



AMBROSE  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

## EN 480 Literature by Women Winter 2009

**Instructor:** Dr. Rita Dirks Heath  
**Office Hours:** 13:00-14:30 W/F, or  
by appointment  
**Class Times:** 16:00-17:15 W/F

**Office:** Room L2067  
**Office Phone:** 410-2000, ext. 5900  
**Location:** A2212  
**Email:** rdirksheath@ambrose.edu

### Course Description

This course endeavours to survey women's writing in the English language from the Middle Ages to the end of the twentieth century. The material will be read through the eyes of feminist literary theories, focusing especially on the recent decades of scholarly activity.

### Course Objectives

1. This course will introduce students to the major and hitherto-overlooked female authors and the feminist theoretical arguments which have shaped the interpretation of literature.
2. This course will give students an understanding of the various genres of women's writing and the many voices within feminist theory.

### Required Text

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*. Third Edition. Volumes 1 and 2. New York: Norton, 2007.

### Feminist Theory Suggested Reading List

Abel, Elizabeth. *Female Subjects in Black and White*

Baym, Nina. *Woman's Fiction*

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminist and the Subversion of Identity*

---. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*

Christian, Barbara. *Black Feminist Criticism*

Daly, Mary. *The Church and the Second Sex*

De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*

Donovan, Josephine. *Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism*

- Eagleton, Mary. *Feminist Literary Criticism*
- Eagleton, Mary. ed. *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*
- Fetterley, Judith. *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*
- Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schüssler. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic*
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, eds. *Feminist Literary Theory and Criticism: A Norton Reader*
- Gilmore, Leigh. *Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women's Self-Representation*
- Greer, Germaine. *The Female Eunuch*
- - -. *Slip-Shod Sibyls: Recognition, Rejection and the Woman Poet*
- Humm, Maggie. *Feminist Criticism*
- Irigaray, Luce. *Key Writings*
- Jacobus, Mary. *Reading Woman: Essays in Feminist Criticism*
- Johnson, Barbara. *The Feminist Difference*
- Kaufmann, Linda, ed. *Gender and Theory: Dialogues on Feminist Criticism*
- Loy, Mina. "Feminist Manifesto" (in anthology)
- Madsen, Deborah. *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice*
- Meese, Elizabeth A. *Crossing the Double-Cross*
- Millett, Kate. *Sexual Politics*
- Moi, Toril. *Sexual/Textual Politics*
- Morris, Pam. *Literature and Feminism*
- Nochlin, Linda. "Why Are There No Great Women Artists?"
- Poovey, Mary. *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*
- Robbins, Ruth. *Literary Feminisms*
- Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women"
- Ruthven, K.K. *Feminist Literary Studies*
- Sellers, Susan. *Feminist Criticism: Theory and Practice*
- Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of Their Own*
- Showalter, Elaine, ed. *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*
- Todd, Janet. *Feminist Literary History*
- Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth*.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (in anthology)
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*
- Woolf, Virginia. "Shakespeare's Sister" (in anthology)
- Zimmerman, Bonnie. "What Has Never Been"

### Course Schedule

January	7	Introduction to Literature by Women
	9	Introduction to Feminist Theories
	14	<b>Women and Spirituality:</b> Julian of Norwich, from <i>A Book of Showings to the anchoress Julian of Norwich</i> ; Kempe, from

