

Bergen Community College
School of Arts, Humanities, and Wellness
Department of Composition & Literature
LIT 228-000: Women in Literature

Professor:
Time/Day:
Office:
Office Hours:
Telephone:
E-mail:

Course Description

Women in Literature is a study of works by women writers in a variety of forms. The course provides a literary, historical and sociological context for the study of women's literature. This is a general education course which also satisfies the diversity requirement.

Three lectures, 3 credits. Prerequisite: WRT 101.

General Education Course

Diversity Course

Student Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of the requirements of this course, you will be able to:

1. Analyze works of literature studied written by women from the late 18th century through the 21st century.
2. Examine various literary techniques that women writers use in constructing their texts, and demonstrate an understanding of these techniques.
3. Demonstrate, through discussion and writing, an understanding the tradition of women's literature as an integral part of literary history and society by examining history, culture, language and the woman's experience as represented in literature.
4. Employ a variety of analytical techniques to respond to the works of the course through questioning, analyzing, interpreting and sharing responses during discussions and in writing.
5. Use critical reading skills to gain a greater understanding of women's literary tradition.
6. Use MLA style documentation in writing assignments.

Course Content

This course requires you to do a great deal of reading, thinking, discussing and writing. This is a

survey course, and we will broadly cover literature by women from the seventeenth century through the present. Therefore, we will examine a number of writers, issues, genres, styles, and themes. The literature is presented in an historical context as a way of better understanding it within the socio-political climate in which it was written.

Course Texts

DeShazer, Mary K. The Longman Anthology of Women's Literature. New York: Longman, 2001.

English college- level handbook, such as the Harbrace Writer's Handbook or Blair Handbook

College dictionary

Course Requirements

You will be required to do the following:

1. Write 15-20 pages or 3750-5000 words for the course. This includes major papers as well as journals, summaries, reading responses, quizzes, take-home essay exams, and class presentations. All formal papers must use MLA style and demonstrate effective proofreading and editing. (Meets student learning objectives 1-6.)
2. Read, interpret, discuss, and analyze numerous literary works from the assigned texts. (Meets student learning objectives 1-5.)
3. Learn and apply various literary terms to texts. (Meets student learning objectives 1, 2, 4, and 5.)
4. Write two analytic 4-6 page papers using MLA style, which demonstrates effective proofreading and editing. (Meets student learning objectives 1-6.)
5. Make an oral cultural presentation. (Meets student learning objectives 2 and 3.)
6. Participate in class discussions and individual or group activities and/or presentations. (Meets student learning objectives 1-5.)
7. Be on time for class and attend class regularly. (Meets student learning objectives 1-5.)
8. Participate in conferences to discuss your work, course progress, and any other concerns you may have. You must give me your e-mail address by the second week of class. (Meets student learning objectives 1-6.)
9. Check WebCT regularly for class announcements, assignments and supplemental material. (Meets student learning objectives 1-6.)

Three tests (20 points each; total 60)

There will be three tests on the required reading for this course. No more than one of these tests can be made up due to absence. Make-up tests must be completed in the Testing Center (S 127) within two weeks after the missed test.

Reading Journal (10 points)

You are required to keep a reading response journal. For any ten readings, you will record your reaction to the reading. There may be occasional in-class journal writing. In-class journals are reading responses written in class on the day a reading is due (usually before we discuss it). The journals are ungraded and are intended to help you process the material you read. Although they

will not receive a number grade, they are evaluated-- excellent, good, fair, poor--based of depth of discussion. If you miss a class in which we have written a journal, you must complete that journal as homework within two weeks. You must write at least ten "journal entries" by the end of the semester.

(See page 7.)

Analytical Papers (20 points)

You are required to write two 4-6 page papers on an approved topic connected to class readings. It may be related to an author, literary historical period or specific works. A handout provides additional information. (See page 9.)

Presentations/Class participation (10 points)

Participation in class discussion and small group work is expected and counts towards your final grade.

As part of the cultural literary exchange, on a designated day, you will share a literary selection by a woman author that represents your cultural background. A handout provides further information. (See page 8.)

Grading

All work carries value, particularly **constructive class participation** and in-class writing. Read all the assigned material before coming to class. Unpreparedness affects your class participation and may affect your final grade. No assignment will be accepted more than one week late.

Final grades for the course are assigned based on the number of points you accumulate this semester. You can earn 100 points in this course. If you accumulate 90-100 points, your final course grade will be "A"; 85-89 points = "B+"; 80-84 points = "B"; 75-79 points = "C+"; 70-74 points = "C"; 60-69 points = "D"; and 0-59 points = "F".

