English 5773: Women in Literature

Instructor: Dr. Catherine Kasper
The best and quickest way to contact the instructor is via email: Catherine.Kasper@utsa.edu
Office MB 2.484 Office Hours: 4-5:30 Mondays

Content and Goals:
This course will focus on “modernist” and “postmodernist” fiction by women writers. In critically analyzing course texts, students will have the opportunity to discuss constructions of authorship, race, class, gender, feminism, genre and hybridity. This course will include several of the literary and theoretical texts that appear on the current MA reading list. Dividing the twentieth century into modernism and postmodernism, we will examine these period designations and their applications and limitations. As a class, students will have the opportunity to engage in discussions questioning the changing manifestations of literature and language. This course assumes the student has previous experience critically analyzing literature and writing argumentative essays. Students should be committed to active participation in class discussion and to rigorous, challenging reading of both texts and scholarly criticism. It is assumed that students will approach these texts using literary terminology. Students will have an opportunity to read, analyze, and to discuss these literary and theoretical works, and to present a final critical analysis research paper.

Requirements:
Graduate level class participation, two presentations and presentation short papers, one final research paper.

Texts: The following paperback texts are required for this course:
- Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, Harvest, 1989 [0156907399]
- Cherrie Moraga, *Loving in the War Years*, South End Press, 2nd expanded Ed. (2000) [978-0896086265] Or (we’ll discuss text availability first class*)

Recommended:
- Any literary terms dictionary
Grade Distribution*

Class Participation 40 points
Includes: Discussion and Attendance (20 points)
(A) One Close Reading/Critical Article presentation (10 points)
(B) One leading of discussion on course text (10 points)

Writing 60 points
Short Paper for (A) Critical Article presentation (15 points)
Outline for (B) Textual Discussion (15 points)
Final Paper (30 points)

Total: 100 points

*Please review the grading criteria. Note that ALL assignments must be submitted to the corresponding Blackboard course area (even when passing out handouts in class), and the posted Blackboard time and date will be used to determine late penalties. Assignments are downgraded one full grade for each day late. Grades cannot be reported by telephone, fax, email or by office staff. Please note: Incompletes are not offered for this course. Please contact the Professor immediately if there is an emergency. The Professor reserves the right to alter the syllabus as is necessary.

Class Discussion: As this is a graduate course for English majors, you are required to come to class with the entire book read on the first day the book is discussed. You should be ready with notes, questions for the class, highlighted quotations marked as necessary, and general reactions. You should, whenever possible, use literary terminology. You should be ready at all times to be called on, but should not rely on this. It is your responsibility to participate several times during each class discussion if you want to receive a passing grade in this course. The quality of your comments will be taken into consideration. As a graduate level course, we will discuss “adult content” contained in the literature being discussed. If you are uncomfortable with this, or if you are uncomfortable talking in class, this may not be the appropriate course for you, as this is a seminar style course built on discussion, arguments, and interactive thinking through discussion.

Assignments include:
One Critical Article Presentation (A) and Short Paper (5 pages): Please see guidelines.

One Discussion Leader Presentation (B) on Course Text and Short Paper (brief, summary outline and questions): Please see guidelines.

IMPORTANT NOTICES:

The University of Texas at San Antonio defines “scholastic dishonesty” as including but not limited to “cheating on a test or other class work, plagiarism (the appropriation of another's work in one’s own written work offered for credit), and collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing course work offered for credit).” University policy further dictates that “Should a student be accused of scholastic dishonesty, the faculty member may initiate disciplinary proceedings.” The section on plagiarism in The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th ed. provides a detailed discussion of “Forms of Plagiarism” and “Other Issues,” including the impropriety of submitting the same paper to more than one instructor or in more than one class by the same instructor. If at any time you are at all uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, please make an appointment to meet with me. Should any student intentionally plagiarize or otherwise cheat in my class, I will lobby for their expulsion from the graduate program and from the university.

