ENGL 3370.001
Women in the Arts
Spring 2010

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Office hours: MW 1:45 – 2:20 p.m. and after class
TTh: 12:30 – 1:50 p.m. and by appointment

Required texts:

Coursepack*: short stories and selected critical and theoretical articles
Cisneros, Sandra, *The House on Mango Street*
Morrison, Toni, *The Bluest Eye*
Norman, Marsha, *Getting Out*
Readings by guest lecturers: to be assigned


*All readings except novels and plays can be found in the coursepack (CP)

Schedule:

Jan. 20   Introduction to the class: overview, readings, assignments


Jan. 27   Feminism, history and definitions: “Woman as Other” (de Beauvoir, 119-26), “A Room of One’s Own” (Woolf, 1376-83), “The Problem That Has No Name” (Freidan, 264-68), “The Varieties of Feminist Thinking”(Tong, 1-8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 8</td>
<td>The Awakening (entire novel)</td>
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<td>Feb. 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 15</td>
<td>The Awakening, plus one critical article of your choice and a one page summary of it. Writing Workshop: how to write a critical analysis</td>
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<td>Feb. 22</td>
<td>“Sweat”</td>
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<td>March 1</td>
<td>“Sweat” (cont.), “Zora Neale Hurston: A Cautionary Tale” and “Looking for Zora” (Walker)</td>
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<td>March 3</td>
<td>“Everyday Use”</td>
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<td>March 8</td>
<td>Mango Street. Take-home midterm due (short answer in class)</td>
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<td>March 15-17</td>
<td>Spring break: no class</td>
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<td>March 22</td>
<td>Guest lecture: Dr. Penny Ingram, film: G.I. Jane (see film on your own)</td>
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<td>March 24</td>
<td>Guest lecture: Prof. Sarah Frisof, flutist: “Women in Classical Music”</td>
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<td>March 29</td>
<td>The Bluest Eye</td>
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<td>March 31</td>
<td>The Bluest Eye and film: Still Killing Us Softly (in class)</td>
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<td>April 5</td>
<td>The Bluest Eye</td>
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<td>April 12</td>
<td>Getting Out</td>
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<td>April 14</td>
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<td>April 19</td>
<td>Black Water and Time and Newsweek (1969) articles in CP</td>
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<td>April 21</td>
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<td>April 26</td>
<td>Black Water Gender Journals due today.</td>
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April 28        “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”
May 5          Review, synthesis, class evaluations
May 10         Final exam, 2 – 4:30 p.m.

Course overview and objectives:

This class begins from the assumptions that a) gender has a profound impact on the ways in which individuals experience themselves and the world around them and b) gender is a social construction. With this as our starting point, we will examine a series of literary, visual, and musical texts to gain an understanding of the various ways that gender affects us and that texts shape what and how we see.

Feminist theory and criticism offer a new way of seeing and thinking about texts, placing women’s experience and gender issues at the center of inquiry. After an initial introduction to this topic, we will proceed to examine various literary, visual, and musical texts, putting into practice the principles presented at the beginning of the class.

More specifically, this course offers:

Information and concepts: the cognitive component
- An introduction to feminist theory and criticism
- An examination of both male- and female-authored literary texts from this perspective: short stories, novels, and drama (plus attendance at a live performance)
- Exposure to feminist issues in the visual arts, photography, film and music via guest lecturers
- Consideration of women’s challenges and opportunities in today’s art world

Skills: the methodological component
- Practice in applying feminist critical principles to a variety of texts and cultural artifacts
- Experience in writing and speaking about these issues

Assignments and policies:

Readings: Read the entire text by the first discussion day, including any introductory sections. I’d advise you to read ahead, as some readings will be longer than others. I also suggest that you take text notes to help you keep track of characters, plots, imagery, and the like. This not only helps in exam preparation; it makes you an active rather than a passive reader.
For each reading, you are responsible for bringing either one question about the text (written out) or a favorite line or passage to share with the class. I will call on several students at random for their question or passage on most, if not all, class periods, so come prepared. This is part of your class participation grade.