- The Book of Margery Kempe*; Lead, *A Fountain of Gardens*; Rossetti, "The Convent Threshold"; Loy, "Portrait of a Nun"; Erdrich, "Saint Marie"
- 16 Response to Norwich, Kempe, Lead, Rossetti, Loy, and Erdrich
- 21 **The "Single" Woman**: Sinclair, "Where Their Fire Is Not Quenched"; Atwood, "Asparagus"; Adcock, "Miss Hamilton in London," "Against Coupling"; Tapahonso, "Leda and the Cowboy"
- 23 Response to Sinclair, Atwood, Adcock, and Tapahonso
- 28\* **Marriage**: Landon, "The Marriage Vow"; Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"; Coleridge, "Marriage"; Mew, "The Farmer's Bride"; Wickham, "Divorce"; West, "Indissoluble Matrimony"; Levertov, "Abel's Bride," "The Ache of Marriage"
- 30 Response to Landon, Gilman, Coleridge, Mew, Wickham, West, and Levertov
- February 4 **Female Sexuality**: Behn, "The Willing Mistress," "Love Armed," "The Disappointment," and "On Her Loving Two Equally"; Chopin, *The Awakening*; Dunbar-Nelson, "I Sit and Sew"; H.D., "Fragment Thirty-Six"
- 6 Response to Behn, Chopin, and H.D.
- 11 **Female Desire**: Hall, "Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself"; McCullers, "The Ballad of the Sad Café"; Beer, "Mating Calls"; Brown, "Forgiveness"
- 13 Response to Hall, McCullers, Beer, and Brown
- 25 **Gender, Race, and Ethnicity**: Truth, "Ain't I a Woman?"; Hurston, "How It Feels to Be Colored Me"; Bonner, "On Being Young—a Woman—and Colored"; Angelou, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings"; Kingston, "No Name Woman"
- 27 Response to Truth, Hurston, Bonner, Angelou, and Kingston;
- March 4 **Women, the Body, and Violence**: Barnes, "How It Feels to be Forcibly Fed"; Swenson, "Bleeding"; O'Connor, "Good Country People"; Sexton, "In Celebration of My Uterus"; Rich, "Power"; Oates, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"; Boland, "Anorexic"; Levertov, "The Mutes"
- 6 Response to Barnes, Swenson, O'Connor, Sexton, Rich, Oates, Boland, and Levertov
- 11 **The Family**: Livesay, "Green Rain"; Wright, "The Sisters"; Paley, "Enormous Changes as the Last Minute"; Plath, "Daddy"; Smith, "Papa Loves Baby"; Wakowski, "The Photos"; Mason, "Wish"
- 13 Response to Livesay, Wright, Paley, Plath, Smith, Wakowski, and Mason
- 18 **Ageing and Death**: Bishop, "Gwendolyn"; Pitter; "Old Nelly's Birthday"; Glück, "Vespers"; Lavin, "In a Café"; Kumin, "The

		Envelope”; Stone, “The Song of Absinthe Granny”; Olds, “The Mortal One”
	20	Response to Bishop, Pitter, Glück, Lavin, Kumin, Stone, and Olds
	25	<b>Women and Politics:</b> Queen Elizabeth, “Speech to the Troops at Tilbury”; Barrett Browning, “The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point,” “A Curse for a Nation”; St. Vincent Millay, “Apostrophe to Man”; Ozick “The Shawl”; Clifton, “ <i>move</i> ”
	27	Response to Queen Elizabeth, Barrett Browning, St. Vincent Millay, Ozick, and Clifton
April	1	<b>Women and Work:</b> Davis, “Life in the Iron-Mills”; Schreiner, “Woman and Labour”; Woolf, “Professions for Women”; Kincaid, “Girl”; Lorde, “Kitchen Linoleum”; Churchill, “Top Girls”
	3	Response to Davis, Schreiner, Woolf, Kincaid, Lorde, and Churchill
	8	<b>Women and Creativity:</b> Woolson, “Miss Grief”; Moore, “Poetry”; Laing, “Sonnet to a Sister in Error”; Bishop, “Gender and Art”; Sarton, “My Sisters, O My Sisters”; Marshall, “Poets in the Kitchen”; Walker, “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens”
	15	Response to Woolson, Moore, Laing, Bishop, Sarton, Marshall, and Walker; Essay due

### Course Requirements and Grading

1. Students should do all the prescribed readings before class and be prepared to participate in class discussion.
2. Assignments are due on the dates specified. Late assignments will not be accepted, unless extenuating circumstances can be shown.
3. Students may not submit work done for another class.
4. The student is responsible for all the information given in class, and also for any changes to the syllabus that are announced in class.
5. Grade distribution and assignments:

Essay 1 (2500 words)	20%
Presentation	20%
Critique	20%
Participation	40%

### Grading

96-100	A+	
91-95	A	Excellent
86-90	A-	
82-85	B+	
75-81	B	Good
72-74	B-	

68-71	C+	
63-67	C	Satisfactory
60-62	C-	
56-59	D+	
50-55	D	Minimal Pass
0-49	F	Failure

### **Important Notes**

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies of as are stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar.

The last day to enter a course without permission and/or voluntary withdrawal from a course without financial penalty is January 16, 2009.

The last day to withdraw from a course voluntarily or to change to audit without academic penalty is March 13, 2009.

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a "Course Extension." Alternative times for final examinations cannot be scheduled without prior approval. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the appropriate deadline. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control."

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.

Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.