Attendance

BCC Attendance Policy: "All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes."

Class Attendance Policy: Attendance and punctuality are expected, and they affect assessment of your class participation, journal and in-class assignment grades. You are responsible for any work missed or assigned when absent or late. Three instances of lateness equal one absence.

If your absences exceed twice the number of weekly meetings, your grade may be lowered. If you are absent excessively, you may fail the course. If you are experiencing serious health or personal issues, please do not hesitate to advise me.

Academic Integrity

BCC Policy on Plagiarism: "Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty and it is a punishable

offense. Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's words, opinions, or ideas and claiming them as one's own. If a student commits an act of plagiarism, the instructor has the authority to assign a failing grade for the assignment or in some cases, the entire course. After two offenses, a student may be suspended from the college."

Class Policy: Take great care to avoid plagiarism. In academic writing, deliberate use of someone else's ideas or words is considered dishonest and will result in failure for the specific assignment, or if this is a reoccurring offense, may result in failure of the course. See the attached statement on plagiarism and "Academic Integrity" and "Plagiarism" under "Academic Regulations" in the *Bergen Community College Catalog*.

In order to help you avoid plagiarism and preserve academic integrity, unless otherwise directed, you are required to submit all essays/papers written at home to [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com), a plagiarism prevention service. Turnitin.com alerts you to text that should be cited and/or paraphrased in your own words. I will check the originality reports on Turnitin.com. If you have trouble understanding the report or how to "correct" your work, please do not hesitate to contact me. **No paper will be graded unless it has been submitted to Turnitin.com.** Review the training video including the session on plagiarism during the first week of class. Click "Training" on the homepage to view the student training video. You do not have to register for Turnitin.com. It can be accessed through the class home page.

Electronic Reserve

Any texts on electronic reserve can be accessed off campus or on campus through Sidney Silverman Library. Go to the [library home page](#). Look for "Find Books/ Reserves/ Media." Type my last name, Roliston, under search terms, and click "Research texts by Professor." A listing of courses should appear under my name. Click LIT 228 and books/stories reserved will appear. Enter my last name in lower case, roliston, if asked for the course password. You may print the story if you wish.

Classroom Etiquette

If you need to leave early, please advise me before class, and leave quietly and as unobtrusively as possible. Note that you will be responsible for any work missed in your absence.

Be respectful of your classmates and their rights to their own opinions. Do not use offensive or profane language when addressing me or your classmates. Avoid interrupting anyone while he or she is speaking. During presentations, give the speaker your full attention.

Turn off your cell phone and pager before entering class. In an emergency, you may keep the phone/pager on vibrate, but if you must answer your phone/pager, do so outside the classroom.

While it is okay to bring a bottle of water or juice to class, please do not eat in class. It is a distraction to your classmates.

Support Services

CERULLO LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTER
English Language Resource Center (ELRC)

Ender Hall 156 / 201-612-5292

<http://www.bergen.edu/pages/2182.asp>

The English Language Resource Center, located in Ender Hall Room 126 provides help to students whose native language is not English. The center assists students to become proficient in English through multimedia computer programs, cassettes, video tapes, and books as well as individual tutoring. The English Language Resource Center also offers ESL conversation groups and specialized language skill workshops.

Tutoring Center

L125 / 201-447-7489

<http://www.bergen.edu/pages/4624.asp>

The Tutoring Center, staffed with peer and professional tutors, offers free individual and group tutoring, supplemental instruction, and online tutoring for subjects offered at BCC. The Tutoring Center provides alternative approach to problem solving and organization skills.

Writing Center

L125 / 201-447-7489

<http://www.bergen.edu/pages/1795.asp>

The Writing Center is designed to serve the writing needs of the BCC community. Peer tutors, professional tutors, and English Department faculty serve as writing consultants who work with visitors to the Center in individualized sessions. Each session is organized to address the specific needs of the writer. Areas of support include help with research papers, written class assignments, college application essays, and grammar review.

Visit the Writing Center early for help with essays, research papers, and even creative writing. Writing Center tutors can

- Help identify strengths and weaknesses in your writing;
- Teach strategies to help you get started;
- Work with you on ways to organize research;
- Help you clarify what you want to say and how best to say it;
- Provide suggestions on how to improve your work;
- Help identify and clarify key concepts in reading passages and work on reading comprehension of a variety of texts (including textbooks, poetry, and fiction);
- Work with you to overcome mechanical, grammatical, and word choice problems.