**Quizzes and one-paragraph summaries:** There will be reading quizzes on the first discussion day of most texts and occasional one-page (typed, double-spaced) paper assignments. Each of the quizzes and one-page papers is worth 10 point, for a course total of 100 (the equivalent of the midterm). If more than ten quizzes and papers are given, the lowest score(s) will be dropped. There are no make-ups on quizzes; no extra time for late-comers, so please be on time.

**Gender Journal:** To increase your awareness of gender issues in today’s world, both locally and globally, I’d like you to keep a Gender Journal throughout the semester in which you paste articles from newspapers and magazines that deal with gender issues or reveal gender biases, advertisements with gendered subtexts, brief summary-with-comment paragraphs on television shows, song lyrics, or movies, and the like. You will make weekly entries and bring your journals to class on Wednesdays, beginning Feb. 3. I will ask for volunteers to share their week’s entries with the class and will (unannounced) sometimes collect your journals, so be sure to bring them each Wednesday. More details will follow in a separate handout. **Due: April 26 (50 points)**

**Live drama:** Because plays are meant to be seen and heard and we only have time to read one play (*Getting Out*), we will supplement our study of drama with attendance at a live performance. Fortunately for us, a play which deals directly with issues we will examine in class, *Reasons to be Pretty*, by the contemporary American playwright, Neil LaBute, is being performed at the Dallas Theater Center during the month of April. Student tickets cost $15.00, a considerable bargain (regular tickets for this Broadway-quality production range from $40 to $60). Friday, April 2, is a pay-what-you-can night, another option. Performance days are April 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 22, and 24 at 7:30 pm and April 10 and 11 at 2:30 pm. Please check your calendars and come prepared to choose a date next Monday. We need to attend as a class to get the reduced $15.00 rate.

The Dallas Theater Center has just moved to the Wyly Theatre in the spectacular new Performing Arts Center in downtown Dallas, next to the Meyerson Symphony Hall. This play will be performed in the Studio Theater at the Wyly, a small space with about 85 seats; it should be an intimate play-going experience. Many students tell me this is one of their favorite experiences of the class. I hope you’ll enjoy it.

To reserve your ticket, call the Box Office at 214-880-0202 during Box Office Hours (8 a.m. – 8 p.m. M – F and 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Sat. and Sun.) and identify yourself as a student in my class. For location and directions, consult the DTC website: [www.dallastheatercenter.org](http://www.dallastheatercenter.org).

If you are unable to see *Reasons to be Pretty*, you may substitute the UTA production, *Dead Man Walking* by Tim Robbins showing on the Mainstage Theater Feb. 26 and 27.
and March 4, 5, and 6 at 8 p.m. and March 7 at 2:30 p.m. Student tickets are $7; $10.00 for the general public. Call the UTA Box Office for tickets at 817-272-2669 (1 – 5 p.m. Mon. – Fri.) or go online. For extra credit, go to both productions (see “Extra Credit” below).

**Live play writing assignment:** a two-page (double spaced) analysis of the play from a feminist perspective. A detailed handout will follow with instructions and due date. (25 points)

**Major paper:** The major paper is the most important assignment of the semester. It allows me to see your mind at work on a text or an issue (option A) or on your field experience at the Arlington Safe Haven (option B). Thus it is worth 200 points, the equivalent of the midterm and final combined. Both options are explained below.

**Option A:** Choose one:

1) Select a literary or visual text (painting, photograph, sculpture) that we haven’t discussed in class, preferably (but not necessarily) by a writer or artist we have studied and write a 7 – 8 page (double spaced) critical analysis of it from a feminist perspective.

The purpose of a literary critical analysis is to shed light on the text by discussing its themes (the issues it raises), its techniques—the specific strategies and tools the author employs (language, imagery, symbolism, point of view, and so forth), or, more generally, a combination of the two. Our writing workshop on Feb. 15th should prove helpful if you haven’t written a paper of this sort before. If you’re analyzing a visual text, the guest lectures by Profs. Wright, North, and Ingleright should be helpful.

