

LJWL

Literature, Journalism,
Writing, and Languages



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LIT 3053: Women Writers:

Dreams and Dystopias in Written and Visual Texts

Spring 2020

Meeting location: BAC 103	Instructor: Dr. Blessing, Professor of Literature
Meeting days: M/W/F	E-mail: carolblessing@pointloma.edu
Meeting times: 8:30-9:25am (sec 1) 11:00-11:55am (sec 2)	Office: Bond Academic Center 115 Phone: (619)849-2652
Final Exam: Mon. 5/4 7:30-10:00am (sec 1) Wed. 5/6 10:30-1:00pm (sec 2)	Office Hours: MWF before or after class and by appointment (email me to set up an appt.)

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 3053, WOMEN WRITERS

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

Welcome to LIT3053, Women Writers. This course presents voices of women from various ethnicities and economic classes. The good news of the Gospel is for all people, and it is out of my own faith that I am compelled to learn from people who are not always heard. While literature classes often cover “masterpieces” by male authors, there are countless other great works by women. As a feminist scholar who has studied and written extensively about women writers and representations of women in literature from ancient through contemporary times, as well as a person who has been on many life journeys, I am your guide and co-traveler in this class, not only sharing what I know but also encouraging your own analysis, insights, and journeys. We will read carefully, critically, thoughtfully, and separately ahead of class time, and then we will join together in our classes to wrestle with the texts and learn from each other’s views, honing reading, writing, thinking, and relational skills in the process.

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

An advanced study of selected works written by women; themes and genres studied may vary. The course focuses on questions related to gender, class, and race. *Prerequisite(s):* Fulfillment of the College Composition requirement, LIT200, and Junior or Senior standing.

REQUIRED TEXTS (in order by course reading assignments)

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

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *We Should All Be Feminists*.

Butler, Octavia E. *Kindred*.

Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*.

Kingston, Maxine. *The Woman Warrior*.

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid’s Tale*.

Walls, Jeanette. *The Glass Castle*.

GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE STATEMENT

This course is one of the components of the General Education Program at Point Loma Nazarene University, in the category *Seeking Cultural Perspectives*. By including this course in a common educational experience for undergraduates, faculty support the “survey of human endeavors from a historical, cultural, linguistic and philosophical perspective, including developing critical appreciation of human expression—both artistic and literary” (Catalog 2019-20).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOs, GELOs, CLOs)

Context: Learning, Informed by our Faith in Christ ILO #1: Students will acquire knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world while developing skills and habits that foster life-long learning	
GELO 1a Written Communication: Students will be able to effectively express ideas and information to others through written communication.	
GELO 1b Oral Communication: Students will be able to effectively express ideas and information to others through oral communication.	
GELO 1c Information Literacy: Students will be able to access and cite information as well as evaluate the logic, validity, and relevance of information from a variety of sources.	
GELO 1d Critical Thinking: Students will be able to examine, critique, and synthesize information in order to arrive at reasoned conclusions.	
GELO 1e Quantitative Reasoning: Students will be able to solve problems that are quantitative in nature.	
Context: Growing, In a Christ-Centered Faith Community ILO #2: Students will develop a deeper and more informed understanding of self and others as they negotiate complex environments	
GELO 2a Students will develop an understanding of self that fosters personal wellbeing.	
GELO 2b Students will understand and appreciate diverse forms of artistic expression.	
GELO 2c Students will demonstrate an understanding of the complex issues faced by diverse groups in global and/or cross-cultural contexts.	
Context: Serving, In a Context of Christian Faith ILO #3: Students will serve locally and/or globally in vocational and social settings	
GELO 3 Students will demonstrate an understanding of Christian Scripture, Tradition, and Ethics, including engagement in acts of devotion and works of mercy.	
Course Learning Outcomes for LIT3053: Women Writers	Corresponding Assignments
CLO 1 Students will closely read and critically analyze texts. (GELO 1d, 2b, 2c)	Analyses, Quizzes, Class Work
CLO 2 Students will recall, identify, and use fundamental concepts of literary study to read texts: terms, modes/genres, element, periods (dates, writers, characteristics, developments). (GELO 1d, 2b)	Analyses, Group Presentations, Class Work, Exams
CLO 3 Students will connect the literary works with their own lives and with the social, cultural, and historical contexts of the works and their authors. (GELO 1d, 2b, 2c)	Analyses, Final Essay

COURSE RATIONALE AND GOALS

This class will focus primarily on the evolution of women’s writing, the concept of home, and the bildungsroman (coming of age story) as told by women writers, linking the works to the ideas of Virginia Woolf, who helped forge the path for contemporary women’s writing. We will be discussing the following topics throughout the course:

- How does intersectional feminism—examining issues of race, class, gender, orientation, age, disability/ability--in both the writers and the novels help us gain more insight into the works?

