Engl 36 Syllabus 2019

English 36: Women’s Literature                                                     SP2019 online

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Office hours: Monday 11-12, and 12-5 by appointment; that is, I will generally be around all afternoon between my morning class and my evening class. This is the time I have slated to prep and read for Women’s Lit, but it’s a long stretch, so I may go take a walk, so email first. Email to set it up by 11AM, so I’ll be sure to be there for you. I can conduct these sessions via email as well. I hope you take advantage of my long Mondays!

Goal of Women’s Literature: To understand the full range of a women’s experiences from women’s points of view through literature written by women.

Secondary goal: to bring this understanding of a broad range of women’s viewpoints out into the world and to our interactions with others.

**Important Dates:**

Every Monday (except holidays): Lapp’s office hours

Some Mondays, 3:30-5:30: “Monday Meetings” aka MMs (optional films and discussions)

Every Tuesday, Saturday, Sunday by noon: due dates on the DB (Discussion Board)

Jan. 29, 7PM Forum Hall: Nikiko Masumoto, storyteller, farmer, activist (rec)

\*Mar. 7, 7PM RC cafeteria: Meg Wolitzer, author (required)

\*Apr. 4th, 7PM Forum Hall: Helena Maria Viramontes and Manuel Munoz (req)

\*if there is absolutely no way to attend the on-campus events, we will make individual arrangements based on the reason and your circumstances.

**Books and materials:**

Many of these works can be found online or checked out from the RC or county libraries.

I have two books in the bookstore that I think you’ll want to buy in hard copy because you’ll have a chance to meet the authors:

***The Wife* by Meg Wolitzer 978-0-7434-5666-1 (required),** warning: there is a recent movie of *The Wife* starring Glenn Close. While Close is magnificent, and I encourage you to watch the movie *after* you read the book, please don’t watch the movie first (and certainly don’t substitute the movie for the book!)

*The Female Persuasion* (RC’s 1Book1College read—recommended, if you haven’t read it)

**Under the Feet of Jesus by Helena Maria Viramontes 0-452-27367-0 (req)**

You may upload *Handmaid’s Tale* one or get from the library (also a good Hulu mini-series by Bruce Miller):

***HANDMAID'S TALE* by Margaret ATWOOD** ISBN: 9780385490818    (required)

***Orlando* by Virginia Woolf**—dvd acceptable (required)

The dvd of Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*is available to rent on Amazon and elsewhere. I’ll be showing it on campus for an optional Monday Meeting.

A familiarity with **Shakespeare’s *King Lear*** will help you understand my point about *A Thousand Acres* by Jane Smiley. A film version is fine.

**A THOUSAND ACRES by Jane Smiley** ISBN: 9781400033836

*Fun Home* is a graphic novel. I recommend you buy it online:

ISBN: 9780618871711      Edition: 06      Status: 06

**Title: FUN HOME: FAMILY TRAGICOMIC** by Alison Bechdel

**One free-choice book by a woman that you have not read and that I have**. See attached list—feel free to ask in case I missed a book you’ve been dying to read. (required)

VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO READ CAREFULLY ALL THE WAY THROUGH TO THE END AND ASK ABOUT IF YOU NEED CLARIFICATION—DON’T WAIT TILL LATER.

-🡪DON’T BE SHY TO ASK IF YOU’RE UNSURE ABOUT ANYTHING!

**Communicating with me:**

1. CHECK YOUR EMAIL AT LEAST ONCE A DAY. I will post lectures and discussion board forums, but I will email you readings, thought questions, clarifications, hopefully nothing trivial—I value your time.
2. I WILL CHECK MY EMAIL AND THE DB COURSE QUESTION FORUM AT 9AM. I will likely check it more frequently, but I don’t live online. Email me questions that are idiosyncratic to YOU. Course questions go on the DB.
3. MOST QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS BELONG ON THE DB. I will keep as the first pinned forum always a Course Question Forum, which I will check at least once a day at 9AM. I will answer the questions there on the forum. Don’t be shy. If you have the question, someone else probably does too. I try to be as crystal clear as possible, but my instructions will inevitably need clarification or correction. Please don’t email me, each of you, to say that Saturday is the 16th, not the 17th. Post that observation in this forum. I will apologize, and say you’re right. You can post suggestions to your classmates here as well: (eg. “Those tracking women and religion should definitely check out the last paragraph on page 96” or “I looked up ‘idiosyncratic’ and it means ‘unique or special to the individual’”)
4. COME TO MY OFFICE HOURS TO TALK. I’ve dedicated Mondays to you, and I hope to see you in CCI-212. I may call you in you’re behind.
5. COME TO OPTIONAL “MONDAY MEETINGS” (MMs). I enjoy vibrant face-to-face discussions about literature. I have some films that will help us cover a little more material in the time we have together. Some people take continuing education classes for social as well as intellectual stimulation, so I like to supplement online classes with some activities. Some people take online classes because they have crazy schedules or live too far from campus, so the MMs are optional.

