Sample Syllabus: AFTER Universal Instructional Design Changes

Introduction to Women's Texts
L77 WS 214C, Section 03
Spring 2002

Instructor: <instructor name>
Office Hours: <office hours>
Phone: <office phone>
Email: <email address>

Required Texts
Course Packet (readings marked with "x" in Class Schedule are from this text)
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.

Accommodations. Students who may need specific accommodations due to disabilities must register with the Office of Disability Services (<insert links / phone numbers>). Once this registration process has happened, I am more than happy to work with you on appropriate modifications to the course to ensure that you have equal access and opportunities for success.....
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**Inclusion.** This course depends upon the inclusion of different perspectives, ideas, modes of learning, and voices for critical thinking and for learning. I have designed the course, to the extent possible, to eliminate barriers and provide full and equal access for all students. All forms of diversity (e.g., culture, ability, age, gender expression, religious belief or non-belief, etc.)—those unique characteristics that add richness, breadth, and depth to our class—at will be acknowledged and accommodated in a universal manner. (Note: the language in this paragraph has been adapted from a “Universal Instructional Design” included in syllabi in the Higher Education Administration program at Saint Louis University.)

**Dialogue.** As we tackle topics and texts that challenge our preconceived ideas and our own personal biases, it will be important that we treat one another with respect. Together, at the beginning of the semester, we will co-create a “code of conduct” to guide our classroom discussions. At a minimum, we will seek to foster dialogue, not debate; to read more about the differences, FOLLOW THIS LINK: [http://bit.ly/1Cw8cy9](http://bit.ly/1Cw8cy9).

**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.
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Class Schedule

Unit 1: How Literature Makes Gender: Representations of Women and Men

Tuesday, January 8
Focus: Introduction & Opening Thoughts
Reading: “Spelling” (Atwood)

Thursday, January 10
Readings: Fairy Tales (handout); Gilbert and Gubar (handout)
Journal 1: Consider how the fairy tales could be said to “make” gender. How do they contribute to assumptions about gender?

Tuesday, January 15
Reading: Jane Eyre – pp. 5-96 (pref. – ch. 9)
Journal 2: How might Jane’s life/identity be different if she were a male?

Thursday, January 17
Reading: Jane Eyre – pp. 97-172 (chs. 10-15)
Journal 3: Topic/passage of your choosing.

Tuesday, January 22
Reading: Jane Eyre – pp. 175-247 (chs. 16-20)
Journal 4: Identify stereotypes of feminine and masculine behavior. Consider how Jane’s identity might be said to be more “masculine” than “feminine.”

Thursday, January 24
Reading: Jane Eyre – pp. 248-331 (chs. 21-26)
Journal 5: Topic/passage of your choosing.

Tuesday, January 29
Reading: Jane Eyre – pp. 335-432 (chs. 27-33)

Thursday, January 31
Reading: Jane Eyre – pp. 433-end (chs. 34-end)
Journal 7: Topic/passage of your choosing.

Comment [d9]: Information is presented as text, rather than in tables, to improve accessibility.

Comment [d10]: Changed blue font for the journal entry text to black.
Unit 2: Literature and Identity Formation: Constructing the Narrative of Self

Tuesday, February 5
Reading: DeBeauvoir (x) \([x = \text{Course Packet}]\)
Journal 8: Consider how the cultural “narratives” about women shape their identities.

Thursday, February 7
Reading: Ferré – “Poisoned Story” (x)
Journal 9: How is this tale a tale of Rosaura’s identity? How does it deviate from typical “fairy tales”?

Tuesday, February 12
Reading: Sula – thru p. 85

Thursday, February 14
Reading: Sula – pp. 86-end
Journal 11: Consider the issue of identity in this text. Why are “boundaries” essential to a definition of “self”?

Unit 3: Writing as a Social Instrument: Negotiating Private and Public Bodies and Public Selves

Tuesday, February 19
Readings: Woolf, Gilman, Walker (x)
Journal 12: Apply Woolf’s “Angel” to the narrator in “The Yellow Wallpaper.”

Thursday, February 21
Reading: Maggie – thru p. 61 (end of novella)

Tuesday, February 26
Reading: Incidents – thru p. 109
Due: 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?

Thursday, February 28
Reading: Incidents – pp. 110-end
Journal 15: Topic/passage of your choosing.

March 5 and March 7
Spring Break – no class!