Once you have done your preliminary pre-writing and come to a tentative thesis, consult criticism on your work that is pertinent to your paper, deepening your understanding by reading analyses by experts who have also studied your text. Incorporate these secondary sources (no less than four) into your final draft. **Please note:** Do not use reference works, abridged summaries of critical articles (the Readers’ Digest of literary scholarship), or more than one on-line source. One of the goals of this assignment is to increase your library research skills.

OR

2) Write a 7-8 page (double spaced) research paper on the work of a significant woman artist (visual or musical) who made a significant impact on her field or an analysis of the challenges and issues facing women in an artistic field of your choice.

The initial draft (typed, complete with bibliography) is due as indicated in the schedule below. I will return your paper the next class period with detailed, typed responses indicating strengths and weaknesses and suggesting areas for revision. The final, revised draft is due approximately two weeks later (see final due date). **Turn in all stages at this point:** initial draft, my comments, and revised final draft.
Note: The initial draft is not a rough draft; it is not even really your first draft. If you’ve done your job well, your paper should require only minor revisions at this point. Only five or six students may sign up per group; tell me your choice by next week. *No late papers will be accepted.* In case of emergency, extensions may be granted with pre-arranged consent.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Initial draft</th>
<th>Final draft</th>
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<tr>
<td>I. Chopin or Hurston</td>
<td>Feb. 24</td>
<td>March 10</td>
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<td>II. Hurston or Walker</td>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>March 22</td>
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<td>III. Walker or Cisneros</td>
<td>March 24</td>
<td>April 12</td>
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<td>IV. Cisneros or Morrison</td>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>April 21</td>
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<td>V. Morrison, Norman, or Oates</td>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>April 21</td>
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Option B: Community Service Learning: This option gives you the opportunity to experience first-hand the problems facing women, children, and families in our community by working at the Arlington SafeHaven, a shelter for women and children who have experienced domestic violence. Community service provides unique benefits to students, the community, and the agencies where students work. The community and agency benefit from resources and services that would otherwise be unavailable. Students benefit from combining the theoretical knowledge of the classroom with experiential knowledge, gaining a greater appreciation of the ways in which gender, racial, and class oppression impact individual lives while experiences the satisfaction that comes with helping others. Your CSL experience may also help you discover career possibilities and develop leadership skills.

The primary responsibility would be to work in Client Services, which could include such things as doing in-take on new clients, going along on client pick-ups, attending to clients’ needs for clothing and resources, and the like. This position and the training required would give students exposure to the issues involved in domestic violence and ways to help support and empower its victims. Bilingual students are always needed to do translating work, both on the phone (the Crisis Hotline) and with clients.

This option requires that students receive a four-hour orientation at SafeHaven during the week of Feb. 1, then work at the center from 1 ½ - 2 hours per week for the next ten weeks; keep a journal; and write a final four-five page (double spaced) about your experience, synthesizing concepts learned in class with your field work experience.

**Deadlines:**
- Turn in journal: March 1, March 29, and April 19
- Major paper: Initial draft April 19
  Final draft April 28

**Packaging:** Your essay must be typed or computer printed, have page numbers and a significant title, and be paper-clipped together. Please don’t use plastic binders. Papers
are due at the beginning of the period whether you are in class that day or not. It’s your responsibility to keep an extra copy of your paper for yourself.

**Exams:** midterm and final * (comprehensive)

**Grading:** The course grade will be determined as follows, with A’s being 90% or better of the total points, B’s 80 – 89%, and C’s 70 – 79%:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major paper</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>Gender Journal</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Drama 2 pp. paper</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam*</td>
<td>100</td>
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575 points

I will also take into account the quality of your preparation for class and the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions. All papers, quizzes, and exams must be completed to receive credit for the course (i.e., to pass with a D or better).

*Optional final exam:* If you have no more than four absences for the semester, excused and unexcused, including the first and last weeks of class, and if you have taken all the quizzes, the final exam is optional. Please keep track of your absences. Note: You are required to attend the final two classes of the semester even if you are exempt from taking the final.

