



Western Arts & Humanities

English 9196A: Constructing the American Woman: 19th Century U.S. Literature for Women
Dr. Miranda Green-Barteet
***Tentative Course Outline**
Fall 2021



Although this academic year might be different, Western University is committed to a **thriving campus**. We encourage you to check out the [Digital Student Experience](#) website to manage your academics and well-being. Additionally, the following link provides available resources to support students on and off campus: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

Instructor: Dr. Miranda Green-Barteet

Office: Lawson Hall 3245

Office Hours: T 10:30-12:00, Th 1:30-2:30
and By Appointment*

Email: mgreenb6@uwo.ca

Phone: 519-661-2111 ext. 84661

Class Time: Th 9:30-12:30

Location:

*Email is the best way to contact me. If you email me Monday through Friday between 9 am and 5 pm, I will respond within 24 hours; if you email me on the weekend, I will not respond until Monday after 9 am. Be sure to put your course number into the subject line and to use your UWO email to contact me.

*I will hold office hours through Zoom. I will provide specific information on how to schedule a meeting with me on the first day of class.

Land Acknowledgement:

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London.

Course Description and Objectives:

Throughout the late-18th and 19th centuries, U.S. politicians, educators, and writers were considering what it meant to be American. Writers, in particular, considered how to construct and to define an American identity through literature. This course, which focuses on 19th-century U.S. literature written for and by women, considers what it meant to be a woman, real and imagined, living in the U.S. during the 19th century. Through reading a variety of literature, including conduct manuals, commonplace books, journals, short stories, slave narratives, and novels, we will consider how U.S. womanhood is constructed in the context of the 19th century, as the U.S. developed from a young republic to a nation at war with itself to a burgeoning colonial power. With each text, we will ask ourselves: what is an American woman? who is included in the term American woman? How does the concept of American womanhood change throughout the century? Are any women included or excluded in the definition?

As we read, we will reflect on the many changes facing the new American nation as well as the developing American literary market and Americans' changing tastes to consider what makes a work of literature specifically for women as well as how literature can add to the identity of American women. We will discuss issues raised by different writers, texts, and literary movements, and we will consider how these issues may relate to particular historical and cultural events; such issues may include the notion of "America" and "being an American," race and racism, the rise of industry, selfhood and alienation, the possibility of violence, regionalism, modernity, feminism, and multiculturalism. We will also consider the political and historical purpose of each work of literature, trying to determine what impact (if any) the work had and continues to have on American culture and the concept of American womanhood. Finally, we will consider these works through a variety of theoretical lenses, including but not limited to Feminism, Gender Theory, Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist Thought, and Postmodernism.

Throughout the term, we will consider a variety of issues that are of concern to scholars studying literature written for and by American women, including, but not limiting ourselves, to the following:

- What historical events influence the way American womanhood is defined?
- How do works written for and by women respond to, interrogate, and even question the historical and political context in which American womanhood is defined?
- How do novels written for girls and young women differ from those written for adult women?
- How do women writers employ various genres to define or challenge the definition of American womanhood?
- Which women are excluded or included from the standard definition of American womanhood?
- Where do these works fit into the American canon?

Course Delivery

Our class is scheduled to meet in person in UC.

Due to the pandemic, I will assess the transmission rate in the community closely, and I reserve the right to meet virtually. Should we meet virtually, I will notify students at least 12 hours before begins, and we will meet “synchronously,” via Zoom.

All students are strongly encouraged to wear masks during class.

All course materials will be posted to our OWL site: <http://owl.uwo.ca>. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and discussed with the class.

If students need assistance, they can seek support on the [OWL Help page](#). Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#). They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

[Google Chrome](#) or [Mozilla Firefox](#) are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#).

Course Texts

Fanny Fern, *Ruth Hall* (1854)

Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1844)

Frances E.W. Harper, *Iola Leroy*, or, *Shadows Uplifted* (1892)

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)
 Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *The Story of Avis* (1873)
 Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie; or, Early Time in Massachusetts* (1827)
 Other reads will be available through OWL.

Technical Requirements:



Stable internet connection



Laptop or computer



Working microphone



Working webcam

Participation	10%
Assignment 1: Follow the Footnote	15%
Or	
Assignment 1: Design an Assignment	
Assignment 2: Presentation & Co-authored Article Review	20%
Assignment 3: Abstract and Annotated Bibliography	20%
Assignment 4: Research Paper	35%

Participation

This is a seminar and is, thus, focused on discussion. While I may briefly lecture and turn the class over to individuals/groups for presentations throughout the term, the bulk of each class will be spent discussing the readings, both primary and secondary.

You are expected to actively participate in each class. “Actively participate” means to be engaged with the discussion and the materials and to participate, thoughtfully, in the discussion. Please get in touch with me at any point if you feel the virtual nature of this course is making your participation difficult.

Assignment 1, Follow the Footnote (Due Oct. 14, 2021)

Chose a single footnote or a set of footnotes from one of the secondary course readings, read the works referenced, and analyze the critical debate constructed by the note(s). How does the writer of the note(s) see herself/himself as intervening in the academic debate? How does the footnote aid your understanding of the primary text being analyzed? How does the footnote aid your understanding of feminist literary criticism? *You must engage with at least three sources through a single footnote or a series of footnotes, and this assignment should be no more than 10 pages.