- How and why does the subject matter of female bildungsroman or development differ from those about males?
- What do these writers have to say about the importance of being able to tell women's stories?
- What do these works say about the authors and their worlds, and ultimately, what do they have to say to us?

COURSE GROUND RULES

1. **Bring the assigned book with you to class every day.** This is a literature course and depends upon us reading and analyzing the works. We will reference the texts frequently, reading aloud, and using them for group discussion exercises and sometimes open-book quizzes.
2. **Do your own work for every written assignment and in every quiz and exam. See the section below on Academic Honesty.**
3. **PUT AWAY YOUR CELL PHONES AND COMPUTERS DURING CLASS—NO TEXTING, RECEIVING TEXTS, CHECKING EMAIL, OR PHONE CALLS DURING CLASS TIME.**
4. Make certain you know how to access your Canvas account for the course. Email me right away if you have issues related to Canvas assignments.
5. 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 analysis assignments, quizzes, and group work.
6. For each class meeting, you will be expected to have read the assigned material and written your analysis entry if there was one due. You also need to turn in the final paper on time in both hard copy and on Canvas, as well as to take the in-class exams at the time specified. No late work will be accepted, except in the case of medical emergencies.
7. This Women Writers course covers material that may be considered controversial and may also trigger emotional responses because of its sensitive nature, as several of the texts deal with female sexual or physical abuse, which is unfortunately part of many women's experience. Students encountering issues in dealing with the readings are invited to speak with me in person.
8. Because the Literature, Journalism, Writing, and Languages 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.
9. 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.
10. No *Wikipedia*, *Sparks Notes*, or similar guides are to be used for homework or papers or used as a **substitute** for the reading.

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

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. It is important to communicate with me regarding reasons for absences and any need for clarification of assignments. I don't give make-up quizzes. If you are on a sports or debate team that requires excused absences, talk to me the first week of class.

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.

If you are not going to do your own work, you should reconsider your decision to enroll in a university.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

While all students are expected to meet the minimum standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic adjustments, modifications or auxiliary aids/services. At Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU), these students are requested to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. (DRC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). The DRC's policies and procedures for assisting such students in the development of an appropriate academic adjustment plan (AP) allows PLNU to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Section 504 (a) prohibits discrimination against students with special needs and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities. After the student files the required documentation, the DRC, in conjunction with the student, will develop an AP to meet that student's specific learning needs. The DRC will thereafter email the student's AP to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester. The AP must be implemented in all such courses.

If students do not wish to avail themselves of some or all of the elements of their AP in a particular course, it is the responsibility of those students to notify their professor in that course. PLNU highly recommends that DRC students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester about the applicability of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not desire to take advantage of some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

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.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

Public Discourse: 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. Thinking of our class work as public and shared also gives us the chance to treat one another with gentleness and compassion.

Maintaining Your Own Class Schedule through Online Registration: You will be responsible for maintaining your own class schedule. Should you need to drop this or any course, please remember to drop the course before

the drop deadline. If you need to drop a class, be sure to fill out and submit the official forms; simply ceasing to attend may result in a grade of F on your transcript.

