English / Women’s Studies 108E “Women in Literature”
HH 280, Tues/Thurs 10 - 11:20 am

Professor Heather Smyth
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hsmyth@uwaterloo.ca
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 11:45 am - 12:45 pm, 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 women writers' 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.

Outcomes:

Students in this course can expect:

- To improve their skills of critically reading literature and literary essays;
- To learn of 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;
- To gain practice and strength in framing a research problem and expressing ideas and insights through the form of the essay.

Texts (required):

Aphra Behn, The Rover
Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre
Hiromi Goto, Chorus of Mushrooms
Jean Rhys, Wide Sargasso Sea
Course Readings: sold in Campus Bookstore

Assignments

10%: Participation, Attendance, and Quizzes
15%: Short diagnostic essay (3-4 pages; due January 27)
35%: Long Essay (8-10 pages; due March 22)
40%: Final exam
Participation, Attendance, and Quizzes (P/A: 5%; Q: 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: 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. If you pick your own topic 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.

Final Exam (40%; date TBA): The final exam will take place in the exam period and will consist of essay questions. It will cover the entire course, including assigned readings, class discussions, handouts, and lectures. The final exam is part of this course and you are expected to book your holiday or travel plans with the date of the exam in mind. Please consult the Undergraduate Calendar for information on rescheduling exams for medical reasons.

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. (See Academic Integrity website http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/)

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 - Student Discipline, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm

**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://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm

**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://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

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. Read “**Avoiding Academic Offences**” at: http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

**Schedule of Readings (subject to change)**

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<tr>
<th>Jan 4</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
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for So Much Writ Upon My Verses”  
*Behn, “To the fair Clarinda who made love to me, imagin’d more than Woman,” “The Golden Age,”  
The Rover  
Short Essay due January 27

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment/Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1</td>
<td>Rossetti, “Goblin Market”</td>
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| Feb 3      | Woolf, “If Shakespeare Had Had a Sister”  
Livesay, “The Three Emily’s” |
| Feb 8 - 15 | Brontë, Jane Eyre |
| Feb 17     | Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman”  
Walker, “In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens”  
Hurston, “Sweat” |
| Feb 21 - 25| Reading Week |
| Mar 1      | Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” |
| Mar 3 - 10 | Rhys, Wide Sargasso Sea |
| Mar 15     | Selvadurai, “Pigs Can’t Fly” |
| Mar 17     | Salah, “Surgical Diary,” “Reading The Book of Suicides,”  
“Pandora’s Machine,” “Intersexuality,” “Transsexuality/Gender Dysphoria,” “Transgender”  
Bergman, “I’m Just Saying” |
| Mar 22 - 29| Goto, Chorus of Mushrooms  
Essay #2 due March 22 |
| Mar 31     | Catch-up and Review |