Or

Assignment 1, Design a Lesson

Ostensibly, taking a graduate seminar prepares you to teach an undergraduate course in the same topic. For this assignment, you will design lesson for an undergraduate class based on at least one of our readers. The assignment must be for a 3rd or 4th year class, so you can assume the students have some knowledge of the topic. You will submit a lesson plan, including a list of objectives for the lesson (i.e., if your lesson focuses on Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life a Slave Girl*, one objective could be to explain the Fugitive Slave Act and the Cult of True Womanhood), and overview of your lecture, and a list of discussion questions. You will also submit a paper explaining your choices,

including an explanation as to why you decided to focus on the work you did, how you plan to engage the class, and why you highlighted certain topics or assigned secondary readings.

Assignment 2: Presentation & Co-authored Article Review

Students will work in pairs give a 15- to 18-minute presentation (maximum) in which each group will present to the class on an article/essay pertinent to the day's primary reading. Students will need to find an article/essay and share it with the instructor and class ahead of the presentation. Students will then:

- Teach the class the article, taking care to explain the article's purpose, it's relevance to the day's primary reading, and summarizing the article's main points.
- Review the article, explaining the value of the article and its usefulness to our discussion of Feminist Speculative Fiction.
- Bring in other secondary sources if needed to support the Review.

Presentation requirements:

- Summarize, review, and evaluate the article.
- Review and evaluate the article. In reviewing and evaluating the article, you are constructing an argument about the article. Be sure to support your argument with evidence.
- Meet with me a minimum of one week in advance of your presentation to discuss your plan.
- Provide a short outline/handout (no more than two pages) for your classmates (unless you choose to use PowerPoint/Prezi/etc.). This must be emailed to the instructor by 8:30 am on the morning of your presentation to give the instructor ample time to distribute it to class.

Co-authored Paper Requirements:

- Writing with your partner, you will submit a co-authored paper that summarizes your presentation. In the paper, you may build on your review and evaluation. This will be submitted one week following your presentation.
- Length: no more than 8 pages.
- *If you're presentation occurs the same week as another assignment is due, please consult with me on an extension for the other assignment.
- Deadlines will be determined after the first day of class. I will choose the groups.

Assignment 3: Abstract and Annotated Bibliography

- You will write an abstract that outlines your research paper. You will also include an annotated bibliography with 6 sources.
- Length: no more than 8 pages.

Assignment 4: Research Paper

- Write an argumentative, analytical research paper on a topic of your choosing that is pertinent to our study of Constructing American Womanhood.
- Length: no more than 6,500 words, inclusive of notes and bibliography
- Due date: To be determined by the class

Written Assignments

All texts on the syllabus are available for use in any assignment, but no text may be substantively employed in more than one assignment. Please use MLA formatting to document your research. I highly recommend you meet with me to discuss your plan for each assignment before you begin working on them

Professionalism & Privacy:

Western Students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations apply to this course:

- Students are expected to follow online etiquette expectations provided on OWL.
- All course materials created by the instructor are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared.
- All course materials created by graduate students (i.e., presentations, handouts, discussion questions, etc.) are the intellectual property of the student creating the materials and cannot be sold/shared.
- Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without the instructor's or the students' explicit permission.
- Permitted recordings are only to be used for class and are not to be distributed.
- All recorded sessions, if any, will remain within the course site or unlisted if streamed.
- Students should feel free to keep their cameras on or off as they choose, with the exception of presentations. When you are giving a presentation, please turn your camera on.
- Students should also feel free to use an appropriate virtual background and to use a nickname on Zoom. If you choose to use a nickname, please email me so that I learn your nickname and mark your attendance based on your nickname.

Course Policies

Submitting Assignments: All assignments are due in-class on the date stated on the class schedule. You are expected to submit an electronic version to OWL. All papers should be submitted as .doc or .dox files.

Attendance Policy: The very nature of this course requires that you attend regularly to do well. You are expected to come to class each week. Should you need to be absent, notify me as soon as you know you will be away.

Working from Home: The pandemic has changed the way we conceive of workspaces and home spaces. As we are all working from home, I understand that you (and that I) may be interrupted by pets, parents, partners, and/or children, etc. As a group, we will be tolerant and understanding of such interruptions. Should you need to step away from the virtual class to deal with something going on at home, please feel free to do so, leaving a comment in the chat if you are able. While I anticipate that we will be able to meet in person for the semester, I have included this in the event that we must meet virtually.

Cameras and Microphones: Please feel free to have your camera on or off as you choose or as is necessary to accommodate your internet speed/bandwidth. If you are able, please do have your camera on for your presentation. If you chose to use a static picture of yourself or an image, you are expected to choose one that appropriate for an academic/professional setting. To minimize background noise, please keep your microphone off unless you are speaking. Use the hand raised feature when you want to speak. You should feel free to use an appropriate virtual background and to use a nickname on Zoom. If you choose to use a nickname, please email me so that I learn your nickname and mark your attendance based on your nickname.

Owl/Sakai: The use of OWL/Sakai is necessary for successful completion of this course. This includes accessing readings as stipulated in the course outline, downloading instructions and guidelines for assignments, and submitting assignments OWL. All course information, including assignments, will be posted on the course website.

Statement on 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 the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf.

Graduate Course Health and Wellness

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. For example, please check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/>, and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html.