English 108F sec 02
The Rebel:
The Rebel in Women’s Prose Fiction

Instructor: Jason Haslam
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Course Description:

When we think of a rebel in contemporary, western society, we often picture a James Dean-like, devil-may-care, independent and anti-social kind of character. What is often not pictured is a female rebel, or, for that matter, a rebel character created by a woman. What we will be exploring in this course is precisely that. We will be looking at texts, written by women, in which the main character(s) do not, for various, fit into the role(s) society has dictated for them. The various works we will look at in the course show these characters (both women and men) attempting, with more or less success, to find their own space, either within or outside of society. Questions of independence, sexuality, oppression, sexism, and racism, among other issues, are all discussed in these works, and will be looked at in class.

We will, in studying the various rebels in this course, attempt to define the place of the rebel within these writings, and perhaps begin to understand the rebel’s place in literature as a whole. Attention will be given to the role of the rebel within the social dynamic - i.e. how each rebel rebels against the dominant social structure, and whether s/he succeeds.

The course will be set up along a basis of lectures by the instructor, along with a heavy emphasis on group work and class discussion.

Texts:

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. The Yellow Wallpaper.
Chopin, Kate. The Awakening.
Winterson, Jeanette. Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit.
Robinson, Marilynne. Housekeeping.
Rice, Anne. Interview with the Vampire.
Carter, Angela. The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories.

Course Requirements:

Attendance: 5%
Issue Cards: 5%
Participation (group work & class discussion): 5%
Midterm: 25%
First Paper (1000-1250 words) 25%
Second Paper (1500-1750 words) 35%
**Issue Cards:** Starting with the second work on the list (*The Awakening*) you will hand in an issue card at the beginning of class, the day before we begin that book (e.g., for *The Awakening*, you will hand it in on Tuesday, Sept. 16th). These issue cards are to be NO MORE THAN HALF A PAGE in length. You simply have to write down ideas or issues that you thought about while reading the book, and wish to discuss in class. They will be marked out of FIVE, 2 points for engaging with the book in a thoughtful and engaged manner, 2 points for grammar, and 1 point just for handing it in on time. ISSUE CARDS THAT ARE NOT HANDED IN ON TIME WILL NOT BE MARKED. FIVE issue cards are required (you can miss one of six--no issue card is required for "Yellow Wallpaper"). Also, please note that the issue card for *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is due the class before the MIDTERM.

**Midterm:** The midterm will consist of several passages from the books read up until the class before the midterm (i.e. "Yellow Wallpaper," *The Awakening*, and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*). For each passage, you will identify the title of the work, the author, and the characters in the passage. You will then make three or four significant interpretive points about the passage. This will be discussed in detail before the midterm. IN CLASS, ON OCTOBER NINTH.

**First Essay:** The first essay must be 1000 to 1250 words in length (approx 4-5 pages), dealing critically with ONE of the texts studied, and should not use outside research. Essay questions will be handed out, but you may also create your own topic if, and only if, you consult with the instructor. DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON NOVEMBER FOURTH.

**Second Essay:** This essay must be 1500 to 1750 (approx 6-7 pages), dealing critically with ONE or TWO works from the course, and may include no more than TWO outside sources. DUE ON DECEMBER NINTH AT 12:00PM.

Both essays must use MLA style -- this will be described in class, and handbooks suggested.

**Late Policy:**--a full grade level (eg from A to B) will be deducted from the papers from the time they are due, every 24 hours after the due dates (e.g. a paper due at 12:00pm will drop one grade at 12:01 that day, two grades at 12:00 the next day, etc.).

Also, please note that plagiarism will be dealt with in the most extreme manner allowed by the University, possibly resulting in expulsion.

The good news - THERE IS NO EXAM IN THIS COURSE.