Diversity Statement: Point Loma Nazarene University is committed to diversity in the classroom, in its publications and in its various organizations and components. Faculty and staff recognize that the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of their colleagues and students are best served through respect toward gender, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture and other personal characteristics. In addition, the department of Literature, Journalism, and Writing, and Languages is committed to taking a leadership position that calls for promoting a commitment to diversity in and out of the classroom and in the practices of writing, journalism and the study of literature.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Your grade for LIT3053 will be based upon the following:

- **Attendance, active participation, and grades in class discussions, quizzes, and other in-class work: 10% of your grade**
- **Analysis work and Article summaries—20% of your grade**

You will turn in assignments on Canvas as listed on the syllabus, following these instructions:

Analysis work: Ten Analysis Assignments: As indicated in the assignments section, post a 350 word entry on Canvas, answering the question of the day (listed on the syllabus) and posing a new question for the class. You usually have a choice each week of two or three days from which to choose. Canvas journal postings are due before class on the day of coverage. For example, if you choose to write an analysis on the reading for 2/5, on pp. 154 to 201 in *Kindred*, you would answer the question “Why does the author have Kevin time-travel with Dana?” and you would need to submit your analysis on Canvas before class on 2/5.

Format: Typed, Double-spaced, 350 words—due as indicated on the syllabus. Use this specific format; other formats will not receive credit:

There should be five indentations in each analysis—five sections consisting of: one sentence, three paragraphs, and one sentence, using the following format:

Write a thesis statement that answers the question of the day—One sentence opening—no introductory paragraph.

Use three paragraphs to support your thesis.

Write a one-sentence question on the work that you would like to ask the class.

Use the text itself—your analysis must be fully based in the literary work; all assertions must be backed up with examples from or references to the work. Use parenthetical references and list the page numbers of the text you cite.

The analysis must be your own work—not taken in part or the whole from any other sources.

Grading is based on:

1. Thoroughness of response—demonstrating good understanding of the text
2. Originality of ideas
3. Critical thought
4. Strength of thesis/argument
5. Strength of support from the text

Article Summaries: Ten Article Summaries--On the first day of each new work, as indicated on the syllabus, you will turn in a 300-word typed summary of a book chapter, article, or essay on the writer and/or her work. You may use a reliable, scholarly print or database source. Include a citation for your sources, in MLA format. Do not summarize *Spark's Notes* (or similar works), book reviews, or student essays. Here are some good databases to consult—*The Gale Literature Resource Center*, *JSTORE*, and *Academic Search Premier*. Here is a link to MLA format: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/24/>

- **Group oral presentation and handout** on one of the assigned writers, to be presented on the first day for each writer: **10% of your grade.**

Sign-up in class. The reports are to be **10 to 12 minutes long** (please time your presentation ahead of time, so that I do not need to cut you off) 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
- ♦ What theme/issue/question you feel is most important connected to this author's work.
- ♦ Major critical debates about the work—you should also lead a brief class discussion about these debates.

These presentations 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 exam: 20%**
- **A final exam: 25%**
- **A three page final paper, turned in both as a printed document in class on May 1 and posted on Canvas before class on May 1 : 15%--** The essay prompt will be given later in the course.

The following questions will be considered when assignments –analysis work, essays on exams, and the final paper--are evaluated and graded. All questions may not be relevant to each assignment.

- Does the paper respond to the prompt or question of the day?
- Does the paper make an argument? Is it clearly stated and contextualized effectively?
- Is there sufficient and relevant evidence to ground the claim?
- Does the paper effectively select and use material from the course readings to support and validate the analysis? Does it summarize, paraphrase, and quote effectively?
- Does the paper use all relevant details from the readings both to support the claim and to provide a context for the case being made? Does it ignore material that should be taken into account?
- Does the paper demonstrate an awareness of how the argument being proposed fits into the larger set of claims made about the topic in our course readings?
- Does the paper work through the complexities of the material (as opposed to oversimplifying or overgeneralizing)?
- Is the paper well-organized?
- Does it cite material from the sources using MLA documentation style?
- Are there sentence structure problems or spelling and grammatical errors that interfere with the meaning?
- An "A" essay (a 5 for the analysis work) demonstrates excellent work. It has something to say and says it well. It develops its argument clearly and consistently, demonstrating a complex understanding of the assignment, and does so using varied sentence structure. It often rises above other essays with particular instances of creative or analytical sophistication. There may be only minor and/or occasional grammatical errors.
- A "B" essay (a 4 for the analysis work) demonstrates good work. It establishes a clear claim and pursues it consistently, demonstrating a good understanding of the assignment. There may be some mechanical difficulties, but not so many as to impair the clear development of the main argument. While a "B" essay is in many ways successful, it lacks the originality and/or sophistication of an "A" essay.
- A "C" essay (a 3 for the analysis work) demonstrates adequate work. It establishes an adequate grasp of the assignment and argues a central claim. In addition, the argument may rely on unsupported generalizations or insufficiently developed ideas. It may also contain grammatical errors.
- Work that earns a grade of "D" or "F" (a 2,1, or for the analysis work) is often characterized by the following problems: it fails to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the assignment; it fails to articulate an adequate argument; and/or it contains significant grammatical problems.