**Extra-credit options:** total points possible – 10

The following options for earning extra credit (or compensating for missed quizzes) are available. You may only select each option once. For example, you may not do the vocabulary words more than one time. Extra credit work should be turned in within no more than one class period from the last date on which we discuss the work you’re dealing with. For example, if you were writing a one-page analysis of the imagery of “Sweat,” it would be due no later than Feb. 24.

**Maximum of 5 points per assignment:**

1. Vocabulary words taken from an assigned reading (a minimum of 10):
   - Write out the sentence or passage from the text that contains the word and underline it.
   - Write out the definition.
   - Use the word in a sentence of your own.

   **Note:** These should be words that are unfamiliar to you. The objective of this assignment is to build your vocabulary.
2. A one-page summary of an essay or non-fiction reading.
3. A one-page analysis of a literary devise or element in a fictive text—for example, point of view, imagery, symbolism, or the function of a character or specific scene.
4. Attendance at a Women’s History Month lecture (throughout March) and a one-page summary

**Maximum of 10 points per assignment:**

1. A one-page summary of a critical article about an assigned reading.
2. A one-page summary or analysis of another (unassigned) work by one of the assigned authors.
3. A one-page analysis of *Dead Man Walking*, if you also see *Reasons to be Pretty*.

All extra-credit work must be typed, double-spaced, spell checked and proofread.

**Participation/attendance:** This is a discussion course, not a lecture, so all students are required to actively participate in class discussions. I expect you to be prepared for every class period. This means not only that you’ve done the required reading but that you have thought about it and have ideas you’re ready to discuss. Obviously, if you aren’t in class, you can’t participate in the discussion. Excessive absences (more than 3-4) will be reflected in your course grade. If you have to be absent for an extended time (for a serious illness, for instance), please get in touch with me.

**Note:** If you plan to withdraw from the course, you must follow University procedures. University regulations prohibit me from dropping you for any reason, including inattendance. Students seeking to drop a course should speak to the Academic Advisor for their major. Undergraduate students who drop a course on or before the Last Drop Date will receive an automatic grade of “W” regardless of whether they have completed assignments or not. If you stop attending class but fail to drop the course, you will receive an F for your final grade. The last day to drop a class is April 2.

**Electronics Policy:** TURN CELL PHONES OFF BEFORE CLASS. No electronic items of any kind, including iPods, pagers, palm pilots, etc, should be used during class unless you have received permission from the instructor. Violating this policy can effect your participation grade and may result in an Academic Dishonesty investigation.

All students are assigned an email account. Information about activating and using it is available at [www.uta.edu/email](http://www.uta.edu/email). There is no charge to students for using this account, and it remains active as long as a student is enrolled at UT- Arlington. You are responsible for checking your email regularly.

**Library information:** Rafia Mirza is the resource librarian for the English Department. If you have any questions or would like help with your research, she can be reached at 817-
272-7428 and by email at rafia@uta.edu. You will find online databases for English in the Arts and Humanities databases at: http://www.uta.edu/library/mavinfo/arts.html.

Plagiarism: It is the philosophy of the University of Texas – Arlington that academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Anyone involved in academic dishonest will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. We will discuss plagiarism and identify examples of it on our writing workshop day. If in doubt, ask.

Disabilities: Please let me know if you have any disabilities which I should be aware of, and I will try to make the necessary accommodations. Students’ responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies can be found at www.uta.edu/disability. Also, you may visit the Office for Students with Disabilities in 102 University Hall or call at 817-272-3364.

Office hours: I will be available in my office. 409 Carlisle Hall, from 1:45 – 2:20 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesday, after this class, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 – 1:50 p.m. You’re welcome to stop by and talk about the readings, your paper, or other concerns. If you need to reach me during non-office hours, leave a message on my voice mail (817-272-2693) with your phone number and a time you can be reached, and I’ll call you back, or email me at home. I check my email daily. If you have an urgent question, you may call me at home.

Welcome to the course!