Please consult the UTSA Student Code of Conduct regarding the penalties and policies on plagiarism, scholastic dishonesty, and expected conduct as well as the Blackboard requirements and code of conduct. You need to remember to participate with professionalism at all times. Links to Roadrunner and Honor Code:
www.utsa.edu/about/creed
www.utsa.edu/about/creed/honorcode.html

It is the student’s responsibility to have access to the applicable computer equipment. Computer problems will not be accepted as a reason for late assignments or problems completing course work. In the first week of class, be CERTAIN you can access Blackboard and are able to attach documents. If you have technological problems, please contact the computer and technology departments of the university. All assignments in attachments need to be posted in Mac-readable Word docs, double-spaced, in 12 point Times Roman or Garamond fonts only. Each assignment MUST have YOUR name at the top, and the course number and date, and pagination. See instructions later in syllabus for document attachments.

UTSA POLICY LINKS (You are responsible for reading these and adhering to their guidelines and rules.):
Academic dishonesty: http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html under section 203
Disability: http://www.utsa.edu/disability/students.htm

Note: University support services, including registration assistance and equipment, are available with documented disabilities through the Office of Disabled Student Services, MS 2.03.18. Students are encouraged to contact that office at 458-4157 prior to starting classes to make arrangements.

Please contact the instructor by email immediately if you have a documented emergency.
UTSA NEW GRADING SYSTEM
*Below is the chart of UTSA’s plus/minus grading system and corresponding course points:

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<th>UTSA GPA</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>6043 Points Equivalents</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>3.67</td>
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<td>3.33</td>
<td>B+</td>
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*GRADING:
(see previous page for point equivalents and UTSA grading system)

Your grade will be determined by both the timely completion of course requirements and the quality of your responses. Because your class grade is heavily dependent on class discussion, three absences is a failing grade, regardless of your performance.

“A” (91-100 points)
Regular attendance; no more than one absence; student is prepared for every class, shows that he/she has read the assignments, participates in every class in a positive and constructive way; student’s writing is virtually free of grammatical and spelling errors, is thoughtful, creative, well-researched, and interesting, and above all, original; student has turned in all required in-class writing and homework on time and student demonstrates enthusiasm in class and concern and dedication to the course itself; student is adult and responsive to others’ work and is encouraging and supportive to all other writers; student’s comments show both sensitivity and honesty; student has demonstrated complex critical thinking in both class discussion and in written work.

“B” (81-90 points)
Regular attendance; no more than two absences; student is prepared for every class, shows that he/she has read the assignments, participates in every class in a positive and constructive way; student’s writing has very few grammatical and spelling errors, is thoughtful, creative, well-researched, and interesting; student has turned in all required in-class writing and homework on time and student demonstrates enthusiasm in class and concern and dedication to the course itself; student is adult and responsive to others’ work and is encouraging and supportive to all other writers; student’s comments show both sensitivity and honesty; student has demonstrated complex critical thinking in both class discussion and in written work.

“C” (71-80 points)
Regular attendance; no more than two absences; student is prepared for every class, shows that he/she has read the assignments, participates in every class in a constructive way; student’s writing, has some grammatical errors, and lacks originality; student has turned in all required in-class writing and homework on time, and student often demonstrates enthusiasm in class; student is adult and responsive to others’ work and is encouraging and supportive to all other writers; student has demonstrated graduate level critical thinking in both class discussion and in written work.

“D” (61-70 points)
No more than two absences; student is usually prepared for class, participation is lacking in quality; student’s writing has frequent grammatical errors, lacks originality; and/or is not turned in on time; student has turned in all required in-class writing and homework, however, student fails to show interest in other’s writing or in the class materials; nevertheless, student is adult and responsive to others’ work, and student has demonstrated some critical thinking in both class discussion and in written work.

“F” (60 points and below) or any performance less than that of a “D”. More than two total absences automatically constitutes a failing grade, regardless of other grades in the course. Repeated lateness will be accrued as absences.
Books and articles should be read by first discussion. Read articles, including author bios as in the Norton anthology[NA], unless otherwise noted. Several copies of the Norton anthology are on reserve for this class in the library, along with one copy of the course texts as available.

Week One: Monday, January 23rd: Introduction to course, texts, syllabus, assignments and class policy.
   • For the following class, read Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*, and be ready to discuss.

Week Two: Monday, Jan. 30th: Historical Overview: Modernism & Postmodernism.
Discuss: *To The Lighthouse*. Sign up for presentations.
   • For the following class, read Woolf, *From a Room of One's Own* [NA: 892] and Gilbert & Gubar, from *The Madwoman in the Attic* [NA1923] and be prepared to discuss.

