



Spring 2014

Meeting times: M/W/F 8:30-9:20am	Instructor: Dr. Blessing x2652
Meeting location: Cabrillo 101	E-mail: CarolBlessing@pointloma.edu
Final Exam: Monday, May 5 7:30-10:00am	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 437, WOMEN WRITERS

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

Welcome to LIT437, 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. This course is a selection for the literature, English education, journalism, and writing majors, as well as the Women’s Studies minor.

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.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who complete the program will be able to:

1. Demonstrate reading practices that make connections between the literature studied and our contemporary world.
2. Identify and articulate characteristics of literary-historical periods: dates, styles, and authors.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of major literary-theoretical perspectives and terminology.
4. Articulate the difference between a traditional pedagogical and a modern linguistics notion of language.
5. Employ strong rhetorical, literary, and analytical skills in their writing.
6. Identify and evaluate effective use of higher and lower order thinking and writing skills.

CLASS LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Closely read (comprehension, analysis) and critically analyze (analysis) texts in their original languages and/or in translation.
2. Recall (knowledge), identify (knowledge), and use (application) fundamental concepts of literary study to read and discuss texts
 - a. Standard literary terminology
 - b. Modes/genres of literature
 - c. Elements of literary genres
 - d. Literary periods (dates, writers, characteristics, and important developments)
 - e. Contemporary critical approaches
 - f. Extra-literary research
3. Analyze (analysis) the social, cultural, ethnic, gendered, and/or historical contexts of the works and their authors, and connect (synthesis, evaluation) the texts with their own lives.
4. Create (synthesis, evaluation) detailed and informed textual analysis of literary works employing secondary sources and applying concepts of literary study and literary theory.

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*.

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*.

Lamott, Anne. *Travelling Mercies*.

Walls, Jeanette. *The Glass Castle*.

Kingston, Maxine. *The Woman Warrior*.

Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*.

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

Robinson, Marilyn. *Housekeeping*.

Lahari, Jhumpa. *The Interpreter of Maladies*.

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. More than five absences (1½ weeks of class) will qualify you for de-enrollment, as per the Student Handbook.
8. 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 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 DISHONESTY

Plagiarism in any form is a violation of Christian and academic values, will not be tolerated, and will at a minimum result in a failure of the assignment; it may result in failure of the course. The following is the LJML Department Policy on Plagiarism:

The Department of Literature, Journalism, and Modern Languages deems intellectual and academic integrity to be critical to academic success and personal development; therefore, any unethical practice will be detrimental to the student's academic record and moral character. Students who present the work of others, which includes but is not limited to borrowing another student's work, buying a paper, or using the thoughts or ideas of others as if their own (using information in a paper without citation), commit plagiarism. Students will be held accountable for plagiarized material whether the material was plagiarized intentionally or unintentionally. Plagiarized work will result in a failing grade for the assignment and possibly for the course. In either event, a written report will be filed with the department chair and area dean. The dean will review the report and submit it to the provost and the vice president for student development. It will then be placed in the student's academic file.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of their courses as established by the instructors, students with special needs may require academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students requesting academic accommodations must file documentation with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center contacts the student's instructors and provides written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual needs of the student. This policy assists the university in its commitment to full compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990, and ADA Amendments Act of 2008, all of which prohibit discrimination against students with special needs and guarantees all qualified students equal access to the benefits of PLNU programs and activities.

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 437 will be based on the following:

- Attendance, and active participation in class, quizzes, and other in-class work: 10%
- Reading journals—15% Combination Eclass and typed. Once a week, post a 200-250 word entry on Eclass, answering the question of the day and posing a new question for the class. Eclass 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.
- One pair oral presentation (two 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 %
- One three page paper, developing a journal entry: 10%
- One ten to twelve page academic paper, including your own analysis plus research, properly documented, ten sources minimum, MLA format: 20%

