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**The Post Feminist(?) Era:  Issues in Contemporary Intersectional Women’s Writing**

This course uses a Third Wave feminist rhetoric deeply grounded in Second Wave Feminism and Theory.  We read nonfiction, fiction, poetry, memoir/diary/letters and personal interviews.  We will begin with a grounding in traditional women’s theory on gender as “made” not “born.”  Performative acts of “feminine” and always intersectional “feminism” will include a class blog, as well as individual interviews.  
**Aims and Objectives**

* To provide a forum for the discussion of contemporary feminist literary theories and criticism in relation to individual feminist and woman-centered texts.
* To interrogate the contemporary debates within feminist literary studies, including post-feminism.
* To foster an understanding of the political, historical and cultural contexts from which these texts have emerged.
* To explore questions of style, genre, and voice, and the connections between them.

We will explore contemporary narratives about women’s “work,” including needlecraft and domesticity, women’s “visions” of the future, past, utopia and dystopia, and women’s sexual identities.  This course explores women’s writing around the world from the 1970s to the present. Questions about the feminist appropriation of “genre” fictions will be emphasized. This course will seek to make connections between theory and practice, and will explore feminisms in relation to women’s literature. **On completion of this course, students will be able:**

         To analyze and evaluate in an increasingly sophisticated manner a wide range of complex feminist literary texts and critical materials.

         To demonstrate their ability to analyze the meaning and formal qualities of individual texts, their relationship to feminism and post-feminism, and to each other.

         To engage with and interrogate a number of the feminist theoretical models that have been applied to women’s literature, and to reflect on their application.

         To recognize and communicate knowledge of the significance of the particular cultural, political and historical contexts in which texts have been produced.

         To use critically and reflectively an appropriate scholarly discourse in order to convey their ideas in writing and oral communication

         Define “Third Wave” feminism as a continuing response to the “postfeminist” strategy of anti-feminism in contemporary culture

**Grades:**

1. Assignment 1—a short précis on a piece of feminist criticism/theory, 1000 words (20%)
2. Assignment 2—an essay focusing on one particular text in relation to the main theoretical and generic foci of the course, 1500 words (20%)
3. Assignment 3—a comparative essay, referring to at least two module texts, that will examine aspects of the literary works which might be said to link them, 2000 words (30%)
4. Book Report—a short book report on one novel, read in addition to course readings.  List is restrictive, oral presentation required. (10%)
5. Class Blog—Writing/Reading Journals (10%) Details will follow
6. Attendance/Participation (10%) pretty self-explanatory Miss more than 2 unexcused classes and you should drop.

**Note:**It is a requirement for the assessment of this course that students must attempt and pass each project.  Students are reminded that written work should be close-read, as well as carefully proof-read, with close attention to technical accuracy in the use of English. All work, other than in exceptional circumstances, must be word-processed with a Times New Roman, 12 pt font.   
**An *MLA works cited, and parenthetical citation of sources is required*.**  
**Student Obligations and Course Policies:** You are responsible to read these policies carefully and understand and observe them: Attendance; Class Participation; Class Decorum; The “Ouch” Rule, Academic Integrity; Collaborative Learning.  These policies are on a supplemental handout/the class website/blog. **Reading Schedule:**

**Week One: Introductory Feminist Theory**

Theory: Virginia Woolf:  “A Room of One’s Own”; LeGuin, Ursula K. “The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction.” *Dancing at the Edge of the World*: *Thoughts on Words, Women, Places.*New York: Grove Press, 1997. 165-171.   Joanna Russ Selection from *How to Suppress Women’s Writing*(1984). Selection from Anne Cranny-Francis, *Feminist Fiction* (1990).  Selection from  de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. Trans. H. M. Parshley. New York: ModernLibrary, 1968.

**Week Two:   Domesticity**

Theory:  Alice Walker “In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens” 516-523;  Brundson, Charlotte. “Feminism, Postfeminism, Martha, Martha, and Nigella. *Cinema Journal*44.2 (2005): 110-116. Patterson, Laura. “From Courtship to Kitchen: Radical Domesticity in Twentieth-Century Southern Women’s Fiction.” *Women’s Studies*32:8 (2003): 907-936.  Romines, Ann. Introduction to *The Home Plot*: *Women, Writing, and Domestic Ritual*. Amherst: U of Mass Press, 1992.

