

**Women and Literature
English and Women's Studies 301W-IO1
(GenEd and Multicultural)
Western Illinois University
Spring 2017**

Instructor: Dr. Marjorie Allison

Office: Simpkins 115/16

Office Hours: MW 9:30-11, F 10-11; and by appt.

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Office Phone: 298-1103 (this is the main office and is for messages only)

Availability: I will generally be available electronically Monday through Friday during regular business hours and will return your e-mail within 24 hours, barring illness. Please expect that messages or assignments posted after the end of the business day on Friday will take until the following Monday for a response.

Office Hours: During online office hours, I am available via e-mail (MC-Allison@wiu.edu). There are times I will be moving around the building, but I will remain online for email questions. It is easiest to actually talk with me via phone by setting up a time in advance. Email to set up a time and I will happily call you back (there is not an office phone in my office). I also am available at many other times in my office or online during normal business hours, Monday through Friday.

Course Description:

As an advanced Women's Studies course in combination with a literature course, this class proceeds with the following assumptions: sexism exists; men and women are treated differently based on gender in societies around the globe; women are discriminated against in the United States as well as elsewhere in the global North and South; and literature helps shape and reveal these aspects of our lives. Because this is both a Women's Studies and an English Literature course, we will use feminist methodologies and close textual readings to analyze the texts we study. We will focus on women's writing across cultures, time, and space. We will read texts from a range of genres, and we will read authors from a variety of time periods, class and educational backgrounds, and ethnicities. The readings are organized around themes of Beginnings, Girlhood, Community Identity, Class, Land, Motherhood, and Bodies.

Course Goals:

Students will become familiar with a range of women writers from diverse time periods, class backgrounds, and ethnicities.

Students will acquire appropriate critical frameworks (i.e., feminist, womanist, close reading) for interpreting these texts.

Students will analyze the conventions and styles of women writers.

Students will write about women's literature with greater facility and assess it with feminist and other text-specific standards.

Students will improve their critical thinking skills with regard to rhetorics of gender, sex, and sexual orientation.

Required Texts:

Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home*. Boston: Mariner Books, 2007. ISBN: 9780618871711.

Bronte, Anne. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Penguin, 1996. ISBN: 9780140434743.

Castillo, Ana. *So Far From God*. Norton, 2005. ISBN: 9780393326932.

Figiel, Sia. *Where We Once Belonged*. Kaya Press, 1996. ISBN: 9781885030276.

Morrison, Toni. *Paradise*. Penguin, 1997. ISBN: 9780452280397.

Satrapa, Marjane, *Persepolis 2: The Story of a Return*, Pantheon, 2005, ISBN: 0375714669.

Savageau, Cheryl, *Mother/Land*, Folio Pub. Corp, 2006, ISBN: 1844712699.

There are also required texts posted in a "Reserves" file within the course materials at WesternOnline.

Recommended Text:

Cuddon, J.A. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*.

New York: Penguin, 2000. ISBN: 9780140513639.

If you are not an English major, you will find this text indispensable. If you are an English major, you should own this text, as you will find it an outstanding reference work.

Course Requirements:

Analysis Paper #1 15%

Analysis Paper #2 15%

Analysis Paper #3 20%

Online Discussion 40%

Quizzes 10%

There are three analysis papers, which will be critical essays on one of the texts from class. I will provide paper topics with sample arguments for these papers; you may choose an alternative topic with my approval. We will also conduct asynchronous online discussions through message threads for each unit. **(Your initial post for discussions should be about 250-600 words—other posts, as you respond to comments others make, may be shorter but should be more than "I agree/disagree." The discussion posts are to be just that—part of a discussion).** **To be successful in the class**

and in the discussions, you need to post multiple times for each board (again, to make the boards real discussion boards). The quizzes are factual; they are designed to ensure you are doing the reading.

Instructions on How to Post Your Discussions and Papers:

For discussions, please type your discussion comments directly into WesternOnline (or write a Word file and cut and paste those comments into WesternOnline). In the past, the occasional student would have problems with her computer crashing and losing her discussion posting, so consider writing your file in a word processing program, but do not attach the file to the WesternOnline discussion thread (only cut and paste the text). This will prevent needless clutter on everyone's desktops.

For papers, please save your final version as a Word document and attach the file to the link in the Drop Box for the Analysis Paper in question. (Every member of this class is using a different computer with software of varying ages, and this practice will ensure that I can read your paper.)

Rewrites:

You will be allowed to rewrite one of the first two papers of the semester if you so choose. If you complete all of the steps of the rewrite assignment, you may earn up to an additional 15 points for the final grade on that one paper. See the "Rewrite Policy" found in the file called "Sample Papers, Revision Guidelines, Tips for Writing."

