

English/Women Studies 301: Women and Literature
(GenEd, Multicultural)

Session: Spring 2015
Instructor: Dr. Marjorie Allison
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MW 12:45-2, and by appt.
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Required Texts:

Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*
Castillo, Ana. *So Far From God*
Figiel, Sia. *Where We Once Belonged*
Morrison, Toni. *Paradise*
Ping, Wang. *The Last Communist Virgin*
Satrapi, Marjane. *Persepolis 2*
Walbert, Kate. *A Short History of Women: A Novel*

Students will also need to read materials accessed through WesternOnline (WO).

(In addition to reading the above texts, we may view two films together)

Course Description:

In the introduction to *Women of the Century: Thirty Modern Short Stories*, Regina Barreca offers the following justification for the anthology:

Why anthologize stories by modern women writers? Isn't a good short story simply a good short story, regardless of who wrote it? This collection grew from a belief that women have different stories to tell than do their male counterparts. Although these stories offer insights and pleasures to both male and female readers, they reflect a vision of the world that is particular to the woman writer.
(1)

In this course we are going to examine Barreca's argument in relation to essays, short stories/myths/folklore, memoir, and, primarily, novels. We will explore the representation of women in selected films. We will also extend the conversation beyond what might be true about U.S. women writers to what women writers from around the world have to say about the cultures in which they live. In short, we will examine this literature in order to consider what women writers think about life, reality, the roles of women and power politics around the world.

As always, this course will also have the goal of increasing each student's critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. Further, we will explore the aesthetic choices the authors have made – why might they choose to write as they do?

Requirements and Grading:

Participation: In this course students are expected to participate fully in class

discussion. This is not a lecture course and each student must come to class each day ready and willing to raise questions and make comments about the text at hand. Students will be asked to bring in outside materials at times. The success and quality of the course is in the hands of the students--only full participation and commitment will make the course "work" to its fullest potential. Each student will be asked to help lead class discussion at least once this semester. (Class Participation is worth about 15% of the final grade).

Quizzes: Throughout the semester students will have 11-12 quizzes and/or informal assignments that will be worth 10 points each. The quizzes will be based primarily on factual information from the current class reading. At the end of the semester, 1-2 of the lowest quiz scores will be dropped. (The combined quiz average for the semester will be worth about 10% of the final grade).

Rough Drafts: On rough draft/peer conferencing days, students are responsible for attending class with two copies of their rough drafts. They must have at least three full pages drafted to receive credit for having a rough draft, and they must attend class and make written notes on others' papers to receive credit on rough draft day. (Each is worth about 2.5 % of the final grade).

Papers: You will write two formal papers. Each paper will be about 5-6 pages long. In the papers you will respond to one or two of the texts and explore a question of interest to you. (The first formal paper is worth about 15% of the final grade, the second is worth about 20% of the final grade).

Exams: You will take two exams which will be comprised of short answer and essay questions. (The midterm exam will be worth about 15% of the final grade; the final exam will be worth about 20% of the final grade).

General Information

--Participation, Attendance and Punctuality: Because this course is based upon class discussion, attendance and participation are crucial to the success of the course and the success of individual students in the course. In order to participate you must not only attend class but also arrive on time. If you are absent, it is up to you to find out from classmates what material you have missed and to find out what you need to do for the next class session. Any student who falls into a pattern of absenteeism will find his or her final grade adversely effected; persistent lateness will have a similar effect. Each student is allowed four absences for the semester--no questions asked. For each absence beyond four, I will deduct one half grade from your final grade for Class Participation. A pattern of chronic absences will result in the final, overall grade being lowered.

--Conduct: I expect my classes to operate with great respect for a large diversity of ideas and viewpoints. This atmosphere is essential in any academic setting. I expect all students to respect and listen to other viewpoints --I do not expect all students to agree on issues. Mature, respectful, and thoughtful dialogue is encouraged. Insensitive comments and conduct will not be tolerated, whether aimed at me or at a class member.

Please see the Code of Student Conduct: <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/stucode.shtml>.

--The papers must be turned in both electronically to WO and in hard copy to me. Grades on late papers will be lowered half of a grade for each day late unless you have made special arrangements with me before the due date.--I reserve the right to not write comments on late papers.

--University Writing Center: "The University Writing Center is available to assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The one-on-one assistance available at the University Writing Center is valuable for generating ideas, talking about global-level issues such as organization, and even working through grammatical problems. The University Writing Center is located in Malpass Library (3rd floor, west side). Call for an appointment (298-2815) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment."

--Grading is done in accordance with college guidelines and are earned according to the following standard:

100-93 = A
92-90 = A-
89-87 = B+
86-83 = B
82-80 = B-
79-77 = C+
76-73 = C
72-70 = C-
69-67 = D+
66-63 = D
62-60 = D-
59 and below = F

--All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

--Please turn off your cellphone ringer during class, and please refrain from texting during class.

--Exams can only be rescheduled in advance of the test.

WIU Policies

- **ADA:** In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require

special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 309-298-2512 for additional services.

- **Student Rights and Responsibilities:**

<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>

- **Academic Integrity Policy:** <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>
HONEST WORK IS EXPECTED; I cannot say this strongly enough. Plagiarism will be reported to CAGAS. Please see the above link regarding the Policy on Academic Integrity.

--A final note--you are urged to keep an extra copy of your papers and of any other important work. If you hand something in late or in to my e-mail account, be sure that you confirm with me that I received the material.

Reading Schedule

(This schedule and list is subject to change according to the needs of the class. All changes will be announced in class, and it is up to you to keep informed about any changes.)

1/21 Class Introduction

1/23 **Beginnings:** essays by bell hooks and Virginia Woolf (found in folder in WesternOnline)

1/26 Chopin: "The Story of An Hour;" Gilman: "The Yellow Wallpaper" (WO)

1/28 Glaspell: "Trifles" (WO)

1/30 Freeman: "The Revolt of Mother" WO

2/2 Begin *A Short History of Women: A Novel*

2/4 "

2/6 "

2/9 "

2/11 **Girlhood:** McCarthy essay, Crumb (WO)

2/13 Begin *Fun Home*

2/16 "

2/18 "

2/20 Rough Draft Day

2/23 Film

2/25 Film; **Paper One Due**

2/27 **Class:** McDaniel and Orr (WO)

3/2 Begin *So Far From God*

3/4 “

3/6 “

3/9 “

3/11 “

3/13 Midterm Exam

3/16-3/20 Spring Break

3/23 **Motherhood:** Begin *Paradise*

3/25 “

3/27 “

3/30 “

4/1 “

4/3 “

4/6 **Community:** Mohanty essay, Walker story (WO)

4/8 Begin *Persepolis*

4/10 “

4/13 “

4/15 Rough Draft Day

4/17 Film

4/20 Film, **Paper Two Due**

4/22 **Bodies:** Begin *Where We Once Belonged*

4/24 “

4/27 “

4/29 **World In Motion:** Begin *The Last Communist Virgin*

5/1 “

5/4 “

5/6 “

5/8 Wrap-up

Final: Section One: Monday, May 11, 10 am

Section Two: Wednesday, May 13, 10 am