BCC Library

2nd floor, Pitkin Educational Center

201-447-7131

www.bergen.edu/library

The Sidney Silverman library at BCC is a superb resource for students in all disciplines, but particularly for students in Literature sections. Please visit the library and library website and take advantage of the collection and the many services the library offers. Whether or not you are required you to use the resources in the college library, you can gain invaluable background

information and critical perspectives on all genres of literature, their historical significance, and individual authors.

Office of Specialized Services

L116 / 201-612-5270

<http://www.bergen.edu/pages/676.asp>

Students who require accommodations by the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) can request support services from the Office of Specialized Services of Bergen Community College.

Food Pantry

HS100/201-447-9257

The Bergen Community College Food Pantry is available to meet the urgent needs of members of the campus community. The Food Pantry provides non-perishable food items, toiletries, and additional support services in an environment that emphasizes discretion and confidentiality. Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to visit HS-100 (Office of Health Services) Monday through Thursday, 9 am-4 pm and Friday, 9 am-3 pm. Donations are also accepted in HS-100.

Reading Journal

There will be specific instructions for journals completed in class. However, below are some general guidelines for reading response entries written at home. Each entry should include the date, title, and author of the reading.

The reading journal should contain your response to five of the readings assigned. Ideally, you should write the response as soon as you finish the reading. One way to approach your entries is to identify a passage in the work and critique the passage. If the passage is too long to write at the top of the entry, you should summarize it in a sentence or two and identify the page or section of the reading. Another way to approach your journal writing is to consider some of the following questions to help stimulate your responses to the readings.

- Did you like or dislike the story? Why? Give at least two reasons.
- Did you agree or disagree with what the author is trying to say? Why?
- Did the reading remind you of something in your own life? Be specific.
- Did anything in the reading make you angry, sad, and happy, etc.? Be specific.
- Did anything in the reading remind you of something that happened to someone you know? Be specific.
- Did anything in the reading remind you of a situation in a book you have read, a film or television show you have watched, or a discussion you have had? Be specific.
- Are there details which are more memorable than others? Why?
- Does this reading change your thinking on a particular subject? How?

DO NOT ANSWER EACH QUESTION INDIVIDUALLY.

DO NOT WRITE A SUMMARY.

CULTURAL LITERARY EXCHANGE

On a designated day, you will share a literary selection written, performed or directed by a woman. It may be a poem, lyrics, or an excerpt from a short story, novel, or play. You may recite or read the work, or it may be a recording or clip from a film. It may be set to music and may be recited or sung in your native dialect/language. If the work is in a language other than English, please be prepared to translate it. Please avoid using material that contains profanity or explicit language.

You may use original work if you write poetry, fiction or drama. Submit in writing to me and be prepared to explain to your classmates why the work you have chosen is important, how it represents your culture and why you chosen it. (Culture is being broadly used; it may be ethnic, linguistic, generational, etc.) You should indicate how the selection relates to a woman's way seeing the world and women's literary canon.

The presentation should be four to seven minutes. It will receive a grade, and points will be deducted if the written material is not handed in, a translation is not available, or the material does not generally relate to literature. Presentations longer than ten minutes will be interrupted.

If you have any questions or special equipment is required, such as a CD player, tape recorder, or VCR, please advise me.

Analytic Paper Assignments

Paper 1 Topic due 10/1

Paper 1 due 11/5

For this paper, write a four-six page essay that compares and contrasts two of the works we studied in “Engendering Language, Silence, and Voice.” You can refer to the “Intertextuality” questions on pages 345-46 for some ideas. Since some of our readings are excerpts, depending on your approach to the topic, you may find it necessary to read the complete work or additional excerpts to write a substantive paper. If you have a favorite work or author, I will consider topics which use one of our readings with a work not read for a class assignment.

It usually makes more sense to compare works that have some basis of comparison. So, it would make sense to compare women writers from a similar time period or women who write about a similar topic, but who do it differently. For example it might be interesting to compare two women who write about silence, Maxine Hong Kingston and Zora Neale Hurston. It's also interesting to point out writers from different time periods. For example, it might be interesting to compare how Virginia Woolf and Alice Walker discuss writing. **Whatever you choose, remember that in a comparative and contrast essay, you point out both similarities and differences.**

You can contact me during office hours for additional help.

Paper 2 Topic due 11/12

Paper 2 due 12/10

For this paper, read another work or two by an author that we have studied in this class. Write an essay in which you discuss how the issue of race, gender, ethnicity or class is evident in the work of this author. For example, you might want to write about one of the following:

1. In what ways does social class affect women as seen in the work of Mary Wollstonecraft or Virginia Woolf?
2. In what ways is race more (or less) important in the work of Alice Walker?
3. How is does gender affect the main characters in the work of Kate Chopin or Susan Glaspell?
4. How is ethnicity a theme in the work of Paula Gunn Allen?
5. How is gender a main theme in the work of _____ (fill in with an author from our course)?

