

This syllabus has been provided as a reference tool for students considering this course. It has been modified to follow Senate regulations. Current students enrolled in any undergraduate course must obtain the most recent syllabus from their course instructor or from their course website. This is not the latest version.



Department of English & Writing Studies

Feminist Literary Theory English 2240G (001) Winter 2014

Instructor: Erica Leighton

Date/Time: Tuesday 2:30pm-3:30pm
Thursday 1:30pm-3:30pm

Location: Talbot College 342

Prerequisites

At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

An introduction to critical debates in twentieth-century feminist literary theory. Students will study (1) the diversity of feminist approaches to literature, literary production, the politics of language, questions of genre and subjectivity; and (2) the intersections among feminist literary theories, post-colonialism, Marxism, anti-racist criticism, queer theory, and post-structuralism.

Objectives:

Successful students who complete the course will be better able to:

- Identify and discuss the main ideas, themes and assumptions of various feminist aesthetic and political movements from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries;
- Adopt a range of feminist perspectives to examine and think critically about the historical, political, economic, social, technological and psychological forces that shape and regulate the idea of woman and the feminine in Western culture and literature;
- Consider how a selection of literary themes and writing strategies are used by feminist writers to re-imagine gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class and nation, and to recognize the ways in which various feminisms inform, critique, and expand upon one another;
- Develop the ability to read, interpret and analyze texts and to produce clear, well-articulated and logical feminist literary criticism supported by adequate evidence from the text(s);
- Write a thoughtful research paper in MLA format by integrating research materials (i.e. secondary sources) and a critical perspective on texts from the course (i.e. primary sources).

Course Materials

Required Texts:

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (available in Western's Book Store)
English 2240G: Feminist Literary Theory Course Pack (available in Western's Book Store)
 Access to the internet and WebCT/OWL (various online material will be posted)

Methods of Evaluation

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|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----|
| Quizzes | (six total; the best five count) | 10% |
| Group Presentations | | 10% |
| Midterm | (1 hour), in-class February 27 | 10% |
| Research Proposal | (1 page), due March 11 | 5% |
| Research Essay | (8 pages), due March 20 | 20% |
| Participation | | 10% |
| Final exam | | 35% |

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

Timetable:

| Date | Topic | Pre- Reading | Assignments |
|---------------|--|--|---|
| Tues. Jan 7 | Week 1: Introduction & course overview | | |
| Thurs. Jan 9 | | Virginia Woolf, <i>A Room of One's Own</i> | |
| Tues. Jan 14 | Week 2: Finding a Female Literary Tradition | Virginia Woolf, <i>A Room of One's Own</i> (con't) Mary Shelley, Introduction to <i>Frankenstein</i> | |
| Thurs. Jan 16 | | | Quiz #1 |
| Tues. Jan 21 | Week 3: Finding a Female Literary Tradition 2 | A. Walker, "In Search of our Mothers' Gardens" S. Gilbert & S. Gubar, "Madwoman in the Attic", J. Culler, "Reading as a Woman" R. Scholes, "Reading as a Man" | |
| Thurs. Jan 23 | | | Presentation 1 & Quiz #2 |
| Tues. Jan 28 | Week 4: Essentialism vs. Constructivism | A. Snitow, "Mass Market Romance" D. Fuss, "Essentially Speaking" | |

