

Fayetteville State University  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Department of English  
English534-01: Women and Literature  
Fall 2011

## I. Locator Information

Instructor: Dr. Brenda Mann Hammack  
English 534-01: Women and Literature  
Semester Credit Hours: 3

Office Location: Butler 131  
Office hours: 11:30-12:30 T & Th;  
5-6 T & Th; 2-6 W; and by appointment

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**FSU Policy on Electronic Mail:** Fayetteville State University provides to each student, free of charge, an electronic mail account ([username@uncfsu.edu](mailto:username@uncfsu.edu)) that is easily accessible via the Internet. The university has established FSU email as the primary mode of correspondence between university officials and enrolled students. Inquiries and requests from students pertaining to academic records, grades, bills, financial aid, and other matters of a confidential nature must be submitted via FSU email. Inquiries or requests from personal email accounts are not assured a response. The university maintains open-use computer laboratories throughout the campus that can be used to access electronic mail. Rules and regulations governing the use of FSU email may be found at <http://www.uncfsu.edu/PDFs/EmailPolicyFinal.pdf>

## II. Course Description

This course surveys many of the most important literary texts written by women. The course explores and analyzes the cultural assumptions embedded in literature about women written by men and women. The course examines the social, political, ideological, and economic matrices of both the production and readership of literature. It gives special attention to women's revaluations and revisions of those matrices. The course discusses the varieties of contemporary feminist theory and criticism. The course also applies feminist contributions to the more important contemporary developments in literary theory and criticism: reader-response theory, structuralism and deconstruction, the new historicism, and the debate over canon formation.

**III. Disabled Student Services:** In accordance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA) of 1990, if you have a disability or think you have a disability to please contact the Center for Personal Development in the Spaulding Building, Room 155 (1<sup>st</sup> Floor); 910-672-1203.

#### IV. Texts

##### Books

- Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*. Anchor, 1998. 038549081X.
- Byatt, A.S. *Angels & Insects: Two Novellas*. Random House, 1992. 9780679751342
- Carter, Angela. *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*. Penguin Books, 1990. 014017821X.
- Duffy, Carol Ann. *The World's Wife: Poems*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999. 057119995X.
- Duras, Marguerite. *The Lover*. Pantheon, 1998. 978037570052.
- Durrow, Heidi W. *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*. Algonquin Books, 2011. 9781616200152
- Griffiths, Linda. *Age of Arousal*. Coach House Press, 2007. 1552451909
- Hulme, Keri. *The Bone People: A Novel*. Penguin Books, 1983. 9780143116455.
- Marryat, Florence. *The Blood of the Vampire*. Valancourt Books, 2009. 1934555657.
- Trethewey, Natasha. *Domestic Work: Poems*. Saint Paul: Graywolf Press, 2000. 9781555973094.

##### Film

- Hadzihalilovic, Lucile, dir. *Innocence*. Home Vision, 2007.
- Tomm Moore and Nora Twomey, dir. *The Secret of Kells*. New Video Group, 2007.

#### V. Student Learning Outcomes

- 1) Employ the academic conventions and protocols salient to their projects.
- 2) Critique the existing scholarship on the subject matter of the course.
- 3) Apply critical concepts to primary texts.
- 4) Execute a research-based project of potentially publishable quality appropriate to the subject matter of the course.

#### VI. Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

The essays, quizzes, and oral presentation will receive letter grades: A=4.0; B=3.0; C=2.0; D=1.0; F=0. Freewrites and homework will receive softer grades (check plus; check; check minus), which will be averaged together at the end of the semester to become a cumulative letter grade (with improvement over the course of the semester being recognized).

The following components will contribute to a percentage of the overall grade.

Attendance/participation 15%.

Freewrites 15%

Two brief (minimum length: 4 pages) response essays to Assigned Texts

with informal oral presentations 10% each

Final Paper (minimum length: 10 pages) with brief oral presentation 20%

Midterm and Final Essay Exams 15% each

### *Attendance/Participation*

If you are not present, you cannot participate. Since this class will be discussion- rather than lecture-oriented, you must come to class prepared to interact with classmates. Participation should be active rather than passive. Sitting in a chair in my classroom once week is not enough to earn you an “A.” Although some students will be scheduled to begin discussion by sharing reflections from response papers they write on assigned texts, all students should be prepared to interact in conversations about the reading. Controversial subject matter may be addressed. Indeed, lively debate is encouraged so long as dialog remains constructive. (In other words, rudeness will not be tolerated.)