**Succeeding in this class:**

1. KEEP UP WITH THE READING. Each week is based on a “lecture,” which will probably be in the form of an essay, that I will post by Monday midnight (often much earlier). The point of the lecture is to give you guided discovery questions and lead you in some of the directions *I* have gone in *my* reading of the work. THESE ARE JUST SUGGESTIONS. This is a discovery class. I want to hear *your*authentic ideas and reactions to the reading.
2. AVOID LOOKING UP OTHERS’ INTERPRETATIONS ONLINE (please read this carefully). In the past, I have even forbidden research in literature classes. Here’s the thing: I want to learn what *you*discover in this work. If everyone just goes online and parrots what some other student, or blogger, reviewer, or scholar has said about the work, there will be no new ideas in the world! That said, I like to read and think about what others have said *after*I’ve thought about what I say—that’s kind of like a discussion, isn’t it? It’s two-way and active, whereas simply reporting what you find online is one-way (receptive) and passive. So, I won’t *forbid*research, but, *even if you think you don’t understand a piece,* post your own first authentic and original response in the DB. Then go online and read what students, or bloggers, reviewers, or scholars have said (don’t stoop to 1-2-3 help me or those Cliff Notes/Sparks Notes sorts of sources). Then respond to your own thread on the DB with the results of your search, citing and/or attaching what you’ve found. Because we’re scholars, we’ll signal the source (eg. According to Elaine Showalter, feminist critic, in a piece entitled “Mrs. Dalloway: Exploring Consciousness and the Modern World,” Woolf’s characters are uniquely conscious of the inequities they experience because of their gender.  (NB: notice that I am paraphrasing the idea rather than quote-bombing). I think you get it: I really want to know what *you* think. Your analysis is valid without research.
3. NEVER-EVER *THINK* ABOUT PLAGIARIZING. In an online class, you don’t see me. You also don’t know what I’ve already read. I have surmised that it is so tempting, when you’ve gotten behind, to go to Google or someplace and spot a plausible answer to the DB question, scoop it up and drop it under your name. It’s painful to me when I have to call you out and give you a zero. It’s disrespectful to your classmates, who are reading your post. It’s a *pain in the paperwork* to report it to the dean, but I will—I have to. We can’t tolerate plagiarism in the scholarly world. If you’re desperate, talk to me.
4. YOU CAN ALSO GO TO THE RWC. The Reading-Writing Center is a super-inviting atmosphere, and there are people who have read some of these works or would be able to read over some parts of works with you. This semester, we are particularly lucky to have a couple of the tutors who have taken the class in a previous semester. The RWC tutors can also help with your midterm and final.
5. TAKE THE DISCUSSION FORUMS SERIOUSLY. Here’s how they operate: By **Monday** midnight each week, I’ll post a lecture and DB1.1 or 2.1 or 3.1, etc. depending on the week (eg. DB3.1 means Week 3, Monday). Complete the Monday post as soon as you read the lecture. It’s a pre-reading, “soft” prompt. Don’t take too much time on the Monday DB, but don’t skip it. Use it to launch you into your reading. Ask any questions you have on the Course Question Forum. Start your reading. By **Saturday**noon each week, I’ll post DB1.2 or 2.2 or 3.2, etc (DB3.2 means Week 3, Saturday). The Saturday forum is the scholarly one, based on the reading. While you don’t need to follow strict MLA style in a DB response, you must be organized, make a point (or points) and support it/them. Formulate your response to the Saturday forums the way you would an essay: Consider your thesis, your main point. Make sure you establish that in the first paragraph. Use topic sentences to govern your paragraphs. Point to specific examples, scenes, chapters, pages, lines, paragraphs, depending on the work(s) in question. Remember that your audience has read the same work (with the exception of Week 16, in which you’ll choose your own free choice work), so, except for Week 16, don’t summarize. Read the piece by Michael Berube in PAGES called “Analyze, Don’t Summarize,” in which the professor compares literary analysis to sport meta-commentary. It’s very clever and instructive for the way I’ll grade the Saturday forums. He points that your audience has read the work, but not in the same way. What’s interesting is the way in which you read the piece compared to the way I read it or classmates read it. One thing to consider, for this class especially, is the Feminist-Deconstructionist trick of binary opposition. In the strain of literary theory called Deconstruction, we look at what something would be like if replaced by its opposite. What if Hamlet had been female instead of male? (this can go so many ways and bleed into other strains of criticism, eg. A Marxist critic might ask: What if Hamlet were a peasant?). We’ll consider, thanks to Virginia Woolf: What if Shakespeare had a sister? Her book *Orlando,*which we will cover in film form in Week 2, actually has a male protagonist magically turn into a woman.
6. **THE DISCUSSION BOARD IS HALF YOUR GRADE---**🡪Of the three DB grades per week, the Thursday forum is most heavily weighted. Besides the grade thing, you *want to write something meaningful, don’t you?* This is your chance to try ideas that are percolating in your head. Some of these ideas will end up on your midterm or final as well. IMPORANT: It’s *critical*you post on time or early because by **Monday**noon each week, you must respond to two classmates. You will respond to the person who posted BEFORE you and to one other post of your choice. If you are the first to post, you simply have two free-choice responses. While the Saturday post (DB.2) is weighted most heavily, both Tuesday and Sunday (.1 and .3) figure into the grade. You may either agree and add more support (“yes, and…”) or disagree and support that (“no, because…”). Your tone must be kind and respectful. Imagine a real person you know and respect as your audience. You’ll all be writing with your most clear punctuation, grammar, spelling, etc, but please don’t comment on each others’. I will send individual emails to people who need to clean up their act (students have called them “howlers,” after the owl deliveries in Harry Potter books, but I do not intend anything but the sincerest coaching from the sidelines to help you express your ideas in the clearest, most well-supported way you can). I repeat: **The Discussion Board is half your grade.** If you fall behind, your grade will obviously suffer. Occasionally, I will post forums called DB1.4, 2.4, 3.4, etc (DB3.4 means an extra credit forum to replace a missed post or low grade. They will have due dates—usually very short windows. They might involve attending a play at Fresno State and commenting on it, or reading an article that I’ve just come across in the *New Yorker.* You’ll be able to see your weekly grade on Canvas. If you want a full accounting of the grade, come see me, but generally it will be broken down DB4.1=10 points, DB4.2=70points, DB4.3=20points. DB4.4 (extra credit, when there *is* extra credit—don’t count on it!) will vary (10-40).

