



Spring 2016

Meeting times: M/W/F 11:00-11:55am	Instructor: Dr. Blessing x2652
Meeting location: RLC 101	E-mail: CarolBlessing@pointloma.edu
Final Exam: Monday, May 2 10:30am-1:00pm	Office: Bond Academic Center 115

PLNU Mission
To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

WELCOME TO LIT 353, WOMEN WRITERS

“Women hold up half the sky.” Chinese Proverb, quoted in The Woman Warrior, Maxine Hong Kingston

Welcome to LIT353, Women Writers. As a feminist scholar who has studied and written extensively about women writers and representations of women in literature, as well as a woman who has been on many life journeys, I am your guide and fellow-traveler in this class, not only sharing what I know but also encouraging your own analysis, insights, and journeys.

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

Considers women writers from a specific chronological period from the Middle Ages through the 20th century. The time period, themes and genres considered vary from year to year. The course focuses on questions related to gender, class, and race.

GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOME

2b. Students will understand and appreciate diverse forms of artistic expression.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Closely read and critically analyze texts in their original languages and/or in translation.
2. Recall, identify, and use fundamental concepts of literary study to read and discuss texts
3. Analyze the social, cultural, ethnic, gendered, and/or historical contexts of the works and their authors, and connect the texts with their own lives.

COURSE RATIONALE AND GOALS

This class will focus primarily on the evolution of women’s writing and the bildungsroman (coming of age story) as told by women writers, linking them to Virginia Woolf, who helped forge the way for women today to be able to write. We will be discussing the following topics throughout the course:

- How do these works use the themes of growth and journeys?
- How does feminist literary theory help us understand and analyze these works?

- Are these writers essentialist or constructivist in their views of the sexes?
- How and why does the subject matter of female bildungsroman differ from those about males?
- What do these women writers have to say about the importance of being able to tell their stories?
- What place in the literary canon do these works deserve?
- What do these works say about the authors and their worlds, and ultimately, what do they have to say to us?

REQUIRED TEXTS (in order by assignments)

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*.

Bessey, Sarah. *Jesus Feminist*.

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*.

Giovanni, Nikki. *Quilting the Black-Eyed Pea*.

Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*.

Kingston, Maxine. *The Woman Warrior*.

Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*.

Robinson, Marilyn. *Housekeeping*.

Kingsolver, Barbara. *The Bean Trees*.

Walls, Jeanette. *The Glass Castle*.

COURSE GROUND RULES

1. This is an interactive course, rather than a lecture course. We will interact with the texts and with each other. Your attendance and participation are essential. Daily work is crucial, as well as a grounding in context and critical approaches, and is reflected by the heavily weighted proportion of the Reading Journal.
2. For each class meeting, you will be expected to have read the assigned material and written your journal entry if there was one due. You also need to turn in the term paper on time, as well as to take the exams at the time specified. No late work will be accepted, except in the case of medical emergencies.
3. Because the Literature, Journalism, and Modern Language department recognizes the power of language, all public language used in this course, including written and spoken discourse, will be inclusive. This standard is outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and is the norm in university-level work.
4. Much of the work we will do in this class is cooperative, by nature of the class discussions and general feedback given to written work and/projects; thus you should think of all your writing and speaking for and in class as public, not private, discourse. By continuing in this class, you acknowledge that your work will be viewed by others in the class.
5. Your oral participation makes the class more interesting for everyone and will affect your grade.
6. No Wikipedia or similar guides are to be used for papers or used as a substitute for the reading.
7. Put away your cell phones during class—no texting, receiving texts, or phone calls during class time.

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Quizzes, homework, analyses, papers, in-class writings, and the midterm and final exams may not usually be made up—no late work is accepted, except for emergency situations. If you have an excused absence, turn in your paper early or electronically.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See Disability Resource Center for additional information.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See Academic Policies in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

The time and date of the midterm and final are firm: do not plan to be away during those dates.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Your grade for LIT 353 will be based on the following:

- Attendance, and active participation in class, quizzes, and other in-class work: 10%
- Reading journals—Combination Canvas and typed. Once a week, post a 200-250 word entry on Canvas, answering the question of the day and posing a new question for the class. Canvas Journal postings are due by 9:00pm the night before class. On the first day of each new work, you will turn in a typed summary of a book chapter, article, or essay on the writer and/or her work. This entry is to be about 250 words on an 8½" x 11" page and turned in at class. You may use a print or database source. Include a citation for your sources, in MLA format. Do not summarize Cliff's Notes (or similar works), book reviews, or student essays: 15%
- Group oral presentation (three students)—on one of the assigned writers, to be presented on the first day for each writer: 10%

Sign-up in class. The reports are to be approximately 10 minutes long and must include the following information:

- ♦ Biographical background to author
- ♦ Major works/awards of the author
- ♦ How the author's personal and historical contexts influenced this work
- ♦ Author's writing style/genre of the work
- ♦ Major critical debates about the work
- ♦ What theme/issue/question you feel is most important connected to this author's work.

These projects are to be researched using sources outside of our textbooks and must include a one-page, two-sided handout for the class on backgrounds to the author and her work. Include a Works Cited list in MLA format of at least three outside scholarly resources on the author and her work; do not use Wikipedia or similar materials. You may also use other visual aids.