If absences are unavoidable, you will be expected to submit make-up free writes to demonstrate your completion of assigned readings. Absence is not an excuse for not being informed. It’s your responsibility to contact the instructor to make up in-class assignments. If you miss class on a film day, you will be expected to watch the film outside of class. However, you may have difficulty locating *Innocence* if you do not have access to Netflix. Tardiness will also impact the participation grade. Do not expect full credit for attendance if you don’t plan on attending class during the entire period in which it is scheduled to meet.

### *Free writes*

In-class free writes will enable students to collect their thoughts prior to discussion of an assigned reading. They will usually be distributed at the beginnings of classes (prior to the oral presentations), and, therefore, will be relatively brief. I recommend that you review your notes on texts immediately before class so that you won’t be trying to re-read portions of the book in order to compose. I do recommend that you bring your primary texts to class since you will be allowed to use your books (unless I specify otherwise). You’ll be at an extreme disadvantage if you don’t have a photographic memory! I prefer not to loan my copy because I tend to write copious notes that could influence the free writer. Also, if you happen to be late to class, you should not expect the rest of the class to wait while you finish composing.

### *Two Short Response Essays (3-4 pp.)*

During the first class meeting, a sign-up sheet will circulate. Students will be expected to write short response essays on two of the semester’s assigned books. These papers should involve close reading of the primary text—and should focus on a relevant theme. We will usually have at least two presenters per evening. Ideally, those presenters should talk to each other before class to ensure that they are not covering identical material. For example, students presenting on poetry collections or short story collections may choose to focus on different poems or stories in their collections. Students are also encouraged to explore cultural history as it is reflected in the assigned texts. However, research should not dominate these essays. MLA documentation is required for primary and secondary texts. (Please talk to me if you are unfamiliar with this format.) Here are some sample topics:

Idols of Perversity in Carol Ann Duffy’s *The World’s Wife*  
Revisionist Takes on “Little Red Riding Hood” in Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber*  
The Nineteenth-Century Spiritualist Medium in A.S. Byatt’s “The Conjugal Angel”  
The Mulatto as Vampire in Florence Marryat’s *The Blood of the Vampire*  
Women, the Bible, and Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*

Once you have read your selected texts, you're bound to discover your own themes. Presenters will not be reading their entire papers to the class. Instead, they will share their interpretive argument in order to introduce angles for class conversation. I will be happy to suggest topics to presenters who need extra guidance, though I recommend that you complete the reading before you begin to worry about your topic!

#### *Final Research Paper* (minimum: 10pp.)

Although your final paper may be inspired by authors you have read during class, you will be encouraged to broaden your research parameters. For example, you may develop an interest in the female authored utopia/dystopia after reading Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. In that case, you might focus on other examples in the genre. The paper could begin with brief discussion of Atwood's book before shifting into a more focused exploration of an earlier female-centered utopia (possibly, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*). Whatever your angle, the subject matter should be relevant to our class work over the course of the semester. I do expect consultation with secondary sources, though you should not allow other voices to control your argument. Original insights are expected. More details will be provided at a later date.

#### *Midterm and Final Exams*

Both exams will be completed outside class. Students will be asked to compose mini-essays in response to prompts. Although primary texts (the assigned texts) must be discussed in detail, students will be expected to avoid secondary sources (other writers' analysis of the primary texts). Documentation will be required for quotation and paraphrase of primary work. My prompts will be grounded in ideas we have explored in class discussion. Your responses should demonstrate your comprehension of cultural and theoretical concepts, but should also reveal original insights. (My prompts will be designed to help students prepare for the kinds of questions they can expect to see on MA comprehensive exams.)

#### *Academic Integrity*

By the time you are in graduate school, you should certainly be aware of the distinctions between paraphrasing and plagiarizing. However, some students may feel less confident of their handling of the documentation format. If you have any questions, you should ask me before submitting work as your own. Plagiarized papers (whether they are submitted as drafts or as final products) will result in automatic "F's."