To reiterate (per week):

Tuesday post=10%,

Saturday post=70%,

Sunday post=20%, and sometimes there will be extra credit=10-40 point bonus, depending.

1. DO WELL ON THE MIDTERM AND THE FINAL. **The midterm and final are each a quarter of your grade.**In Week 8, instead of the DB, you will write a midterm of 5 paragraphs, one paragraph exploring each of five evenly-weighted questions. The questions will be general and based on the reading up to Week 8. They will be something like: How does social class impact the women’s outlook and attitude? Or: How much do traditional roles still impact progressive women? Or: How much does a woman’s experience depend on her race and culture? What is the impact of motherhood on a woman’s life experience? I will probably present you 7 questions, and you’ll choose 5.
2. **A THEME OF YOUR OWN** (YOUR FINAL): Then, in Week 17, instead of the DB, you’ll write a developed paper exploring a theme of YOUR OWN that you’ll develop over the course of the semester. Keep track, as you’re reading, thinking, and discovering, of themes that emerge. These should be particular to *your*reading of the works. Don’t waste any time or energy trying to figure out what Lapp’s reading of the works is or what I’m looking for. I’m looking for your own authentic discovery and analysis. I don’t want to list previous themes from this class, but I had a similar final in American Literature, back when we covered Puritans to the present. I gave suggestions like: How did people’s relationship to God or death or marriage change over time? Or: How did the portrayal of women change over time? (they were required to choose one work from each half-century). Most people chose my suggestions and wrote passing finals or better, but I was impressed by original themes, such as how people’s relationship to business had changed over time, portrayals of farmers and farming, or our changing ideas about work and leisure time. I’ll pin a forum to contain your Thesis-in-Progress ideas. Drop something in there any time you want. When a student writes something that sounds like a potential theme to me, I’ll drop it in there. This will be available to everyone all the time.
3. READ AHEAD IF YOU WANT TO. Break up the long reading, so you’re not cramming it in at the end. You’ll see there are two full-length works before midterm: Margaret Atwood’s *Handmaid’s Tale*and Meg Wolitzer’s *The Wife.* *The Female Persuasion* is the 1 Book-1 College all-school read, and Wolitzer will be coming to campus March 7th. I’m kind of assuming you’ve read that.. After midterm and Spring Break, there are two more: Jane Smiley’s retelling of King Lear entitled *A Thousand Acres.* *The Mothers*by Brit Bennett and your free choice book, which can actually be poetry or any literary genre.

