English 108E  Women in Literature

Times: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30-4:00 p.m.  Room: AL 212
Instructor: Erin E. MacDonald, BA/BEc, MA
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Office Hours: Tues. and Thurs. 1:30-2:30 p.m. or by appointment
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Course Description
This course will introduce students to representations of women in the literature of England, Canada, and the United States, from the past five centuries. We will examine poems, short stories, and novels, beginning with poetry by such canonical authors as Shakespeare and Milton and moving through the Romantics and Victorians, analyzing male writers’ traditional representations of women. We will then study a wider range of literature by women, discussing and reflecting on the ways in which these writers counteract images of them as docile angels or evil temptresses. In doing so, we will also discover a strong image of the female author. Women writers from Queen Elizabeth I, the New Women of the late 19th century, and Virginia Woolf to poets Dickinson, Rich, and Atwood and Canadian fiction writers Munro, Birdsell, and Beresford-Howe provide readers with a broader view of the real lives and aspirations of women.

Through class discussions, group work, lectures, and writing assignments, students will gain knowledge of diverse authors and genres as well as valuable skills in critical reading and writing, learning to interrogate and analyze both texts and their cultural, socio-political contexts.

Required Texts
Course Readings booklet (in UW Bookstore)
She, H. Rider Haggard
Agnes Grey, Anne Bronte
The Marriage Bed, Constance Beresford-Howe

Recommended Texts
MLA Handbook, Fifth Edition
Little, Brown Compact Handbook

Assignment Weighting

Tests (2 x 20%) 40%
Short Essay
  First Draft 5%
  Second Draft 20%
Research Essay
  Thesis, Outline 5%
  Essay 25%
Attendance 5%
Description of Assignments

Attendance: Regular attendance is absolutely required, given the nature and demands of the course. To this end, a 5% attendance mark will be awarded to those who attend and participate in every class. More than two classes missed without a doctor’s note will result in a mark of zero.

Tests: Students must write two tests worth 20% each, for a total of 40%. These short tests will cover readings and class discussions corresponding with roughly the first and second halves of the course. Part A of each test will consist of terms or quotations for identification, while Part B will require students to answer a choice of short answer or short essay questions.

Short Essay: This essay must be 4-5 full pages in length, double spaced with 12 point font and following proper MLA guidelines for format and citation. Only primary sources (i.e. the text(s) studied in class) may be used for this essay. Students should develop a concise thesis of their own, supported with proof from the text itself. A first draft of this essay will be worth 5% of the total mark for the essay. The second and final draft will count for 20% of the total 25% allotted for this essay. Students who do not hand in a first draft by the due date will not be allowed to hand in a second draft, and will therefore lose all 25%.

Research Essay: This essay must be longer (7-9 pages) and more comprehensive than the first and should include secondary research in addition to critical analysis of the primary source(s). At least 3 secondary sources must be used to help prove your own thesis, and must be properly cited both in parenthetical reference and in a Works Cited page. The essay must be double spaced and follow MLA format. No first draft will be submitted for this essay and the instructor will not proofread any rough copies. However, a thesis statement and outline for the essay must be handed in and will be worth 5% of the final 30% mark.

Course Policies: All late assignments will receive a penalty of 10% off per day, and will not be accepted more than three days late without a doctor’s note. Assignments not handed in during class must be signed by the English secretary to verify the time and date and placed in my mailbox no later than 4 p.m. on the date due. Students are responsible for making up any notes, assignments, or tests missed due to illness or emergency and must provide proof sufficient to warrant any extensions granted at the discretion of the instructor. All sources, whether quoted in full or paraphrased, must be properly cited. Any incidents of plagiarism will be dealt with in the severest manner possible according to University of Waterloo guidelines. See calendar for official policy.