Week Three: Monday, Feb. 6th: Discuss Woolf and Gilbert & Gubar selections for foundation on early woman's movement, feminism.
   • For the following class, read Gertrude Stein’s novel, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and be prepared to discuss.

(B)Discussion Leader Presentation ______________________
(B)Discussion Leader Presentation ______________________

   • For the following class, read selection of Annette Kolodny, *Dancing Through the Minefield*, [NA: 2045] and Adrienne Rich, *from Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence*, [NA:1588], and be prepared to discuss.

Week Five: Monday, Feb. 20th: Discuss: Article Selections
(A)Critical Article Presentation (Kolodny)________________________
(A)Critical Article Presentation (Rich) ____________________________

Week Six: Monday, Feb. 27th: Discuss Morrison, *Song of Solomon*
(B)Discussion Leader Presentation_______________________________
(B)Discussion Leader Presentation_______________________________

   • For the following class, read Toni Morrison’s *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* and be prepared to discuss.

Week Seven: Monday, March 5th: Discuss Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*
(B)Discussion Leader Presentation_______________________________
• For the following class, after break: read Cherrie Moraga, *Loving in the War Years* and OR Clarise Lispector’s *Family Ties* and be prepared to discuss.

**Week Eight: Spring Break: March 12th-16th**

**Week Nine: Monday, March 19th:** Discuss Cherrie Moraga, *Loving in the War Years* or Clarise Lispector’s *Family Ties* depending on class agreement at start of course.
(B) Discussion Leader Presentation ____________________
(B) Discussion Leader Presentation ____________________

• For the following class, read “Chicana Feminism and Postmodernist Theory” by Paula M. L. Moya and be prepared to discuss.

**Week Ten: Monday March 26th:** Discuss Article: “Chicana Feminism and Postmodernist Theory” by Paula M. L. Moya.
(A) Critical Article Presentation ____________________
(A) Critical Article Presentation ____________________

**Week Eleven: Monday, April 2nd:** Personal Conferences

**Week Twelve: Monday, April 9th:** Discuss Judith Butler, [NA: 2536] and Wittig, *One is Not Born a Woman* [NA: 1904].
(A) Critical Article Presentation (Butler) ____________________
(A) Critical Article Presentation (Wittig)____________________

• For the following class, read Lyn Hejinian’s *My Life* AND Helene Cixous, *The Laugh of Medusa* [NA: 1938] and be prepared to discuss.

**Week Thirteen: Monday, April 16th:** Discuss Lyn Hejinian’s *My Life* and Cixous, *The Laugh of Medusa* [NA: 1938] and be prepared to discuss.
(B) Discussion Leader Presentation ____________________
(A) Critical Article Presentation (Cixous)____________________
(A) Critical Article Presentation (Cixous)____________________

• For the following class, read the Maira Kalman’s “The Principles of Uncertainty” and article on visual culture theory: WJT Mitchell, *Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture* [from *The Visual Culture Reader*, ed. by Nicholas Mirzoeff, 2nd edition in the UTSA library) and be prepared to discuss.

**Week Fourteen: Monday, April 23rd:** Maira Kalman, *The Principles of Uncertainty*, Discussion & Critical Article Discussion
(B) Discussion Leader Presentation ____________________
(A) Critical Article Presentation (Mitchell)__________________
**Week Fifteen: Monday April 30th** Final Paper Workshop. For this class, you should bring a rough draft and/or outline of your final paper to class and you should have a working thesis to be approved. You may also bring questions for us to discuss and comment on.

**Week Sixteen, Monday, May 7th: Final Exam Time Period:** Final Papers Due by the 5:00 PM Final Exam time period. This is the last day work will be accepted for this class, no exceptions.
PRESENTATION GUIDELINES
You need to sign up for one Presentation A and one Presentation B.

FOR YOUR PRESENTATIONS: You may work as a team or as individuals, but you need to coordinate your presentation so it doesn’t repeat the same material. The presentation team should decide how they split the presentation items. However, regardless of how you work as a team, each person is also individually responsible for their own, original short paper and discussion leader outline and questions.

