English 108E, section 2  
Women in Literature  
Fall 1999

Place: HH 227       Time: MW 12:30-2:00 p.m.

Instructor: Jacqueline Howse  
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Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays after class – 2:00-3:30 – and by appointment.

Course Description
A study of the nature and role of women in British, Canadian and American literature. Works by both men and women will be studied in which women are seen in such forms as mothers, saints, sex objects, and witches.

This section begins by looking at the figures of women – and their corollary, figures of men – in fairy tales, and compares these figures with ones we will encounter in more complex narratives. We will examine gender roles as cultural constructions, paying special attention to authors’ attempts to complicate conventional gender roles. This section of 108E is organized around an exploration of relationships: we will read to see what kinds of relationships authors make possible in the worlds they imagine, and how gender affects those relationships. In addition to examining the cultural phenomenon of gender roles, we will also practise techniques for analysing literature and writing academic essays. By the end of term, you should be able to analyse, in competent academic prose, how different authors’ writing choices contribute to the impact of their texts. Class activity will consist mostly of discussion, with occasional brief lectures.

Required Texts
course readings available in the bookstore  
A Canadian writing and reference handbook and a Canadian dictionary.  
Short texts (e.g., poems) on overhead, as required

Graded Assignments
In-class essay quizzes  6 @ 5% each  25%  (Best 5 marks out of 6)

Analytical book review  20%  
plus self-evaluation  5%  
Total  25%

Tentative thesis and annotated bibliography  15%
Research essay 30%
plus self-evaluation 5%
Total 35%

Description of Assignments

In-class essay quizzes – 6@ 5% = 25% (Best 5 marks out of 6)
For each text we read, you will be given (a) question(s) before quiz day. On quiz day, I will give you one of the questions to respond to in a brief essay. These will be “open-book” quizzes; that is, you may consult your text as you write. Your quizzes should be in academic essay form; you should have an introduction with a clearly-articulated thesis, a second well-developed paragraph which supports your thesis with examples and discussion, and a final paragraph which concludes your essay appropriately. You will have ½ hour to complete each quiz. No extra time will be give to those who arrive late. No make-ups will be given unless there is a valid and documented reason for your absence.

Analytical book review and self-evaluation – 20% + 5% = 25% (Approximately 800-900 words)
This essay will be written out of class. Guidelines for the self-evaluation will be distributed. This book review is not a mere description of the book you choose; the purpose is to analyse some aspect(s) of the writer’s literary technique as it pertains to your understanding of the theme(s) and/or purpose(s) of the book. Your review should be a well-considered and balanced judgement which includes, at least:
- a statement of your understanding of the author’s purpose and how well you think that purpose has been achieved;
- discussion of above, including ample evidence to support your judgement of the author’s achievement.
(Evidence may be drawn from your discussion of selected literary devices, such as plot development, character, setting, style, imagery, sentence structure, diction, etcetera.)

Tentative thesis and annotated bibliography – 15%
Prior to completing in your final paper, you will hand in a summary of your working thesis and an annotated bibliography of your research sources. Your thesis should be narrowly focussed and specific. You should have approximately five research sources, at least two of which should be scholarly journal articles. All should be reputable and appropriate scholarly research. For each research source you intend to use in your paper, you will provide a three-or-four-sentence entry which briefly summarises the source and explains, in more detail, what you have learned from each source, and how you intend to use it in your paper. The entries should follow MLA guidelines for citation style. (See your writing and reference handbook.)

Research essay plus self-evaluation – 30% + 5% = 35% (Approximately 1200-1500 words)
Your final paper will be on a topic either chosen from a list to be distributed, or one you develop, and your discussion should be informed by the research you do. You should use your research to expand your understanding of the text(s) you examine, rather than using it simply to confirm your preliminary speculations about the text(s). The self-evaluation will follow the same format as for the book review.

*Note that essays are not required to have five paragraphs which discuss three ideas; in fact, they should have as many paragraphs as you require to demonstrate your thesis effectively.*

Library web resources: Library web site: www.tug-libraries.on.ca
Special page for undergraduates: www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/usered/undergrad
Course policies

— Extensions —
I may grant extensions, if you discuss the possibility with me up to at least twenty-four hours before the due date. Late papers are subject to a 2% per day grade deduction; weekends count as one day.

— Attendance —
Since this is not a lecture class, and since most of the value of the class comes from your participation in class activities, I expect you will attend class regularly and participate actively. Absences that could affect your grade will be excused if you provide documentation explaining how your absence was justifiable.

— Plagiarism —
Plagiarism is a severe offence in North American universities, and I am obligated to observe university regulations regarding students who commit plagiarism or any form of academic dishonesty. (See your university calendar, pp 1:11-12, for a full description of Policy #71.) Your work must be entirely new work for this course, and entirely your own work. If you aren’t sure about what plagiarism is and what it isn’t, consult your reference handbook, and talk to me about it. (See attached handout.)

— Non-sexist language —
The North American university community has adopted guidelines for the use of gender-neutral language in academic writing, and you should adhere to these guidelines.

— Presentation of papers —
Papers should be typed and double-spaced, with one-inch margins on top, bottom, and both sides. They should also be stapled or paper-clipped, and your name should appear on each page. Citations should follow MLA style. Do not use folders or report covers.

— Grading Standards —
Grading will follow the standards suggested by the University of Waterloo document, A Handbook for Teaching in the English Department, which reads: “‘A’ papers distinguish themselves by discovering fresh or original approaches to assigned topics and by developing them in well-written prose; ‘B’ papers satisfy assignment requirements in an effective manner, both in building and developing arguments and in writing performance; ‘C’ papers do adequate jobs, but have demonstrable weaknesses in formulating arguments, developing evidence, or in written expression – or they may be overly dependent on secondary sources; ‘D’ papers are barely adequate, with muddled ideas or inadequate argumentation, with writing problems that interfere with expression of ideas, or with careless use of evidence (including secondary sources); ‘F’ grades usually involve some obvious lapse – somebody didn’t read the books required, did not interpret the assignment in a meaningful way, misused secondary sources, or wrote in a hopelessly illogical, incoherent, and ungrammatical fashion” (13-14).

Tentative Schedule (We may change some scheduling, if we see a need to.)
Week 1
– Sept. 13 – Introduction
– Sept. 15 – Grimm brothers and Lee course readings *1st essay quiz*

Week 2
– Sept. 20 – Jane Eyre *2nd essay quiz*
– Sept. 22 – Jane Eyre
Week 3
- Sept. 27 – Jane Eyre
- Sept. 29 – Jane Eyre

Week 4
- Oct. 4 – Desert of the Heart *3rd essay quiz*
- Oct. 6 – Desert of the Heart

Week 5
- Oct. 11 – Thanksgiving holiday – class cancelled
- Oct. 13 – Desert of the Heart

Week 6
- Oct. 18 – Desert of the Heart
- Oct. 20 – Love Medicine *4th essay quiz*

Week 7
- Oct. 25 – Love Medicine
- Oct. 27 – Love Medicine *Analytical book review due in class*

Week 8
- Nov. 1 – Love Medicine
- Nov. 3 – Jazz *5th essay quiz*

Week 9
- Nov. 8 – Jazz
- Nov. 10 – Jazz *Tentative thesis and annotated bibliography due in class*

Week 10
- Nov. 15 – Jazz
- Nov. 17 – Lady Oracle *6th essay quiz*

Week 11
- Nov. 22 – Lady Oracle
- Nov. 24 – Lady Oracle

Week 12
- Nov. 29 – Lady Oracle
- Dec. 1 – spare class

*Monday, Dec. 6 – research essay due in my office, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.*