

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

English 201 – Women, Gender, and Sexuality in Literature

3 hours lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

This course is designed to examine gender and sexuality in diverse literature with emphasis on the representations of women. Students learn to use different theoretical lenses to critically interpret and discuss fiction, graphic literature, poetry, drama, and creative nonfiction in historical, political, literary, and cultural contexts. Through active reading and discussion, students interrogate how literature informs, reinforces, challenges, alters, resists, or otherwise influences social constructions of gender and sexuality.

Prerequisite

None

Recommended Preparation

“C” grade or higher or “Pass” in ENGL C1000 (formerly ENGL 120) or equivalent

Entrance Skills

Without the following skills, competencies and/or knowledge, students entering this course will be highly unlikely to succeed:

- 1) Ability to effectively read and compose college-level texts.

Course Content

- 1) Work primarily by, but not limited to, women and other historically underrepresented writers from any of the major periods in American literature (colonial, romantic, realist/naturalist, modernist, contemporary) and from Western and non-Western cultures representing diverse perspectives (i.e., Sojourner Truth, Juana Inés de la Cruz, Zitkála-Ša, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Kate Chopin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Gloria Anzaldúa, Ursula K. Le Guin, Maxine Hong Kingston, Margaret Atwood, James Baldwin, Jhumpa Lahiri, Marjane Satrapi, Allison Bechdel, Maia Kobabe, Audre Lorde, Jamaica Kincaid, Zora Neale Hurston, Virginia Woolf, Marge Piercy, Adrienne Rich, Waris Dirie, Jane Austen, Octavia Butler, Tillie Olsen, Yukio Mishima, Gertrude Stein, Sandra Cisneros, Carmen Maria Machado, Toni Morrison, Elizabeth Acevedo, Azar Nafisi, Annie Proulx, Danez Smith, Ocean Vuong, Louise Erdrich, Joshua Whitehead, Arielle Twist, Qwo-Li Driskill, Leslie Feinberg, Casey Plett).
- 2) Fiction, drama, poetry, graphic literature, short stories, and works of creative nonfiction that engage with issues related to representations of women, gender, and sexuality, as well as intersectional key concepts and experiences such as race, ethnicity, class, dis/ability, language, religion, etc.
- 3) Representations of women, gender, and sexuality in media such as film, television, video games, and the Internet.
- 4) Sociohistorical, political, and cultural artifacts, such as articles, essays, music, photography, art, advertisements, and short videos, to provide enrichment and context for primary texts and their authors.

- 5) Literary theory and criticism relevant to primary texts, with an emphasis on Feminist Theories and Queer Theory. Additional approaches may include Critical Race Theory, Masculinity Studies, Marxism, New Historicism, Postcolonialism, etc.
- 6) Gender, such as differences between sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality/attraction; the social construction of gender and the body; gender binary vs. spectrum; masculinity and femininity; transgender and non-binary identities; language and pronouns.
- 7) Sexuality, such as sexual orientation and identities; heteronormativity; homoeroticism; representations of desire, pleasure and attraction; representations of sex work; intersections between sex and power.
- 8) Feminisms, such as first, second, third, and fourth waves; Liberal Feminism; Radical Feminism; Socialist/Marxist Feminism; Psychoanalytic Feminism; Black Feminism; Eco-feminism; the “Me Too” movement.
- 9) Gender in genres like horror, gothic, science fiction, the coming-of-age novel (Bildungsroman), graphic novels, comics, manga, and postmodern, with an emphasis on how authors use, resist, or alter the conventions of genre to challenge, interrogate, revise, and reimagine representations of womanhood, gender, and sexuality.
- 10) Theoretical key concepts central to the analysis of gender and literature, such as the gaze, embodiment, consciousness raising, agency, essentialism, domesticity, public/private sphere, family/motherhood, girl power, performativity, patriarchy, heteronormativity, representation, reproductive technologies, sex work, stereotype, etc.
- 11) Rhetorical and literary devices, including how authors use language, form, structure, and other tools to reinforce, resist, interrogate, or otherwise critically engage with ideologies about women, gender, and sexuality (and related/intersectional key concepts).