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| Thurs. Jan 30 | | | Presentation 2 & Quiz #3 |
| Tues. Feb 4 | Week 5: "French" Feminisms | L. Irigaray, "The Power of Discourse" H. Cixous, "Medusa" & "Castration" D. Stanton, "Language" | |
| Thurs. Feb 6 | | | Presentation 3 & Quiz #4 |
| Tues. Feb 11 | Week 6: Feminism & Sexuality | G. Rubin, "Thinking Sex" M. Wittig, "Straight Mind" A. Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality" | |
| Thurs. Feb 13 | | | Presentation 4 |
| Feb 17- Feb 21 | Week 7: READING WEEK | | |
| Tues. Feb 25 | Week 8: The Gaze; Midterm | R. Jackson, "Fantasy" R. Coward, "Female Desire" | |
| Thurs. Feb 27 | MIDTERM (IN CLASS) | | Midterm |
| Tues. Mar 4 | Week 9: The Body and Performing Gender | J. Butler, "Gender Trouble" S. Bordo, "The Body" M. Garber, "Dress Codes" | |
| Thurs. Mar 6 | | Film screening: TBA | |
| Tues. Mar 11 | Week 10: Feminism and the Colonial/ Post-Colonial | G. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" G. Anzaldua, "The Race for Theory" | Research Proposal |
| Thurs. Mar 13 | | | Presentation 5 & Quiz #4 |
| Tues. Mar 18 | Week 11: Feminism and Critical Race Studies | b. hooks, "Selling" and "Postmodern Blackness" B. Christian, "The Race for Theory" | |
| Thurs. Mar 20 | | | Presentation 6 and Research Essay |
| Tues. Mar 25 | Week 12: Class, Capitalism, Consumerism & Popular Culture | F. Mernissi, "The Western Women's Harem" E. Sedgwick, "Introduction" and "Gender Asymmetry" | |
| Thurs. Mar 27 | | | Presentation 7 and Quiz #5 |
| Tues. Apr 1 | Week 13: Gender, Science and Technology | D. Haraway, "Manifesto" (Other reading TBA) | |
| Thurs. Apr 3 | | | Presentation 8 and Quiz #6 |

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|-------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Tues. Apr 8 | Last Day of Class: Review | | Questions and Comments |
| Apr 11-30 | Exam Period | | |

Assignments:

Quizzes: These quizzes are designed to encourage thoughtful analysis and response to the texts covered, and to reward reading and engagement. Out of the quizzes you write, the best five marks will count towards your grade.

Group Presentations: For the group presentations, the class will be divided into groups of approximately three or four students. Each group is responsible for finding a creative and insightful way of explaining and engaging with the text(s) assigned for that week. They must also select a secondary text or cultural product with which to demonstrate the approach(es), themes or concerns of the week, and use it to guide the class in an exercise. Each member of the group will be expected to do an equal amount of work, as determined by the group. The presentations should take approximately 15-20 minutes and the subsequent discussion should take another 15-20 minutes. In the discussion, the group will lead the class in an examination of the relationship between the material of their presentation and some themes/concerns seen elsewhere in the course. The grade will be based on contribution to and participation in the presentation and the discussion.

Midterm: This in-class test will be composed of short and long answers. Students may be asked to identify and explain the significance of passages from class readings, define and explain the significance of key terms, or answer a selection of directed questions in paragraph form. More information will be provided in class.

Research Proposal: Your one-page proposal for your research essay should include a working thesis, a methodology, and an indication of what critical sources will be used.

Research Essay: Students will be required to write an essay on a topic related to the course readings. Essays should include a clear, argumentative, and specific thesis statement, as well as a logical argument defended with evidence from the texts (i.e. primary sources) being discussed. Students must incorporate at least FIVE secondary sources from scholarly journals and books. The assignment must be submitted in MLA format. Do not hesitate to consult the instructor or teaching assistant regarding your essay as you begin your brainstorming and research.

Participation: The grade for participation will be determined based on your attendance and participation in class discussions. "Participation" means coming to class having done the readings, prepared for active participation in discussion and activities; it also means your own effort in maintaining a respectful and positive classroom space. If you are uncomfortable speaking in class, you may meet with the professor or teaching assistant during office hours to discuss the texts.

Assignment Rules and Regulations: Late assignments will be penalized 2% per day, including weekends. As per UWO regulations, students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any misses texts, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counseling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on assignments cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Please note: instructors are not permitted to review medical documentation; all requests for academic accommodation that include doctor's notes, etc., regardless of the total worth of the assignment to a student's final grade, must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office and not to the instructor.

Please submit all assignments, in person, to your instructor. Assignments are due on their due date at the beginning of class. Assignments submitted to the essay drop box, located outside the English Department main office in UC 173 will incur a late penalty. Electronic submissions will NOT be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Attendance:

Excessive absenteeism is grounds for debaring a student from taking the final examination. The 2013 Academic Calendar states: "Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given)/ On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course" (p. 35). *For the purposes of this course, "excessive absenteeism" will be defined as missing six hours or more (two weeks) of classes over the course of the term.*

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.