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:

BRING YOUR RELEVANT BOOK WITH YOU TO EACH CLASS PERIOD: YOU MUST HAVE IT FOR CLASS DISCUSSIONS, GROUP WORK, OCCASIONAL OPEN-BOOK QUIZZES, and ORAL READINGS—

This is a literature course, a text-based class.

DATE	IN CLASS COVERAGE	WORK DUE
1/14	Course Introduction; Handouts on women's writing and bildungsroman	Analysis due this week
1/15	Virginia Woolf—Backgrounds, <i>A Room of One's Own</i> , pp. 3-40 What is Woolf trying to show through her comparison of the men's and women's colleges?	
1/17	Woolf: <i>A Room of One's Own</i> , pp. 41-57 What does Woolf's fictional example of Shakespeare's sister show about how gendered constructions limited women?	
1/20	The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—No Classes	
1/22	Woolf: <i>A Room of One's Own</i> , pp. 58-114 What does Woolf say about women writers in earlier decades?	Analysis due this week
1/24	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: <i>We Should All Be Feminists</i> —Entire book Why should we all be feminists, according to Adichie?	
1/27	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: <i>We Should All Be Feminists</i> --TEDTalk	In-class worksheet
1/29	Octavia Butler: Backgrounds; read pp. 9-51 Why does Butler use time travel in this book?	Read and summarize one critical article on Octavia Butler or <i>Kindred</i>
1/31	Butler: <i>Kindred</i> , pp. 52-107 How does the narrator allow the reader to experience slavery in the pre-Civil War American South?	
2/3	Butler: <i>Kindred</i> , pp. 108-154 What is important about Dana's relationship with Rufus?	Analysis due this week
2/5	Butler: <i>Kindred</i> , pp. 154-201 Why does the author have Kevin time-travel with Dana?	
2/7	Butler: <i>Kindred</i> , pp. 202-264 Why does Dana lose a part of herself when she returns to the present?	
2/10	Alice Walker: Backgrounds, Poetry and Essay handout	Read and summarize one critical article on Alice Walker or <i>The Color Purple</i>
2/12	Walker: <i>The Color Purple</i> , pp. 1-57 Why is this work written in the form of letters?	
2/14	Walker: <i>The Color Purple</i> , pp. 58-116 Is this work anti-male?	
2/17	Walker: <i>The Color Purple</i> , pp. 117-177 How are Nettie's and Celie's stories connected?	Analysis due this week
2/19	Walker: <i>The Color Purple</i> , pp. 178-225 What do you think of Celie's view of God?	
2/21	Walker: <i>The Color Purple</i> , pp. 226-288 How is home constructed in the ending? How has home changed over the course of the novel?	
2/24	<i>The Color Purple</i> , Movie	In-class worksheet
2/26	<i>The Color Purple</i> , Movie	In-class worksheet