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Interpret, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize representations of women, gender, and sexuality in diverse literature from varied genres: fiction, drama, poetry, short stories, graphic literature, and creative nonfiction. Media such as film, television, video games, podcasts, and texts from the Internet may also be assigned.
- 2) Illustrate an understanding of academic discourse and the conventions of evidence-based literary analysis, including the integration of secondary and/or theoretical material, documented in MLA format.
- 3) Utilize standard literary terminology to discuss and write about women, gender, and sexuality in literature.
- 4) Define key concepts related to representations of women, gender, and sexuality in literature, such as the social construction of gender, differences between gender and sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, masculinity and femininity, womanhood, etc.
- 5) Summarize and apply assigned literary theory, including the core tenets of Feminist literary criticism and Queer Theory.
- 6) Situate literary texts in various historical, political, literary, psychological, and cultural contexts and discuss how those contexts inform their meanings, values, and roles in larger debates about gender.
- 7) Discuss how authors use, resist, and alter conventions of genre to inform representations of women, gender, and sexuality in assigned literature.
- 8) Evaluate and analyze various and diverse representations of women, gender, and sexuality in literature.
- 9) Account for the relationships between gender and intersectional formations such as race/ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, (dis)ability, religion, national identity, etc., in assigned readings.

- 10) Identify and evaluate how literature informs, reinforces, challenges, alters, resists, or otherwise influences social constructions of gender and sexuality.

Method of Evaluation

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on student achievement of the course objectives and outcomes, as determined by multiple measurements of evaluation and/or student self-assessment.

- 1) Summaries
- 2) Annotated bibliographies
- 3) Reader responses, journals, and/or notes
- 4) Quizzes on assigned texts
- 5) Analysis, interpretation, and discussion of literature
- 6) Student reports and/or presentations on selected topics or authors
- 7) Contributions to group activities and/or workshops
- 8) Group and individual projects
- 9) Reviews of literary arts activities
- 10) Evidence-based analytical essays (in standard MLA format) that may require research
- 11) Metacognitive reflections and/or self-assessments regarding learning experiences

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

Smart classroom

Method of Instruction

- 1) Lectures and presentations by the instructor, visiting writers, and/or speakers
- 2) Facilitation of student analysis, interpretation, and discussion of literature
- 3) Student-led inquiry into relevant literature and theoretical frameworks via discussion groups, presentations, and other projects
- 4) Collaborative small group activities
- 5) Whole class discussion of sample writing (student and/or professional), peer workshops, and instructor-student conferences to help students successfully complete assignments
- 6) Multi-modal texts (i.e., films, short video content, podcasts, social media, and audio clips), including culturally relevant and diverse interpretations

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1) Read and take notes on assigned texts.
- 2) Maintain journals or other types of informal writing.
- 3) Research various assigned texts and/or authors.
- 4) Create content for presentations, projects, or other assignments.
- 5) Participate in workshops, peer reviews, or other collaborative assignments.
- 6) Write evidence-based analytical essays, annotated bibliographies, and other shorter assignments.
- 7) Attend literary arts events and readings on campus, online, and in the greater literary community.

Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative examples):
 - a. Goodman, Lizbeth. *Approaching Literature Series; Literature and Gender*. 2nd edition. Routledge, 2015.
 - b. Shaw, Susan. *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. 6th edition. McGraw-Hill, 2015.

- c. Grimm, Bruce Owens, Miguel M. Morales, and Tiff Joshua TJ Ferentini, eds. *Fat and Queer: An Anthology of Queer and Trans Bodies and Lives*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2021.
 - d. Whitehead, Joshua, ed. *Love After the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2022.
 - e. Gardner, Janet E., and Joanne Diaz. *Reading and Writing about Literature: A Portable Guide*. 5th Edition, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2020.
- 2) Supplemental (possible texts for selection):
- a. Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books, 2012.
 - b. Baldwin, James. *Giovanni's Room*. Vintage Books, 2013.
 - c. Bechdel, Allison. *Fun Home*. Mariner Books, 2007.
 - d. Boylan, Jennifer Finney. *She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders*. Crown, 2013.
 - e. Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*. Reader's Library Classics, 2021.
 - f. Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Amistad Press, 2021.
 - g. Kobabe, Maia. *Gender Queer: A Memoir*. Oni Press, 2019.
 - h. Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Gollancz, 2017.
 - i. Machado, Carmen Maria. *Her Body and Other Parties*. Graywolf Press, 2017.
 - j. Palahniuk, Chuck. *Fight Club*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2018.
 - k. *Boys Don't Cry*. Dir. Kimberly Peirce. Perf. Hillary Swank, Chloë Sevigny, Peter Sarsgaard. Fox Searchlight, 1999.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Use literary terminology and critical theory to interpret, discuss, analyze, and synthesize representations of women, gender, and sexuality in diverse literature.
- 2) Create evidence-based literary analyses of representations of women, gender, and sexuality in literature demonstrating close reading and interpretive skills, logical reasoning, and argumentative strategies.
- 3) Evaluate how literature informs, reinforces, challenges, alters, resists, or otherwise influences social constructions of womanhood, gender, and/or sexuality.