English 108E
Women in Literature
Section 2
Winter 1998

Place: EL 206
Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:30

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-3:30, and by appointment

Course Description
In this section of Women in Literature, we will begin by studying some traditional cultural images of women we have inherited from the nineteenth century. Then, we will spend the rest of the term studying literary images that challenge and complicate those traditional images. We will work from the assumptions that there is no “true” or “right” image of woman, that all such images are cultural constructions of one sort or another, and that authors exercise a certain amount of choice in their literary constructions. We will be guided by questions such as “what images of women does this text present? How do these images enlarge and constrain the social roles of women and also, where applicable, of men?” By the end of term, you should be able to analyze, in competent academic prose, how different authors’ choices as writers contribute to the impact of their texts, particularly in their portrayal of gender as a culturally and socially defined category. Class time will be given mostly to discussion, with occasional brief lectures.

Texts
Louisa May Alcott, Little Women
Henrik Ibsen, A Doll’s House
Toni Morrison, The Bluest Eye
Thomson Highway, Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing
Jeanette Winterson, Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit
Marilyn Dumont, A Really Good Brown Girl

List of reserved readings to follow.

Assigned Work and Grade Scheme
6 Summary and commentary sheets — 5% each — Total 25%
(I’ll count the highest five marks of the six)
Essay # 1, 1000-1500 words  Total 20%

Essay # 2, 1000-1500 words  Total 25%

5 “Pop quizzes” — 1% each —  Total 5%

5 Discussion question sheets — 1% each —  Total 5%

Final exam  Total 20%

Course Policies
— Extensions —
I do grant extensions on papers, but you must discuss this with me before the paper is due.

— 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.

— Missed quizzes —
Make-ups will be granted for missed quizzes if you provide documentation from a doctor explaining that your absence was due to illness.

— 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 cheating. (See your university calendar for a full description of penalties.) 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, talk to me about it.

— 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. Folders or report covers are unnecessary.

Schedule
Week 1
— Jan. 6 — Introduction
— Jan. 8 — Little Women — Discussion questions due
Week 2
— Jan. 13 — LW
— Jan. 15 — LW

Week 3
— Jan. 20 — LW *Sheet due*
— Jan. 22 — A Doll's House — Discussion questions due

Week 4
— Jan. 27 — DH
— Jan. 29 — DH *Sheet due*

Week 5
— Feb. 3 — The Bluest Eye — Discussion questions due
— Feb. 5 — BE

*BREAK* — *BREAK* — *BREAK* — *BREAK* — *BREAK* — *BREAK* — *BREAK*

Week 6
— Feb. 10 — BE **Essay # 1 due**
— Feb. 12 — BE *Sheet due*

Week 7
— Feb. 24 — Dry Lips Oughtta Move to Kapuskasing — Discussion questions due
— Feb. 26 — DL

Week 8
— Mar. 3 — DL
— Mar. 5 — DL *Sheet due*

Week 9
— Mar. 10 — Oranges are Not the Only Fruit — Discussion questions due
— Mar. 12 — OF

Week 10
— Mar. 17 — OF
— Mar. 19 — OF *Sheet due*

Week 11
— Mar. 24 — A Really Good Brown Girl **Essay # 2 due**
— Mar. 26 — BG

Week 12
— Mar. 31 — BG *Sheet due*
— Apr. 2 — Class cancelled

Final class — Apr. 7 — review

Note: I encourage you to drop in during my office hours. These meetings are very casual, and you don’t need to wait for a major crisis before you talk to me personally. In fact, students who regularly use instructors’ office hours for consultation tend, generally, to do better in courses, especially when they consult instructors during the planning and drafting stages of essays. If you can’t get in to speak to me during my scheduled office hours, I am happy to make an appointment for us to meet at a better time.