Poetry:  Edna St. Vincent Millay, from “Sonnets from an Ungrafted Tree”;  Margaret Walker “Lineage”

**Week Three:**

Short Prose:  Gauthier, Xaviére. “Pourquoi Sorcières?” from *New French Feminisms*: *An Anthology*.  1980.

Alice Hoffman, *Practical Magic* (2003)

**Week Four: Visions (dys/utopias, speculative fiction, sci-fi)**

Theory  Weigman, Robyn. “Feminism’s Apocalyptic Futures.” *New Literary History*31 (2000): 805-25. Wilkerson, Abby. “Ending at the Skin: Sexuality and Race in Feminist Thinking.” *Hypatia*12.3 (1997): 164-82.  
Fiction: Selections from *Women of Wonder Volume I.*  and James K. Tiptree, Jr. “The Women Men Don’t See” (1973) Joanna Russ “When it Changed” (1972).

**Week Five:**

Nalo Hopkinson *Brown Girl in the Ring* (date)

**Week Six:  Reading the Confessional:  Memoirs, Letters, Diaries & Poetry**

Theory:  Selection from Sidonie Smith, *Women, Autobiography, Theory* (1998). “Life Studies, or, Speech after Long Silence: Feminist Critics Today” Sandra M. Gilbert *College English*, Vol. 40, No. 8 (Apr., 1979), pp. 849-863.

Poetry: Selections from Diana DiPrima, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath. Also read: “Women of the Beat Generation: Conversations with Joyce Johnson and Hettie Jones” at:  <http://www.wooster.edu/artfuldodge/interviews/johnsonjones.htm>

**Week Seven: Book Length Memoir**

Joyce Johnson *Minor Characters: A Beat Memoir* (1999)

**Week Eight:  Class & Memory**

Theory: Selections from Dorothy Allison *Skin* (2005); Intro to Merri Lisa Johnson,*Jane Sexes it Up*(2002)*;* Julie Bettie “Women without Class: Chicas, Cholas, Trash, and the Presence/Absence of Class Identity.”  *Signs*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Autumn, 2000), pp. 1-35

**Week Nine:  Novel/Memoir**

Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1993)

**Week Ten: Sexing the Third Wave (The Next Generation of Feminism)**

Theory:  Hogeland, Lisa Maria. “Against Generational Thinking, or, Some of the Things that ‘Third Wave’ Feminism Isn’t.” *Women’s Studies in Communication*24.1 (2001): 107-21.  Intro from Baumgardner, Jennifer and Amy Richards.  *Manifesta*: *Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*. New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2000.

**Week Eleven:**

Jaqueline Carey:  *Kushiel’s Dart* (2002)

**If schedule permits, we will also watch the following movies as a class:**

*Tank Girl* Directed by Rachel Talalay (1995)Night of the Comet  
*Female Perversions*, Susan Streitfeld, Dir. (1996)  
*Still Killing Us Softly: Advertising’s Image of Women* Margaret Lazarus, Dir. (1987)

You will also choose one of the following novels to write an outside of class book report on.  You will report in class, having a visual aid (handout or Power Point presentation) on your author & novel on dates to be announced.  More details will follow.  
**Batch 1:  Book Reports:** Maya Angelou; *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969); Edwige Danticat *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994); Fae Myenne Ng *Bone*(1993); Anderson-Dargatz, Gail *The Cure for Death by Lightning*. (1997); Byatt, A. S *Possession: A Romance* (1990);  
 **Batch 2: Book Reports**:  Octavia Butler *Parable of the Sower* (date); Nicola Griffith *Slow River*(1995); Ursula K. LeGuin *Left Hand of Darkness* (1969); Marge Piercy*Woman on the Edge of Time*(1993); Amy Thomson *The Color of Distance* (1995); Mazza, Cris and Jeffrey DeShell, eds *Chick-Lit: PostFeminist Fiction* Vol. 1 Normal, IL: FC2 (1995).