#### *Other Notes on Written Work:*

All essays should be typed and double-spaced. Please use a 10, 11, or 12 point font size.

Lateness will result in lowered grades. A "B" will become a "B-" if the essay is one day late, a "C+" if it is two days late--and so on. Short extensions *may* be granted if the student contacts the professor in advance of the due date; however, late papers will not be accepted on a consistent basis. I will not accept multiple late assignments at the same time—especially not at the end of the semester.

Ideally, all materials should be submitted to the instructor in person. If you choose to send work via E-mail, you should verify my receipt of your material (especially if you are leaving the area for vacation). Likewise, if you leave papers in my English department mailbox or if you slip them under my door, you should also verify receipt before you leave campus.

#### **FSU Policy on Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom**

The *Code of the University of North Carolina* (of which FSU is a constituent institution) and the *FSU Code of Student Conduct* affirm that all students have the right to receive instruction without interference from other students who disrupt classes.

FSU Core Curriculum Learning Outcome under Ethics and Civic Engagement (6.03): All students will “prepare themselves for responsible citizenship by fulfilling roles and responsibilities associated with membership in various organizations.” Each classroom is a mini-community. Students learn and demonstrate responsible citizenship by abiding by the rules of classroom behavior and respecting the rights all members of the class.

The FSU Policy on Disruptive Behavior (see FSU website for complete policy) identifies the following behaviors as disruptive:

1. Failure to respect the rights of other students to express their viewpoints by behaviors such as repeatedly interrupting others while they speak, using profanity and/or disrespectful names or labels for others, ridiculing others for their viewpoints, and other similar behaviors;
2. Excessive talking to other students while the faculty member or other students are presenting information or expressing their viewpoints.
3. Use of cell phones and other electronic devices
4. Overt inattentiveness (sleeping, reading newspapers)
5. Eating in class (except as permitted by the faculty member)
6. Threats or statements that jeopardize the safety of the student and others
7. Failure to follow reasonable requests of faculty members
8. Entering class late or leaving class early on regular basis
9. Others as specified by the instructor.

The instructor may take the following actions in response to disruptive behavior. Students should recognize that refusing to comply with reasonable requests from the faculty member is another incidence of disruptive behavior.

1. Direct student to cease disruptive behavior.
2. Direct student to change seating locations.
3. Require student to have individual conference with faculty member. At his meeting the faculty member will explain the consequences of continued disruptive behavior.
4. Dismiss class for the remainder of the period. (Must be reported to department chair.)
5. Lower the student’s final exam by a maximum of one-letter grade.
6. File a complaint with the Dean of Students for more severe disciplinary action.

Students who believe the faculty member has unfairly applied the policy to them may make an appeal with the faculty member’s department chair.

## **VII. Academic Support Resources.**

Students will be expected to access blackboard for various supplemental guidelines on research and documentation. External links to websites will be directly related to homework assignments. Backup copies of the syllabus and other handouts will also be available at this site.

Students will also be encouraged to use Smarthinking and Criterion tutoring services as well as to visit the Writing Center in the basement of the Helen T. Chick Building.

### VIII. Course Outline (Reading and Assignment Schedule)

Note: Be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for each date on the schedule below.

August

Th 18: Discuss syllabus. Sign up for brief response essays and oral presentations.

Th 25: Griffiths *Age of Arousal*

September

Th 1: Duras *The Lover*

Th 8: Duffy *The World's Wife: Poems*

Th 15: Carter *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*

Th 22: Marryat *The Blood of the Vampire*

Th 29: Byatt "Morpho Eugenia" in *Angels & Insects* Midterm exam distributed.

October

Th 6: Midterm exam due. Watch *Innocence*.

Th 13: Byatt "The Conjugal Angel" in *Angels & Insects*

Th 20: Hulme *The Bone People*

Th 27: Hulme *The Bone People*

November

Th 3: Durrow *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*

Th 10: Trethewey *Domestic Work*

Th 17: Atwood *The Handmaid's Tale* Final Exam distributed.

Th 24: Thanksgiving Break. No Class.

December

Th 1: Final Exam due. Watch *The Secret of Kells*.

Th 8: Oral Presentations. Final Papers due for entire class.

