunday's date. I do not accept essays submitted after the final exam has been completed.

Found Performance Poem and Report (5%, due March 28): Students will find an online performance poem (ideally with video) that exhibits a theme from the course. Students will hand in a maximum one-page report with a link to the video/audio performance online and answers to the following questions: why did you pick this poem? How did you find it? What course theme(s) does the poem touch upon, and how does the poem and its performance illustrate this/these theme(s)? Optional questions: how does the poem fit, or perhaps not fit, into the online context in which you found it? How does the poem's impact or meaning shift depending on the surrounding online material (links, advertisements, graphics, other textual or visual material)? We will look at a selection of these performances in class. Grading of this assignment will be based largely on level of effort and engagement.

In-class Exam (25%, April 4): The in-class exam will take place in class on the last day of classes, and will be in essay question format. It will cover material from the entire course, including assigned readings, class discussions, handouts, and lectures. You must ensure that you are in class on time that day and ready to write at 9:30 am promptly. Please consult the Undergraduate Calendar for information on rescheduling exams for medical reasons.

Note for crosslisted course: Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, this course will count in

an ENGL average for an English student and a WS average for a WS student, for majors or minors.

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Note from the Faculty of Arts on Avoidance of Academic Offences:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71: <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals: <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72>

Other sources of information for students:

Plagiarism is a highly serious offence with serious penalties. It is your responsibility to learn what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid committing it inadvertently (it is an academic offence even if not deliberate). You must avoid plagiarism in any oral or written assignments. Please see the **Academic Integrity website (Arts)** for descriptions of plagiarism: <https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/current-undergraduates/student-support/ethical-behavior>

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo): <https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>

Schedule of Readings (subject to change)

Jan 8	Introduction
-------	--------------

Jan 10	Grimm, "Little Snow White" Gilbert and Gubar, "Infection in the Sentence"
Jan 15	Lanyer, "Eve's Apology in Defense of Women" Chudleigh, "The Ladies' Defense" and "To the Ladies" Patmore, from <u>The Angel in the House</u> Ruskin, from <u>Sesame and Lilies</u> Rossetti, "The World," "In an Artist's Studio" Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman"
Jan 17	Sarton, "The Muse as Medusa" and "My Sisters, O My Sisters"
Jan 22	Rossetti, "Goblin Market"
Jan 24	Rich, "Diving into the Wreck"
Jan 29	Finch, "The Introduction" Cavendish, "The Poetess's Hasty Resolution" and "An Excuse for So Much Writ Upon My Verses" Behn, "To the fair Clarinda"; <u>The Rover</u> Essay #1 due
Jan 31	<u>The Rover</u>
Feb 5	<u>The Rover</u>
Feb 7	Woolf, "If Shakespeare Had Had a Sister"; Ibsen, <u>A Doll's House</u>
Feb 12	finish Ibsen, <u>A Doll's House</u> ; Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"
Feb 14	finish Gilman; Alice Munro, "Miles City, Montana"
Feb 17-21	Reading Week
Feb 26	Brontë, <u>Jane Eyre</u>

Feb 28	Brontë, <u>Jane Eyre</u>
Mar 5	Brontë, <u>Jane Eyre</u>
Mar 7	Aidoo, "The Girl Who Can"; Kincaid, "Girl"; Walker, "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens"
Mar 12	Rhys, <u>Wide Sargasso Sea</u>
Mar 14	Rhys, <u>Wide Sargasso Sea</u>
Mar 19	Rhys, <u>Wide Sargasso Sea</u>
Mar 21	Selvadurai, "Pigs Can't Fly"
Mar 26	Salah, "'Surgical Diary,' 'Intersexuality,' 'Transsexuality/Gender Dysphoria,' 'Transgender' Bergman, "I'm Just Saying" Essay #2 due
Mar 28	Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power"; Selina Tusitala Marsh, "Things on Thursdays," "Guys like Gauguin," "Two Nudes on a Tahitian Beach, 1894," "Song for Terry," "Fast Talkin' PI," "Outcast" Found performance poem and report due
April 2	Found poems, review for exam
April 4	In-class exam

Other Information

English Peer Mentoring Group: <https://uwaterloo.ca/english/current-undergraduates/student-services/english-peer-mentoring-group>

Facebook: WaterlooEnglish

Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/UWaterlooEnglish>