

**Women's Studies 352**  
**WOMEN IN LITERATURE**  
**Professor Bonnie Zimmerman**

Spring 2001  
TTH 9:30-10:45  
AH 2112

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and by appointment

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Graduate Assistant: Marnie Binfield  
Office Hour: Tu 11:00 – 12:00

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Women's Studies courses in the humanities analyze the effects of gender on the imagination and on works of art such as literature. They present a perspective on culture and tradition from a group -- women -- who have spoken primarily from the margins of society. In doing so, Women's Studies offers students a more inclusive understanding of humanity and creativity. Women's Studies opens a new aperture on the world: we see the differences women have made and are making on our culture.

As a general education course in the humanities, Women in Literature intends to critically examine the cultural endeavors and legacies of women writing in the English language. Recognizing that no one group of women can speak for all, it includes as diverse a range of voices as possible. Throughout, the course emphasizes the similarities among women due to shared gender, and the differences we must recognize because of diversity in race, class, nationality, ethnicity, age, and sexual preference.

In addition, this course emphasizes reading with comprehension and appreciation, and speaking and writing with clarity and cogency. Finally, it is the instructor's sincere hope that this course deepens your appreciation of the aesthetic and intellectual pleasures provided by literature.

## **COURSE TEXTS:**

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women. Second Edition (the blue, not yellow, book)

Sandra Cisneros, The House on Mango Street

Xeroxes (X) available at KB Books, 5187 College Avenue.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Weekly Reading Quizzes (10%). Each quiz consists of five multiple choice questions designed to test basic reading comprehension. The quizzes cover the material due that week, not material previously read and discussed. Quizzes begin Week 3 (February 13), and are given at the beginning of the first class for which the readings are assigned.
2. Examination I (20%). An in-class examination consisting of short-answer questions and one integrative essay. This will cover the first three weeks of readings. In class, March 1.
3. Examination II (30%). A take-home essay covering the readings in the section BECOMING A WOMAN. You are expected to write a well-constructed 3-5 page essay--containing a thesis and supporting arguments based upon class lectures and examples from the texts—on the following question:

How do these readings chart a young girl's journey into adult womanhood? How does she learn what it means to be a woman? As you develop your answer, pay attention to both the similarities among these characters, and to the differences, particularly those of class and race. Consider also the obstacles she faces, and the support she receives. In other words, what makes it possible for her to succeed or fail in achieving her dreams. The best answer will look at general themes and issues, and also the specific literary images and motifs used by the authors.

You will receive a more detailed description later. Due April 17.

4. Examination III (40%). Part 1 is an in-class examination consisting of short-answer questions covering the final five weeks of readings. Part 2 consists of integrative questions from which you are to choose one and write a comprehensive essay based on readings you select from the whole course. In class, final exam period, May 22.

## **GRADING POLICY:**

Make-up exams and late submission of papers are not acceptable without serious and compelling reasons. Late papers will be downgraded at the discretion of the instructor. You may take an exam early by prior arrangement. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class and no-make-ups are allowed under any circumstances. Nor can you take the quiz and leave: do not ask! However, the lowest quiz score will be dropped.

The following grading scale will be used.

- A Outstanding achievement in both substance and style.
- B Superior achievement.
- C Average achievement. The most common undergraduate grade.
- D Below average achievement. Passing at a minimal level.
- F Failure to achieve class goals.

I also use plus/minus grading. The course can be taken Credit/No Credit; to receive CR a student must complete all course requirements with an average of C (not C minus). I rarely give incompletes, and you must have completed at least 75% half the course requirements with a C average.

## **A FEW ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES:**

Students are responsible for all assignments and announcements presented in class. If you arrive late, leave early, or are absent, it is your responsibility to contact another student.

Visitors are occasionally permitted, but only with prior approval by the instructor. Visitors are asked not to participate in class discussions except under special circumstances.

Please turn off all noisemakers: pagers, watches, cell phones, and so on.

