

Sample Syllabus: BEFORE Universal Instructional Design Changes

Introduction to Women's Texts

L77 WS 214C, Section 03

Spring 2002

*"One is not born but made a woman."
~Simone de Beauvoir*

Instructor: <instructor name>
Office Hours: <office hours>
Phone: <office phone>
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Required Texts

Course Packet (x)
Atwood, Margaret. The Handmaid's Tale. (Doubleday)
Brontë, Charlotte. Jane Eyre. (Penguin)
Crane, Stephen. Maggie: A Girl of the Streets. (Bantam)
Jacobs, Harriet. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. (NAL)
Morrison, Toni. Sula. (Signet)
Rhys, Jean. Wide Sargasso Sea. (Norton critical)

Course Objectives

- 1) To assess canonical and non-canonical literary texts, primarily written by women, with a more critical eye for gender constructions, both inside and outside of the texts themselves.
- 2) To evaluate how language, literature, and the stories we tell—to each other and to ourselves—contribute to individual and cultural identity-formation.
- 3) To identify the arguments implicit in seemingly non-argumentative texts, and to consider the ways in which women have used writing as a mode of changing their "social and imaginative conditions."

Course Requirements / Policies

- **Attendance.** You must attend every class, except in the event of serious illness or family emergency. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you've missed. More than three unexcused absences will result in a lowered final grade.
- **Participation.** Active and attentive involvement, both in your discussions and in your reading, is mandatory for this class. You should come to each class prepared to discuss the day's assignment, and prepared to think critically about its content, motivations, and implications.
- **Reading Journals.** For each new reading assignment, you will be required to type a 1-page (minimum) reading journal entry. These entries should be placed in a folder from which they can be removed easily; **you will need to bring the whole journal to class every day.** Entries will be collected at random, and **no late entries will be accepted.** See handout on the format and content of these entries.
- **Essays.** There will be two formal essays: one of 4-5 pages in length, and one of 7-8 pages. I will give you topics to choose from for the short essay assignment, but you will formulate the topics of the longer paper, according to your own interests. These topics will need to be planned carefully and discussed with me in advance. All papers for this course should be written according to conventions for writing about literary texts. More details to come about these essays. **No late papers will be accepted.**

Note: Plagiarism is using others' ideas without citing them, whether "intentional" or not, and can result in failure of an assignment or even the course. If you are uncertain about whether to cite an idea, cite it, or ask someone. If you are uncertain about how to cite material, please see the *Modern Language Association Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (most recent edition), a. k. a. *MLA Handbook*.

Comment [d1]:
Two font formatting choices that may present difficulties for students with visual disabilities: 1) the font is "shadowed," and 2) the font is a serif font (Garamond).

What's a "serif"? See: <http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/S/serif.html>

Sans serif fonts – such as **Arial**, **Corbel**, and **Calibri** – are more accessible.

Comment [d2]:
Shaded background with black text is low-contrast. This formatting choice persists throughout in the section and table headings.

May be difficult for students with visual disabilities.

Comment [d3]:
The "x" in parentheses is intended to serve as shorthand later in the syllabus, when readings from the Course Packet are listed in the Class Schedule.

Without a note explaining this shorthand, instructor is assuming that this information will be understood by all students.

Comment [d4]:
Font size throughout the syllabus is 9 point.

Accessible font size should be 12-point at a minimum; 14-point often is preferred for those with visual disabilities.

Comment [d5]:
Missing: "policies" or other information that might contribute to an inclusive, accessible learning environment, such as:

Information about where students with disabilities may go for support and relevant campus policies.

Explicit mention of the value and importance of multiple perspectives and shared understandings across difference as a means to enrich the learning of the class.

Code of conduct or civility to describe the norms for respectful dialogue and discussion (particularly important in a course where the subject matter could lead to discussions of a sensitive nature).

Comment [d6]:
Text alignment is justified, which may present difficulties for students with visual disabilities, due to inconsistencies in spacing between words. Left-hand justified text would be more accessible because the spacing between words is more regular and predictable.

Comment [d7]:
Italics also may present difficulties for students with visual disabilities. Underlining is more accessible.

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Class Schedule

1 How Literature Makes Gender: Representations of Women and Men		
TU 1/8	Introduction & Opening Thoughts "Spelling" (Atwood)	
TH 1/10	Fairy Tales (handout) Gilbert and Gubar excerpt (handout)	Journal 1: Consider how the fairy tales could be said to "make" gender. How do they contribute to assumptions about gender?
TU 1/15	<u>Jane Eyre</u> – pp. 5-96 (pref. – ch. 9)	Journal 2: How might Jane's life/identity be different if she were a male?
TH 1/17	<u>Jane Eyre</u> – pp. 97-172 (chs. 10-15)	Journal 3: Topic/passage of your choosing.
TU 1/22	<u>Jane Eyre</u> – pp. 175-247 (chs. 16-20)	Journal 4: Identify stereotypes of feminine and masculine behavior, and consider how Jane's identity might be said to be more "masculine" than "feminine."
TH 1/24	<u>Jane Eyre</u> – pp. 248-331 (chs. 21-26)	Journal 5: Topic/passage of your choosing.
TU 1/29	<u>Jane Eyre</u> – pp. 335-432 (chs. 27-33)	Journal 6: Topic/passage of your choosing.
TH 1/31	<u>Jane Eyre</u> – pp. 433-end (chs. 34-end)	Journal 7: Topic/passage of your choosing.

Comment [d8]:
Information is presented in tables, which may present difficulties for screen readers.

What's a screen reader? See: <http://www.nomensa.com/blog/2005/what-is-a-screen-reader>

Comment [d9]:
Blue font on white background may be difficult to read for students with color blindness or other visual disabilities.

2 Literature and Identity Formation: Constructing the Narrative of Self		
TU 2/5	De Beauvoir (x)	Journal 8: Consider how the cultural "narratives" about women shape their identities.
TH 2/7	Ferré – "Poisoned Story" (x)	Journal 9: How is this tale a tale of Rosaura's identity? How does it deviate from typical "fairy tales"?
TU 2/12	<u>Sula</u> – thru p. 85	Journal 10: Topic/passage of your choosing.
TH 2/14	<u>Sula</u> – pp. 86-end	Journal 11: Consider the issue of identity in this text, and why "boundaries" are essential to a definition of "self."

3 Writing as a Social Instrument: Negotiating Private and Public Bodies/Selves		
TU 2/19	Woolf, Gilman, Walker (x)	Journal 12: Apply Woolf's "Angel" to the narrator in "The Yellow Wallpaper."
TH 2/21	Maggie – thru p. 61 (end of novella)	Journal 13: Topic/passage of your choosing.
TU 2/26	<u>Incidents</u> – thru p. 109 Essay #1 due in class.	Journal 14: Who is Jacobs's audience? What's her purpose? How do these things shape the narrative she's telling?
TH 2/28	<u>Incidents</u> – pp. 110-end	Journal 15: Topic/passage of your choosing.
TU 3/5	Spring Break!	
TH 3/7	Spring Break!	

Note: the remaining weeks of the semester have been cut for the sake of brevity with this sample syllabus.