**Presentation A: Close Reading/Critical Article**
1. You will need to demonstrate a close reading of the text. For an article, summarize the thesis argument of your article, and the critic’s main supporting evidence/points. You should type this up in outline format to present to the class with copies for everyone.
   - In your summary, be sure to include ALL of the following:
     1. What is this author’s thesis? (Use a direct quote, and then paraphrase it in your own words.) or what are the central ideas?
     2. What are some of the supporting points your author uses to argue the thesis?
     3. Then, you need discuss its application to the other works, as possible, that we’re reading in class, using SPECIFIC TEXTUAL examples.
2. Do you agree with this view of the work you’ve chosen? Why or Why not? What are the problems of the argument as you see it?
3. Using this text and its ideas, you should prepare some questions that you can use to conduct class discussion. These can emerge from the article’s reading of our text, but also can concern controversies we haven’t explored yet in class. Each team member should be able to answer questions about the text and participate in a general discussion.

**Presentation B: Discussion Leader**
1. You will need to be familiar with the entire book/reading assignment. You should provide a brief summary of key issues/plot/characters for the class. HOWEVER, since we’ve all read this work, you should use this as a reference tool and not as part of your presentation. Instead, you should prepare a number of discussion questions for the class that help generate discussion on the text. You can also invite comparisons between other texts we’ve read in class. Be sure to reference specific textual passages with citation information.

Clearly, should you miss your presentation dates, it is impossible to make this assignment up, given the course schedule. If for any reason you anticipate having to change your presentation, please switch with another student in class well ahead of time, and notify me by email.
SHORT PAPER GUIDELINES

You will turn in two short paper assignments in conjunction with your two presentations.

These assignments must be done individually for a grade.

**Short Paper (A):**
Incorporating your knowledge of the texts you’ve chosen for the presentations develop a five-page, thesis driven, argumentative paper. It can be prompted by an idea from class or from the article, but it must have specific supporting material from the texts. Clearly, it will not be highly developed or thoroughly argued. Where a typical paper has a conclusion, you should, instead, write how you would need to develop this further into a research paper, what research you may have to do, and what textual evidence you would need to explore. This is an opportunity to formulate your ideas for the final paper.

This paper is due one week AFTER you give your presentation, and must be submitted to the corresponding assignment area on Blackboard. All late papers will be automatically downgraded one full grade. Deadlines are part of each assignment and your ability to meet them does affect your final grade (see grading descriptions).

**Short Paper (B):**
This should be turned in the SAME DAY of your presentation (on Blackboard, but can also bring an additional copy to class) as Discussion Leader no later than the class time period. It should include, in typed form according to class formatting instructions:
1.) A condensed outline of the main ideas/central plot/characters of the book or article.
2.) Questions for class discussion which demonstrate an ability to critically analyze the text, compare/contrast it to other course texts, and explore the philosophical ideas in the book as well as issues of defining genre. These questions should employ, as in all your work, the correct use of literary terminology.
In your final paper, you are expected to write an argumentative, thesis-driven scholarly, critical paper of 10 to 15 pages. You may develop an argument using any of the ideas in class and refer to any of the articles read for class as you wish, giving proper credit in your paper to sources. Clearly, I am looking for your ideas, ability to understand and critically analyze course texts, as well as an ability to go beyond our class discussions ideas and analysis.

You are required to use at least two (2) works from class, but you are not required to do additional outside research beyond class readings. You may incorporate any of the class theoretical/critical/ literary texts. You may incorporate work from your short paper.

This paper must be in MLA format, typed, double-spaced, with no fonts larger than this one, and with no margins larger than 1 inch. This means correct formatting on block quotations and a works cited page at the end. If it is useful, you may use footnotes or end notes.

In general, I look for the following qualities in this order:

1. originality of thought
2. graduate level skills of critical analysis
3. graduate level skills of logic and reasoning
4. ability to argue ideas and present evidence
5. ability to discuss complex ideas and express them clearly
6. ability to decipher complex and varied texts and images
7. clarity and elegance of prose
8. correct grammar and spelling
9. ability to use correct MLA formatting

ALL PAPERS ARE DUE: Monday, May 7th by the 5:00 PM Final Exam, and must be posted on Blackboard.