- A midterm essay exam: 15%
- A final essay exam: 20 %

- Two five page papers: 15% each (30%)

PERCENT	GRADE
93-100	A
90-92	A-
88-89	B+
83-87	B
80-82	B-
78-79	C+
73-77	C
70-72	C-
68-69	D+
63-67	D
60-62	D-

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

DATE	IN CLASS COVERAGE	WORK DUE
1/12	Course Introduction; Handouts on women's writing and bildungsroman	
1/13	Virginia Woolf—Backgrounds, <i>A Room of One's Own</i> , pp. 3-59	Who is Shakespeare's sister? How effective is this portrait?
1/15	Woolf: <i>A Room of One's Own</i> , pp. 60-118	What does Woolf say about the reasons why women have not written in earlier decades?
1/18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—No Classes	
1/20	Bessey: <i>Jesus Feminist</i> , pp. 11-69	What does Bessey mean by the term "Jesus Feminist"?
1/22	Bessey: <i>Jesus Feminist</i> , pp. 70-136	How does Bessey's reading of scripture compare to yours?
1/25	Bessey: <i>Jesus Feminist</i> , pp. 138-197	What is your overall assessment of Bessey's arguments?
1/27	Sylvia Plath—Backgrounds/Poetry handouts	Read and summarize one critical article on Plath.
1/29	Plath: <i>The Bell Jar</i> , pp. 1-50	What types of women are represented by the characters?
2/1	Plath: <i>The Bell Jar</i> , pp. 51-103	How do society's views of women affect Esther?
2/3	Plath: <i>The Bell Jar</i> , pp. 104-150	Do you sympathize with or dissociate from Esther?
2/5	Plath: <i>The Bell Jar</i> , pp. 151-216	What does the title mean? Is Esther "well"?
2/8	Giovanni: <i>Quilting the Black-Eyed Pea</i> : Selections	What is the importance of history in Giovanni's poems?
2/10	Giovanni: <i>Quilting the Black-Eyed Pea</i> : Selections	What is the importance of community in Giovanni's poems?
2/12	Alice Walker: Poetry and Essay handout	Read and summarize one critical article on Alice Walker
2/15	Walker: <i>The Color Purple</i> , pp. 1-60	Why is this work written in the form of letters?
2/17	Walker: <i>The Color Purple</i> , pp. 61-121	Is this work anti-male?
2/19	Walker: <i>The Color Purple</i> , pp. 122-182	How are Nettie's and Celie's stories connected?
2/22	Walker: <i>The Color Purple</i> , pp. 183-246	What do you think of Celie's view of God?
2/24	Walker: <i>The Color Purple</i> , pp. 247-296	How does the film differ from the novel?

2/26	Maxine Hong Kingston—Backgrounds; <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , “No Name Woman”	Read and summarize one critical article on Kingston.
2/29	Kingston: <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , “White Tigers”	Explain the allegory and significance of <i>The Woman Warrior</i> —Fa Mu Lan.
3/2	Kingston: <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , “Shaman”	How is Kingston’s mother a “woman warrior”? Paper #1 DUE
3/4	Midterm Exam	Essay Exam
3/7-11	Spring Break Week—No Classes	
3/14	Kingston: <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , “At the Western Palace”	How do Kingston’s female relatives’ stories intersect hers?
3/16	Kingston: <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , “A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe”	What prejudices does the author have to deal with? How does she deal with them?
3/18	Cisneros—Backgrounds/Cisneros poetry handout	Read and summarize one critical article on Cisneros.
3/21	Cisneros: <i>The House on Mango Street</i> , pp. 3-32	What is the voice of the narrator? Why is this voice chosen?
3/23	Cisneros: <i>The House on Mango Street</i> , pp. 33-71	Is this specifically a female bildungsroman?
3/24-28	Easter Break—No Classes	
3/30	Cisneros: <i>The House on Mango Street</i> , pp. 72-110	What stories of your childhood could you tell?
4/1	Robinson: <i>Housekeeping</i> , pp. 3-59	What role does Place play in the novel?
4/4	Robinson: <i>Housekeeping</i> , pp. 60-108	How does the narrator think back through her mothers?
4/6	Robinson: <i>Housekeeping</i> , pp. 109-142	How do traditional views of “housekeeping” influence the work?
4/8	Robinson: <i>Housekeeping</i> , pp. 143-219	How do you interpret the ending of the novel?
4/11	Kingsolver: <i>The Bean Trees</i> , pp. 1-67	What role does the setting play in this novel?
4/13	Kingsolver: <i>The Bean Trees</i> , pp. 68-136	How does Kingsolver portray Nature?
4/15	Kingsolver: <i>The Bean Trees</i> , pp. 137-199	How does Taylor’s story fit the bildungsroman model?
4/18	Kingsolver: <i>The Bean Trees</i> , pp. 200-246	Discuss the view of motherhood in the novel.
4/20	Jeanette Walls: <i>The Glass Castle</i> , pp. 3-72	Read and summarize one critical article on Jeanette Walls.
4/22	Walls: <i>The Glass Castle</i> , pp. 73-148	How would you describe the narrative voice in this memoir?
4/25	Walls: <i>The Glass Castle</i> , pp. 149-213	What is Walls’ attitude toward the challenges she encounters?
4/27	Walls: <i>The Glass Castle</i> , pp. 214-288	How and why does Walls’ life differ from her brother’s?
4/29	Course Wrap-up	Paper #2 DUE
5/2	Final Exam, 10:30am-1:00pm <i>From the Schedule of Classes: “The published time for the final examination is one of the considerations when enrolling for a course. Students are expected to arrange their personal affairs to fit the examination schedule.”</i>	Essay Exam