**Grading:**

Weekly DB responses=100 points per week for 1,500 (toss the lowest)

Midterm and Final=750 each for 1,500

Be organized because **the class doesn’t work if DB postings are late**, and a zero can have a devastating effect on your grade. There are emergencies: you may toss ONE grade. Of course, if you are in dire and desperate straits, talk to me.

Likewise, I expect the midterm and final on time.

Plagiarism is presenting anyone else’s work as your own; it’s wrong; it’s against the law; and it will result in at least a zero on the assignment. We have Turnitin.com on this campus, and I am psychic. **If you are desperate, talk to me.**

**Special Circumstances:**

If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (i.e., Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact me as soon as possible.

Syllabus by Weeks: SP 2019

1. Intro: “Why Men and Women Need to Know Herstory”; Lecture on early women writers including Anne Bradstreet, Phyllis Wheatley and more--personal inventory, family history; themes or tropes in men’s literature. “The Birthmark” by Nathaniel Hawthorne (for comparison).
2. “What if Shakespeare Had a Sister? Or The Marriage Trap”; Lecture on Wharton, Brontes, Austen, Elliot/”Roman Fever” by Wharton, “My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun” by Dickinson, “Trifles”
3. **Nikiko Masumoto, Tues. Jan. 29 7PM Forum Hall** “Wake Up! Oh, So Many Awakenings”; Woolf “Room of One’s Own,” Chopin “The Awakening” (90 pgs) by Chopin or “Desiree’s Baby”
4. **MM**: *Orlando* “Of Pigeon Houses and Wings That Work” Discussion of Chopin, turn of the century; read *The Wife* in preparation for Wolitizer’s visit
5. “August 18, 1920—And the Rest Is History”; Lecture on suffrage; read *Wife*
6. “Weathering The Great Depression: Literary Women of the 30’s & 40’s” Bishop
7. **Meg Wolitzer, Thurs. Mar. 6 RC Cafeteria, 7PM (required)** “The Confessional Poets and a Gynocriticism of Shakespeare” *Handmaid’s Tale*by Atwood, *A Thousand Acres*by Jane Smiley
8. **MM:** *A Thousand Acres*(movie); **MIDTERM** is due through TurnItIn before Saturday at noon. Choose Free Choice Reading for Week 17
9. “A Woman’s Place Is in the…” Lecture on Second-Wave Feminism, short stories
10. “Approaching the Millenium”; Lecture on Sharon Olds et al/poems,
11. **Helena Maria Viramontes and Manuel Munoz, Thurs. 7PM Forum Hall 7PM (required)** “Women and the Immigrant Experience”; Lecture on Pat Mora “Sonrisas,” Sasha Pimmental “For Want of Water”; Quiara Alegria Hudes/*Water by the Spoonful* Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Under the Feet of Jesus* by Viramontes
12. “The Unspeakable Question of Abortion” Brooks, Bennet, Sexton,Plath (Hemingway, Wallace); Spring Break
13. “’Men Explain Things to Me’” Lecture onRebecca Solnit, Lorrie Moore ”How to Be an Other Woman,” Pam Houston
14. “Lesbian Writers Then and Now” Alison Bechdel and *Fun Home*(play)/*Fun Home* graphic novel; Gloria Machado
15. **MM: *The Color Purple* (film)** “A Discussion of Race and Intersectionality”; Lecture on Alice Walker/”Everyday Use” *The Color Purple*film (optional)
16. “Body Image in Women’s Literature”; Carmen Machado *Her Body and Other Parties*
17. Student Lectures on free choice reading/ future reading suggestions
18. Lecture on final: Your theme developed across the literature and ideas of the entire class
19. **FINAL** is due through TurnItIn on Canvas before Monday at noon