2/28	Maxine Hong Kingston—Backgrounds	Read and summarize one critical article on Maxine Hong Kingston
3/2	Maxine Hong Kingston— <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , “No Name Woman”	Analysis due this week
3/4	Kingston: <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , “White Tigers” Explain the allegory and significance of The Woman Warrior—Fa Mu Lan.	
3/6	Kingston: <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , “Shaman” How is Kingston’s mother a “woman warrior”?	
3/9-13	Spring Break Week—No Classes	Keep reading
3/16	Kingston: <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , “At the Western Palace” How do Kingston’s female relatives’ stories intersect hers?	Analysis due this week
3/18	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?	
3/20	Midterm Exam	In-class Midterm Exam
3/23	Margaret Atwood: Backgrounds; read “Introduction,” pp. xiii-xix	Read and summarize one critical article on Atwood
3/25	Atwood: <i>The Handmaid’s Tale</i> , pp. 3-66 What questions does this first section of the novel raise for you?	
3/27	Atwood: <i>The Handmaid’s Tale</i> , pp. 67-122 How does this work compare with <i>Kindred</i> in depicting enslavement?	
3/30	Atwood: <i>The Handmaid’s Tale</i> , pp. 123-163 What is the protagonist’s relationship with the Commander?	Analysis due this week
4/1	Atwood: <i>The Handmaid’s Tale</i> , pp. 164-195 How do the flashbacks work in the narrative? How does the use of time compare to that in <i>Kindred</i> ?	
4/3	Atwood: <i>The Handmaid’s Tale</i> , pp. 199-250 How does the Jezebel section show how women are regarded and used?	
4/6	Atwood: <i>The Handmaid’s Tale</i> , pp. 251-311 Why does the novel include the last section, “Historical Notes,” and what effect does that have on your interpretation of the book?	Analysis due today
4/8	<i>The Handmaid’s Tale</i> : Series Clips	In-class worksheet
4/10-13	Easter Break—No Classes	Celebrate the Good News of Christ setting us free
4/15	Jeanette Walls: Backgrounds	Read and summarize one article on Jeanette Walls
4/17	Jeanette Walls: <i>The Glass Castle</i> , pp. 3-72	
4/20	Walls: <i>The Glass Castle</i> , pp. 3-72 How would you describe the opening of the book?	Analysis due this week
4/22	Walls: <i>The Glass Castle</i> , pp. 73-148 How would you describe the narrative voice in this memoir?	
4/24	Walls: <i>The Glass Castle</i> , pp. 148-213 Describe Walls’ parents’ actions in this section.	
4/27	Walls: <i>The Glass Castle</i> , pp. 214-288 How and why does Walls’ life differ from her brother’s?	Analysis due today
4/29	<i>The Glass Castle</i> : Film Clips	In-class worksheet
5/1	Course Wrap-up and review	Final Paper DUE in class and on Canvas
5/4	Final Exam, Monday, 5/4 7:30-10:00am Section One	
5/6	Final Exam, Wednesday 5/6 10:30am to 1:00pm, Section Two <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>	In-Class Final Exam

Helpful Backgrounds and Terminology for the Course

It is common to speak of “waves” or movements of Feminism—The works we read will span these movements:

First: The Suffragette Movement—1848—1960s—focusing on women’s right to vote, to be full citizens

Second: 1960s to 1980s—Aimed at changing social structures, often through legislation—National Organization of Women campaign, reproductive rights, workplace rights

Third: 1990s to early 2000s--More international in scope, it focused on individual women’s experiences; celebrated women’s sexuality

Fourth Wave: Last ten years through today, it takes the individuality of third wave feminism to a further, more nuanced, informed view and focuses on Intersectional feminism, which examines the complexities of each person; there is no singular idea of what a woman is; humans deal with multi-faceted issues of race, ethnicity, class, gender, orientation, age, education, abilities/disabilities, and so on.

For example, black writer Octavia Butler would have a very different experience of being a woman than white writer Jeanette Walls. Their histories, challenges, stories, and the stories they create will be very different. It is not just an issue of personality or writing style; it is cultural shaping, reception, and regard.

Lawyer, professor, and civil-rights advocate Kimberlé Crenshaw is credited for introducing intersectionality to feminist thought in 1989 to describe and conjoin multiple layers of discrimination; previously in the workplace, race was treated as a separate issue from sex.

Nancy J. Hirschmann, director of the Alice Paul Center for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality at the University of Pennsylvania, explains the concept in a 2017 *USA Today* article:

"Intersectional feminism is the idea that 'gender' or 'women' doesn't just refer to a single unified concept: all women have a race, whether white, black, Asian, Latina, etc. as well as a class, ethnicity, religion, etc., and their experiences as 'women' differ because of those other differences. The different aspects of our identity intersect — white women's experiences 'as women' is partly defined by their race, just like black women's experiences are, it's just that it's easier for white women to ignore their race. So if 'feminism' is supposed to represent 'women' it has to attend to those differences."