## IX. Teaching Strategies

This class will be discussion-oriented with lecture interspersed. Graduate students are eligible for Writing Center and computer assisted tutoring. If you are unfamiliar with MLA documentation, possibly because you received your Bachelor's degree in a subject other than English literature or because your earlier studies were in another country that did not employ the same documentation format, you may need guidance. The course will involve intensive writing and reading both in and out of the classroom.

## X. Bibliography

- Alfer, Alexa and Michael J. Noble, eds. *Essays on the Fiction of A.S. Byatt: Imagining the Real*. New York: Greenwood Press, 2001.
- Andermahr, Sonya, Terry Lovell, and Carol Wolkowitz, eds. *A Glossary of Feminist Theory*. London: Arnold, 2000.
- Atwood, Margaret. *In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination*. New York, Random House, 2011. Forthcoming in October.
- Bacchilega, Christina. *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.
- Benson, Stephen, ed. *Contemporary Fiction and the Fairy Tale*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008.
- Bobby, Susan Redington and Kate Bernheimer, eds. *Fairy Tales Reimagined: Essays on New Retellings*. Jefferson, North Carolina: Macfarland, 2009.
- Brody, Jennifer DeVere. *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity, and Victorian Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Code, Lorraine, ed. *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Cohen, Susan D. *Women and Discourse in the Fiction of Marguerite Duras: Love, Legends, Language*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Dijkstra, Bram. *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Faderman, Lillian. *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*. New York: Harper, 1998.
- Fraser, Wayne. *The Dominion of Women: The Personal and the Political in Canadian Women's Literature*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1991.
- Freedman, Estelle. *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2003.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, eds. *Feminist Literary Theory and Criticism: A Norton Reader*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.
- Gissing, George and Arlene Young. *The Odd Women*. Ontario: Broadview Press, 1998.
- Goldsmith, Barbara. *Other Powers: the Age of Suffrage, Spiritualism, and the Scandalous Victoria Woodhull*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1999.
- Haase, Donald, ed. *Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004.
- Hammack, Brenda Mann. "Florence Marryat's Female Vampire and the Scientizing of Hybridity." *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 48.4 (Autumn 2008): 885-896.
- Henninger, Katherine Renee. *Ordering the Façade: Photography and Contemporary Southern Women's Writing*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Hill, Bridget. *Women Alone: Spinsters in Britain, 1660-1850*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Jeffreys, Sheila. *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality, 1880-1930*. Boston:

- Pandora, 1985.
- Jose, Nicholas, ed. *The Literature of Australia: an Anthology*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009.
- Kahane, Claire. *Passions of Voice: Hysteria, Narrative, and the Figure of the Speaking Woman, 1850-1915*. Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- Knoepfmacher, U.C. and Logan D. Browning, eds. *Victorian Hybridities: Cultural Anxiety and Formal Innovation*. Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.
- Knudson, Eva Rask. *The Circle & the Spiral: A Study of Australian Aboriginal and New Zealand Maori Literature*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004.
- Little, Judith A. *Feminist Philosophy and Science Fiction: Utopias and Dystopias*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007.
- Malchow, H. *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century England*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Morgan, Sue. *The Feminist History Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Nelson, Carolyn Christensen. *A New Woman Reader: Fiction, Articles, Drama of the 1890s*. Ontario: Broadview Press, 2001.
- Owen, Alex. *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Pearsall, Ronald. *Table-Rappers: the Victorians and the Occult*. Charleston: The History Press, 2004.
- Price, Janet and Margrit Shildrick, eds. *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Roemer, Daniel M. and Christina Bacchilega, eds. *Angela Carter and the Fairy Tale*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001.
- Schafer, Kay. *Women and the Bush: Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Schönpflug, Karin. *Feminism, Economics, and Utopia: Time Traveling through Paradigms*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Seller, Susan. *Myth and Fairy Tale in Contemporary Women's Fiction*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.
- Sharpless, Rebecca. *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens: Domestic Workers in the South, 1860-1960*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carol. *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Sullivan, Rosemary. *Oxford Book of Stories by Canadian Women in English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Thornham, Sue, ed. *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*. Washington Square, New York: New York University Press, 1999.
- Tong, Rosemarie. *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2008.
- Webby, Elizabeth, ed. *The Cambridge Companion the Australian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
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