The Sign of Angellica: The Female Body (Politic) and British Women Writers

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Office Hours: T, Th 1:15-2 and 3:30-4:30 and by appointment

Course Description: This course explores a diversity of literature by British women writers, from medieval mystic Julian of Norwich (who offers the maternal female body as analogy to God) to Mary Shelley (whose characters grapple with “body” of any material sort) to Nadine Gordimer (who represents the female body as a site of conflict including race, class, and gender in relations in South Africa) to Angela Carter whose female bodies in fairy tale form transform expectations and stereotypes about sexuality and gender roles. Course readings will require us to consider allegorical, spiritual renderings of the body as in Julian or the conflict between spiritual and sexual in the poetry of Rossetti; we will explore the intersection of the female body with social/political/cultural norms as articulated especially in Behn’s female prostitute Angellica who hangs out her “sign” only when she is ready.

Required Texts and Materials:
Aphra Behn. The Rover and Other Works.
Mary Shelley. Frankenstein.
Jane Austen. Mansfield Park.
Nadine Gordimer. Jump and Other Stories.
Virginia Woolf. Mrs. Dalloway.
Angela Carter, The Bloody Chamber
Selections from Julian of Norwich, Amelia Lanier, Christina Rossetti, Virginia Woolf, Caryl Churchill on electronic reserve or courseden
Selected critical readings from Anne Mellor, Romanticism and Gender, Janet Todd, The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing, and Fiction 1660-180, and Butler’s Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries on electronic reserve.

Departmental Learning Objectives: Course Objectives:
1. Students will read selections of literature in English by British women writers from the medieval to the contemporary period and be able to discuss them critically and analytically.
2. Students will consider the nature of canonical and noncanonical texts and the ways in which women writers (specifically) or questions of gender (theoretically) modify or challenge these concepts.
3. Students will examine the readings, specifically, in terms of how the female body comes to be represented, manipulated, and reconceived in sexual, spiritual, economic, and aesthetic arenas.
4. Students will demonstrate in both oral and written work a discipline-specific critical facility through convincing and well-supported analysis of related material.
5. Students will demonstrate their command of academic English and the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose.
6. Students will be capable of conducting independent and meaningful course-related research and of synthesizing it in the form of a correctly documented research paper prepared according to current professional standards.

7. Students will engage in both Writing to Learn and Writing to Communicate assignments in accordance with the objectives of Writing Across the Curriculum designation.

For more information on how this course meets program goals and requirements for the department of English, see http://www.westga.edu/~engdept/fr/CourseGuid/2120.htm.

Course Requirements and Class Policy:
1. CLASS PARTICIPATION: Primarily, students must read and be ready to discuss each assignment. Daily responses/ quizzes, discussion questions, paragraph responses will all be used as methods to assess participation.
2. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: Students will complete two brief essays as well as one longer research paper for the course.
   A. Students will complete two brief essays (3-4 pp. maximum) in response to selected topics, one before and one after midterm. The purpose of these essays is to demonstrate analytical and focused writing in response to specific texts we study.
   B. The research paper (8-10 pages) for this course will investigate the work of a woman writer whom we have studied in the course. These papers must demonstrate thorough research (at least six sources), organization and focus, and above all current and absolutely correct MLA citation style and bibliography. If you are not certain of this requirement, see me the first week of the course. We will spend several class periods on workshop for this paper.
3. EXAMS: We will have a MIDTERM exam and a FINAL exam, each requiring quotation discussion/ analysis and essay.
4. ABSENCE POLICY: Much of the participation grade is based upon contributions to the class; the first mandatory level of contribution is attendance! 3 or more absences will affect your participation grade substantially.

Plagiarism Policy: The Department of English and Philosophy defines plagiarism as taking personal credit for the words and ideas of others as they are presented in electronic, print, and verbal sources. The Department expects that students will accurately credit sources in all assignments. An equally dishonest practice is fabricating sources or facts; it is another form of misrepresenting the truth. Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course; in all cases, any paper with any plagiarism will receive a ZERO. Students will be reported to the appropriate university officials.

Grading Procedures:
Evaluation of assignments is based on the specific unique requirements for each: the participation shows interest and individual response to texts; the essays will be graded on form and content equally, with absolutely correct MLA style necessary; the exams demonstrate both specific knowledge of the material as well as a broader understanding of the issues raised by these texts.

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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Essays</td>
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<td>Research Paper</td>
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<td>Mid-term</td>
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T 21 Introduction to course: Introduction: Why study literature by women? Academic and professional issues / Literary histories: Woolf, Todd, Mellor / Semiotics of Eve/Mary

Th 23 Medieval women’s lives; Julian of Norwich, “God the Mother,” from A Book of Showings / excerpt from Chaucer’s “Wife of Bath’s Tale / excerpt from Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature

T 28 Excerpt from Milton’s Paradise Lost, Book 9 (Eve’s fall); Aemelia Lanyer, from Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum (Eve’s Apology in Defense of Women) / students bring in other revisions of Eve

Th 30 Wollstonecraft, VRW excerpt

T 4 Masquerade and performance, representations of Marie Antoinette, excerpts Amand, “Terrorizing Marie Antoinette / begin The Rover

Th 6 Behn, The Rover

T 11 Shelley, Frankenstein / frame narrative, triple narrators, characters / assign scene search

Th 13 Shelley, cont’d /assign scene search from film versions/ assign essay 1

T 18 Essay 1 workshop/ “My Jane Austen phenomenon” Austen artifact student discussion/ begin, Mansfield Park (first few chapters)

Th 20 Mansfield Park

T 25 Finish MP / Discuss film version of MP

Th 27 Finish film discussion/ review for midterm

T 2 Midterm

Th 4 Overview: Legacies of Austen, Shelley / Where we are going / reading adaptations

T 9 Rosetti, “Goblin Market,” “After Death,” (Victorianauthorsweb) / Pre-Raphealite Brotherhood / assign essay 2 option

Th 11 Modernism, Stream of consciousness, excerpts from Woolf A Room of One’s Own and “Professions for Women”
Note: Friday 10/12 is last day to withdraw with a grade of W

T 16 Essay 2 workshop (option available to defer essay 2 for later author)

Th 18 OUT OF TOWN CONFERENCE

T 23 Woolf

Th 25 Woolf

T 30 Caryl Churchill, Vinegar Tom: characters, witchcraft contexts/ assign research paper

Th 2 Churchill cont’d / postmodern drama techniques

T 6 Gordimer, Jump and Other Stories / postmodern narrative techniques / research paper discussion

Th 8 Gordimer, Jump and Other Stories / postcolonial theory

T 13 Angela Carter

Th 15 Angela Carter

T20, Th 22 THANKSGIVING BREAK

T27 Research Paper: Q and A

Th 29 Paper due by 5:00

Final Exam: T Dec 4th 2-4:20