A foundational work of feminist literary criticism was Annette Kolodny's "Dancing Through the Minefield," 1980, which laid out the following tenants for the work of readers and literary critics; it is still relevant today:

Things Feminist Literary Criticism seeks to do:

1. Locate misogyny in male works
2. Find and bring to light more works by women
3. Challenge the literary canon [male literary works that are taught repeatedly]
4. Educate readers how to read works by women
5. Recognize that the canon, our values, and how we read are all socially constructed

Three issues that Feminist Criticism should address:

1. Literary history (and, with that, the historicity of literature) is a fiction. [social construction]
2. Insofar as we are taught how to read, what we engage are not texts but paradigms
3. Standards of judgment: Since the grounds upon which we assign aesthetic values to texts are never infallible, unchangeable, or universal, we must re-examine not only our aesthetics but, as well, the inherent biases and assumptions informing the critical methods which (in part) shape our aesthetic responses

Definitions and Discussions of Bildungsroman

Bildungsroman is a literary genre that was originally and for many years following only pertained to males—male writers writing about development of males. We will be asking if and how female stories differ, as well as the ways in which writers who are not European males revise the genre.

Definition from *The Oxford English Dictionary*: Bildungsroman, n.

Etymology: German, < *bildung* education + *roman* novel.

A novel that has as its main theme the formative years or spiritual education of one person (a type of novel traditional in German literature).

From *The Victorian Web*, the term as it related to Nineteenth Century Literature:

The term Bildungsroman denotes a novel of all-around self-development. Used generally, it encompasses a few similar genres: the Entwicklungsroman, a story of general growth rather than self-culture; the Erziehungsroman, which focuses on training and formal education; and the Künstlerroman, about the development of an artist.

1. A Bildungsroman is, most generally, the story of a single individual's growth and development within the context of a defined social order. The growth process, at its roots a quest story, has been described as both "an apprenticeship to life" and a "search for meaningful existence within society."
2. To spur the hero or heroine on to their journey, some form of loss or discontent must jar them at an early stage away from the home or family setting.
3. The process of maturity is long, arduous, and gradual, consisting of repeated clashes between the protagonist's needs and desires and the views and judgments enforced by an unbending social order.
4. Eventually, the spirit and values of the social order become manifest in the protagonist, who is then accommodated into society. The novel ends with an assessment by the protagonist of himself and his new place in that society.

The following excellent discussion of female bildungsroman is taken from Prof. Mitzi MacFarland's course—University of West Georgia: **Introduction: Bildungsroman**[\[1\]](#)

Women's stories have not been told. And without stories there is no articulation of experience.

Without stories a woman is lost ... She is closed in silence.—Carol Christ

Women will starve in silence until new stories are created which confer on them the power of naming themselves.—Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar

A central theme of contemporary women's fiction is the quest for authentic female self-development. This process is both environmental and psychological, and it entails coming to terms with multiple social and cultural forces, external as well as internal, that infringe upon the path toward female individuation and an understanding of the individual self. Rites of passage are depicted either as the adolescent protagonist's coming of age, or as the mature woman's awakening to the reality of her social and cultural role as a woman and her subsequent attempts to reexamine her life and shape it in accordance with her new feminist consciousness.

This process of becoming, whether it is that of the child and adolescent or the somewhat older woman, is a recurrent theme in minority women's literature, and due to this very subject matter, many of their narratives belong to the *Bildungsroman* genre, the literary form traditionally used to portray the process of self-development. It is significant that it is not solely a search for identity per se that engages women writers in general, but rather an exploration and articulation of the process leading to a purposeful awakening of the female protagonist. In the case of the child and adolescent protagonist, the emphasis is on social and environmental influences on her rite of passage, whereas narratives with a more mature protagonist tend to be more confessional in nature, emphasizing the reexamination of the past through the recollection of past experiences in order to arrive at an understanding of her female self. In both cases the emphasis is on the education of the self emerging from the interaction between the self and the world.

The path toward self-development or self-definition is in some cases portrayed as intimately connected to the process of creation; thus the act of writing or creating becomes essential to discovery of self. These particular aspects, the intersections of self-development and creativity, qualify some *Bildungsromane* as *Künstlerroman*. The latter is a form of the *Bildungsroman* that portrays the development of an individual who becomes—or is on the threshold of becoming—an artist of some kind ...