6. How is social class a main issue in the work of _____ (fill in an author from our course)?
7. How is race a main theme in the work of _____ (fill in an author from our course)?

DO NOT CHOOSE AN AUTHOR YOU HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT IN PAPER

1.

Requirements

- Be sure to state a thesis in your opening paragraph. Make sure that your statement contains an assertion about your topic. You can check your thesis in advance with me via e-mail or during my office hours.
- Use a minimum of four quotations (direct or indirect) from the texts to illustrate and explain your ideas.
- Analyze the examples you use in relation to your thesis.
- Your paper should be 4-6 pages, double-spaced.
- Cite quotations (and any outside sources) using the correct MLA style.
- Be sure to include a "Works Cited" page with the sources listed.
- I prefer that you develop and write your own ideas. It is not necessary to consult or include other outside sources in your paper!
- You should submit your essay to Turnitin.com to ensure that you do not plagiarize inadvertently. **No paper will be graded which has not been submitted to Turnitin.com.** Turnitin.com can be accessed through Moodle.

Essay Tips (See additional information on class website. Examples below were developed by Dr. Judith Davis.)

Comparison and Contrast Essay Organization

There are two approaches to comparison and contrast analysis. You may use either the block method or the point-by-point method although I prefer the latter. If you use the "point-by-point" method, your essay will be organized by three, four or more subtopics that are discussed in terms of BOTH parts of your comparison and contrasts. If you use the block method, your comparative essay will fall into two large "blocks," each of which is devoted to one part of your comparison or contrast. (See diagram below.)

	PREFER THIS METHOD!
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BLOCK METHOD	POINT-BY-POINT METHOD
Introduction	Introduction
Celie's relationships w/ men, her attitude about God, and her ideas about authority.	Relationships with men: Celie/ Shug
Shug's relationships w/ men, her attitude about God, and her ideas about authority	Attitudes about God: Celie/Shug
	Ideas about authority: Celie/Shug
Conclusion	Conclusion

Essay Organization

When you write this essay, organize it by points that you will make that show the evidence of theme you choose.

First, you will need to develop a thesis that contains an assertion. In other words, you will need to make a point that is debatable in your thesis. See the sample thesis statements below for a model:

WEAK THESIS: Assertion is Missing	REVISED THESIS: with Strong Assertion
Racial discrimination is a theme in Alice Walker's works.	Alice Walker writes about how racial discrimination limits people.

Secondly, your thesis needs to suggest a pattern of organization in your essay. In other words, when your reader reads your thesis, he or she should know main topics you will write about in your essay. See the sample thesis statements below for a model.

WEAK THESIS—no organization is implied	STRONG THESIS with organization implied
Alice Walker writes about how racial discrimination limits people.	Alice Walker writes about how racial discrimination harms people socially, economically, and psychologically.

In the example below, look at the evolution of a thesis as each element is added:

SAMPLE THESIS STATEMENTS	ANALYSIS OF STATEMENT
Alice Walker writes about racial discrimination.	No assertion, no pattern of organization
Alice Walker writes about how racial discrimination harms people.	An assertion is added in green. Someone might argue that Walker sees racial discrimination as a factor in helping African Americans unite as families, as citizens, and as activists.
Alice Walker writes about the many ways that racial discrimination harms people.	This thesis contains an arguable assertion and the implication that the paper will discuss the several ways in which the harmful effects of racial discrimination appear in the work of Alice Walker.

Preferably your thesis is one sentence, but it can be more than one sentence. Some writers write one sentence for each main idea that will be discussed in the essay. The important point here is that in your introduction you state the main ideas you will develop later in your essay-- in the order in which you will write about them. Ideally, place your thesis toward the end of your introduction.

Also, in your introduction, state the author and titles of the works you will be discussing in your essay. When you write the titles of the works, provide a brief statement about the work, (i.e. "*The Color Purple* is a novel about the coming of age of a poor African American girl in the 1920's.") Also use the correct punctuation to indicate the titles of works of literature (Quotation marks around titles of short stories, essays and poems. Italics or underlining for titles of novels and books).

Every paragraph in your essay should have a topic sentence that links to the thesis. Then the paragraph should develop the idea stated, using examples from the primary source and analysis of those examples. Avoid using secondary sources in your essay. You may quote from the novels, poetry, short stories and essays, but not from critics who analyze those works. I'm interested in your ideas about the reading in this assignment.