Participation:

Regular participation is the key to success in this class. If you anticipate being unable to access the course on a daily basis during the semester, I strongly caution you against taking this class.

Netiquette:

This course covers controversial materials, and it also engages feminist methodologies because it is a Women's Studies course. Please show your best side to your peers in your online discussions by following basic rules of Netiquette: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>. Always remember with written communication, it can be difficult to read tone. Saying that someone's point is "ridiculous" is not acceptable. You can certainly say "I do not agree...I do not understand..." etc. But always be aware of tone and the fact we do not have body language and vocal inflections to aid us in communicating with one another. If at any point in the semester you have concerns about how discussions are being conducted online, whether you feel threatened, offended, or just plain uncomfortable, please contact me, so that we can discuss the issue and take action if appropriate. I will vouchsafe your confidentiality and not share your identity information with others in the course. Similarly, I ask that all students keep the discussions from this class **within** the class itself, especially postings from other students that are not anonymous.

Anonymity:

You will note that your identities **can** be set to anonymous for the first two discussions of the semester. I have set the program that way, but **you must individually select that option** when posting for it to show as anonymous. I do this to help everyone feel comfortable in initial discussions and to lay the groundwork for a course is a safe space for sharing thoughts, impressions, and controversial ideas with the class as a whole. Those first two discussion boards are ungraded. After that, the discussion boards are graded.

Reading/Discussing:

You must do the discussion module's reading assignment in order to contribute meaningfully to class discussion, and your discussion grade is based entirely upon your contribution to discussions. Be sure to keep up with each module's reading assignment and log onto the course discussions with at least one discovery and one question regarding the texts. And, perhaps most importantly, remember this is a discussion – not statements sent out into cyber space to be left there unanswered and unconsidered. Just as in a class discussion, consider the other points people are making, and consider your own response to the text at hand – what about the text makes you respond as you do? What about your own experiences influences that response? Try to be specific and concrete in directing others to particular moments in the text(s) that you found thought-provoking, intriguing, unclear, etc. Why/how are those important moments to consider? You do not have to have answers – questions and comments are fine and may well provoke others to suggest their own answers to the questions raised.

NOTE: By its nature, this is not a lecture-based course. The onus is on you to do the reading, because we will spend all class time discussing the reading online. Failing to do the reading is equivalent to failing the course. The reading load will fluctuate throughout the course with some modules' reading assignments being of greater length than others; however, you will find that most of the modules' reading loads are quite reasonable if you work on them regularly. I suggest that you print a copy of the electronic readings and underline important passages, in order to better contribute to online discussion. All of the course's online articles will be in WesternOnline in a folder marked "Reserves" that is found within the course content for Eng/Ws 301.

Grades: Grades 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

Incompletes will only be given in accordance with the WIU Policy on Grades and Class Attendance which requires that the student be unable to complete all assignments

within the limits of the term owing to circumstances beyond his or her control (i.e., illness).

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty requires that you only hand in work that is entirely the fruit of your own efforts and that has been created expressly for this class. You should work at all times to avoid plagiarizing other scholars' work: University policy requires that I report any suspected cases of plagiarism, so be relentless in accurately documenting your citations of others' work. Please see the following link regarding the Policy on Academic Integrity:
<http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

Harassment: Students are expected to follow WIU's Anti-Harassment Policy. I expect you to treat all classmates with respect, regardless of how they may differ from you in race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, language, or other characteristics. Please recognize that given the sensitive nature of our class materials, it is especially important to communicate with each other in a tolerant, receptive fashion. Please see the following website for more information on WIU policies regarding harassment: <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/harassment.php>

University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php. If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

Student Behavior: Students are expected to behave with respect toward the course materials, their fellow students, and the instructor. Any disruptive behavior that interferes with teaching and/or learning will not be tolerated and can result in a modified class discussion arrangement or expulsion from the class. Continued disruptive behavior on the part of a student can result in an "F" in the course. Please see the web address for student rights and responsibilities:
<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>

Please understand that as this is an online course we must make concerted efforts to communicate clearly and respectfully with each other. This course will stimulate controversial discussions; however, please be kind and considerate of your classmates and myself in the interest of maintaining a welcoming classroom atmosphere. Thanks.

Course Schedule:

Module #1: Beginnings

Read: bell hooks – *feminism is for everybody* (WesternOnline-“Reserves” file); Virginia Woolf, from *A Room of One’s Own*, “Shakespeare’s Sister” (WesternOnline-“Reserves” file), and **Watch:** “We should all be feminists: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie” TedxEuston Talk:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc

Read: *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

Discussion #1: Defining Controversy (closes at 11 pm on 1/20).