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
1/14	Course Introduction; Handouts on women's writing and bildungsroman	
1/15	Virginia Woolf—Backgrounds, <u>A Room of One's Own</u> , pp. 3-59	Who is Shakespeare's sister? How effective is this portrait?
1/17	Woolf: <u>A Room of One's Own</u> , pp. 60-118	What does Woolf say about the reasons why women have not written in earlier decades?
1/20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—No Classes	
1/22	Early Women Writers—Handouts	What arguments are presented against women's character?
1/24	Early Women Writers—Handouts	What arguments do these women make concerning the importance of women's writing?
1/27	Sylvia Plath—Backgrounds/Poetry handouts	Read and summarize one critical article on Plath.
1/29	Plath: <u>The Bell Jar</u> , pp. 1-50	What types of women are represented by the characters?
1/31	Plath: <u>The Bell Jar</u> , pp. 51-103	How do society's views of women affect Esther?
2/3	Plath: <u>The Bell Jar</u> , pp. 104-150	Do you sympathize with or dissociate from Esther?
2/5	Plath: <u>The Bell Jar</u> , pp. 151-216	What does the title mean? Is Esther "well"?
2/7	Lamott: <u>Traveling Mercies</u> , pp. 3-88	Read and summarize one critical article on Anne Lamott.
2/10	Lamott: <u>Traveling Mercies</u> , pp. 89-168	Discuss Lamott's spiritual journey.
2/12	Lamott: <u>Traveling Mercies</u> , pp. 169-272	What significant growth has Lamott experienced in the course of this memoir?
2/14	Jeanette Walls: <u>The Glass Castle</u> , pp. 3-72	Read and summarize one critical article on Jeanette Walls.
2/17	Walls: <u>The Glass Castle</u> , pp. 73-148	How would you describe the narrative voice in this memoir?
2/19	Walls: <u>The Glass Castle</u> , pp. 149-213	What is Walls' attitude toward the challenges she encounters?
2/21	Walls: <u>The Glass Castle</u> , pp. 214-288	How and why does Walls' life differ from her brother's?
2/24	Maxine Hong Kingston—Backgrounds; <u>The Woman Warrior</u> , "No Name Woman"	Read and summarize one critical article on Kingston.

2/26	Kingston: <u>The Woman Warrior</u> , “White Tigers”	Explain the allegory and significance of The Woman Warrior—Fa Mu Lan.
2/28	Kingston: <u>The Woman Warrior</u> , “Shaman”	How is Kingston’s mother a “woman warrior”?
3/3	Kingston: <u>The Woman Warrior</u> , “At the Western Palace”	How do Kingston’s female relatives’ stories intersect hers?
3/5	Kingston: <u>The Woman Warrior</u> , “A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe”	What prejudices does the author have to deal with? How does she deal with them? Three page essay DUE
3/7	Midterm Exam	
3/10-14	Spring Break Week—No Classes	
3/17	Alice Walker: Poetry and Essay handout	Read and summarize one critical article on Alice Walker
3/19	Walker: <u>The Color Purple</u> , pp. 1-60	Why is this work written in the form of letters?
3/21	Walker: <u>The Color Purple</u> , pp. 61-121	Is this work anti-male?
3/24	Walker: <u>The Color Purple</u> , pp. 122-182	How are Nettie’s and Celie’s stories connected?
3/26	Walker: <u>The Color Purple</u> , pp. 183-246	What do you think of Celie’s view of God?
3/28	Walker: <u>The Color Purple</u> , pp. 247-296	How does the film differ from the novel?
3/31	Cisneros—Backgrounds/Cisneros poetry handout	Read and summarize one critical article on Cisneros.
4/2	Cisneros: <u>The House on Mango Street</u> , pp. 3-32	What is the voice of the narrator? Why is this voice chosen?
4/4	Cisneros: <u>The House on Mango Street</u> , pp. 33-71	Is this specifically a female bildungsroman?
4/7	Cisneros: <u>The House on Mango Street</u> , pp. 72-110	What stories of your childhood could you tell?
4/9	Robinson: <u>Housekeeping</u> , pp. 3-59	What role does Place play in the novel?
4/11	Robinson: <u>Housekeeping</u> , pp. 60-108	How does the narrator think back through her mothers?
4/14	Robinson: <u>Housekeeping</u> , pp. 109-142	How do traditional views of “housekeeping” influence the work?
4/16	Robinson: <u>Housekeeping</u> , pp. 143-219	How do you interpret the ending of the novel?
4/17-21	Easter Break—No Classes	
4/23	Final paper summary presentations.	Final paper due
4/25	Lahiri: <u>The Interpreter of Maladies</u> , pp. 1-69	Read and summarize one critical article on Lahiri or her work.
4/28	Lahiri: <u>The Interpreter of Maladies</u> , pp. 83-135	How does Lahiri depict male/female relationships?
4/30	Lahiri: <u>The Interpreter of Maladies</u> , pp. 136-198	Comment on Lahiri’s portrayal of cross-cultural intersections.
5/2	Course Wrap-up	
5/5	Final Exam <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>	