I am available for consultation during scheduled office hours and by appointment. Do not hesitate to make an appointment. If you are having any difficulties at all, see me; don't wait until it's too late to improve the situation.

And, of course, mature adult behavior is expected at all times.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### WOMEN AND THE CULTURAL TRADITION

Jan. 30 – Feb. 1	<u>Introduction</u>
Feb. 6 – 8	<u>Breaking the Stereotypes</u> Truth: <u>Ain't I a Woman?</u> (370) Dickinson: <u>#613-They Shut Me Up in Prose</u> (874) <u>#657-I Dwell in Possibility</u> (875) Yamada: <u>Masks of Woman</u> (xerox) Hernandez: <u>To Other Women Who Were Ugly Once</u> (xerox) Walters: <u>A Teacher Taught Me</u> (xerox)
Feb. 13 – 15	<u>Women and Creativity</u> Bradstreet: <u>The Prologue</u> (83) Woolf: <u>A Room of One's Own [Shakespeare's Sister]</u> (1338) Das: <u>An Introduction</u> (2125) Anzaldúa: <u>Tilli, Tlapalli</u> (2271) Walker, A.: <u>In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens</u> (2315)
Feb. 20 – 22	<u>Learning to "Read" Women's Lives</u> Wheatley: <u>On Being Brought From Africa to America</u> (247) Harper: <u>Learning to Read</u> (850) Glaspell: <u>Trifles</u> (1351) Dinesen: <u>The Blank Page</u> (1391) Strongin: <u>Sayre</u> (xerox)
Feb. 27	<b>Study Session</b>
Mar. 1	<b>Exam I (in class)</b>

### BECOMING A WOMAN

Mar. 6 – 8	<u>Growing Up Female</u> Dickinson <u>#508—I'm ceded—I've stopped being Theirs</u> (869) Yamamoto <u>Seventeen Syllables</u> (1834) Lorde <u>Zami</u> (2132) Kingston <u>No Name Woman</u> (2239) Kincaid <u>Girl</u> (2335) Tapahonso <u>Blue Horses Rush In</u> (2346) Cervantes <u>For Virginia Chavez</u> (2349)
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Spring Break

Mar. 20 – 22            Bronte:                    Jane Eyre: chapters 1-22 (472)  
 Mar. 27 – 29            Bronte:                    Jane Eyre: chapters 23-38 (641)  
 Apr. 3 – 5                Cisneros:                 The House on Mango Street

#### WOMEN IN RELATIONSHIPS

Apr. 10 – 12            Between Women and Men  
 Bradstreet:             A Letter to Her Husband (89)  
 Gilman:                 The Yellow Wallpaper (1133)  
 Hurston:                Sweat (1490)  
 Atwood                  Rape Fantasies (2222)

Apr. 17                    **Exam II (take home essay due in class)**

Apr. 17 – 19            Between Women  
 Richardson:            Two Hanged Women (1200)  
 Stein:                    Ada (1299)  
 Clarke:                 Of Althea and Flaxie (X)  
 Tsui:                     A Chinese Banquet (X)  
 Moraga:                Loving in the War Years (X)

Apr. 24 – 26            Morrison:                Sula (1993)

#### FINDING OUR POWER

May 1 – 3                Working for Change  
 Truth:                    What Time of Night It Is (370)  
 Harper:                 Vashti (848)  
 LeSueur:                Annunciation (1587)  
 Rukeyser:              Käthe Kollwitz (1696)  
 Olsen:                    Tell Me a Riddle (1702)

May 8 – 10             Adventures and Visions  
 Bogan:                    Women (1570)  
 Angelou:                I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (1917)  
 LeGuin:                 Sur (1932)  
 Rich:                     Diving Into the Wreck (1960)  
 Aidoo:                  The Message (2266)  
 Anzaldúa:              To Live in the Borderland (X)

May 15                    **Study Session**

May 17                    **No class**

May 22                    **Exam III (in class final exam period)**