Discussion #2: Finding a Female Tradition/Women and Literary Production (closes at 11 pm on 1/27).

Discussion #3: *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (closes at 11 pm on 2/3).

Quiz #1: all readings of Module #1

NOTE: Module #1 must be finished by 2/3. The last discussion and the quiz will no longer be available after 11 pm on 2/3.

Module #2: Girlhood

Read: Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*; *The Sweeter Side of R. Crumb* (WesternOnline-“Reserves” file); Walker essay (WesternOnline- “Reserves” file); McCarthy essay (WesternOnline-“Reserves” file)

Discussion #1: Memoir and Fiction/Representing Girlhood – Bechdel and Crumb (closes at 11 pm on 2/10).

Discussion #2: *Fun Home* (closes at 11 pm on 2/17).

Quiz #2: all readings of Module #2 (closes at 11 pm on 2/17).

NOTE: Module #2 must be finished by 2/17. The last discussion and the quiz will no longer be available after 11 pm on 2/17.

Analysis Paper #1: ANALYSIS PAPER #1 DUE BY 2/22 AT 5PM. PLEASE POST TO ANALYSIS PAPER #1 DROP BOX. SAVE THE FILE AS A WORD DOCUMENT.

Module #3: Community Identity

Read: Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis 2: The Story of a Return*, Mohanty essay (WesternOnline –“Reserves” file)

Discussion #1: Defining Others/Self (closes at 11 pm on 2/24).

Discussion #2: *Persepolis* (closes at 11 pm on 3/3).

Quiz #3: all readings of Module #3 (closes at 11 pm on 3/3).

NOTE: Module #3 must be finished by 3/3. The last discussion and the quiz will no longer be available after 11 pm on 3/3.

Module #4: Motherhood

Read: Toni Morrison, *Paradise*

Discussion #1: *Paradise* – first half of the book (closes at 11 pm on 3/10).

Discussion #2: *Paradise* – second half of the book (closes at 11 pm on 3/24).

Quiz #4: all readings of Module #4 (closes at 11 pm on 3/24).

NOTE: Module #4 must be finished by 3/24. Discussion and quizzes will no longer be available after 11 pm on 3/24.

Analysis Paper #2: ANALYSIS PAPER #2 DUE BY (3/29) AT 5PM. PLEASE POST TO ANALYSIS PAPER #2 DROP BOX. SAVE THE FILE AS A WORD DOCUMENT.

Module #5: Class

Read: Ana Castillo, *So Far From God*; McDaniel and Orr essays/stories (WesternOnline-“Reserves” file)

Discussion #1: Class and Gender (closes at 11 pm on 3/31).

Discussion #2: *So Far From God* (closes at 11 pm on 4/7).

Quiz #5: all readings of Module #5 (closes at 11 pm on 4/7).

NOTE: Module #5 must be finished by 4/7. The last discussion and the quiz will no longer be available after 11 pm on 4/7.

Module #6: Land

Read: Cheryl Savageau, *Mother/Land*, all of book; Paula Gunn Allen and Harjo (WesternOnline-“Reserves” file)

Discussion #1: Savageau (closes at 11 pm on 4/14).

Discussion #2: Harjo and Allen (closes at 11 pm on 4/21).

Quiz #6: all readings of Module #6 (closes at 11 pm on 4/21).

NOTE: Module #6 must be finished by 4/21. The last discussion and the quiz will no longer be available after 11 pm on 4/21.

Analysis Paper #3: ANALYSIS PAPER #3 DUE BY (4/26) AT 5PM. PLEASE POST TO ANALYSIS PAPER #3 DROP BOX. SAVE THE FILE AS A WORD DOCUMENT.

Module #7: Bodies

Read: Figiel *Where We Once Belonged*; Diablo Cody, *Candy Girl* (WesternOnline-“Reserves” file); current issue of *Cosmopolitan* or other women’s magazine of your choice

Discussion #1: Representations of the Body (closes at 11 pm on 4/28).

Discussion #2: *Where We Once Belonged* (closes at 11 pm on 5/2).

Quiz #7: all readings of Module #7 (closes at 11 pm on 5/2).

NOTE: Module #7 must be finished by 5/2. The last discussion and the quiz will no longer be available after 11 pm on 5/2.

Course Wrap-Up

NOTE: Course Wrap-Up must be finished by 5/10. The assignment will no longer be available after 11 pm on 5/10.

Course Evaluations: Please be sure to complete the course evaluations in the Course Wrap-Up folder. Your numerical feedback as well as written feedback via e-mail and discussion postings is invaluable in the improvement of this course.