

## **1. TITLE OF COURSE AND COURSE NUMBER:**

**Life Passages: The Female Experience WS 218**

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:**

This course looks at the diversity of the female experience over a lifespan: infancy, girlhood, menarche, adolescence, adulthood, middle age, menopause, and old age. Attention is given to diversity issues including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, abilities and disabilities, class, religion, and political perspectives. Some of the topics addressed include mother-daughter and father-daughter relationships, gender and sexual identity awakenings and struggles, motherhood, marriage/partnership, friendships, and ageing. The course materials include contemporary, multicultural and interdisciplinary essays, literature, and films.

## **3. COURSE PREREQUISITES: ENG 110**

## **4. COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course will**

- ✚ Explore female life passages
- ✚ Examine the differences between the coming of age experience for females and males
- ✚ Compare and contrast mother-daughter and father-daughter relationships
- ✚ Review the socialization of the female
- ✚ Consider the impact of sexual violence on females
- ✚ Present the diversity of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, and other identities
- ✚ Explore relationships including sisterhood, marriage/partnership and friendship
- ✚ Look at motherhood as a personal experience and as an institution
- ✚ Consider the impact of abilities and disabilities on females of all ages
- ✚ Analyze female ageing experiences in the context of an ageist and sexist society

## **5. LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students will**

- ✚ Explore female life passages through journal writing
- ✚ Discuss the differences between female and male coming of age experiences
- ✚ Read and write about relationships with parents
- ✚ Analyze the socialization of the female from literary and sociological perspectives
- ✚ Critique the social institutions that perpetuate violence against females
- ✚ Use literature to explore the gender, sexual orientation, and race, ethnicity, class, and other identities
- ✚ Write about familial and chosen relationships
- ✚ Show an understanding of the differences between the lived experiences of mothers and the social institution of motherhood
- ✚ Reveal an understanding of disabilities and abilities and their impact on the life passages of females
- ✚ Critique societal messages about ageing

## 6. Topical Outline:

- ✚ Course introduction. What are female life passages? Family Relationships and identity
- ✚ Infancy and girlhood
- ✚ Parent/Child, especially mother/daughter dynamic
- ✚ Other familial relationships: siblings, birth order, etc.; ancestral heritage: grandparents, aunts/uncles, cousins, etc.
- ✚ Female friendships: childhood through middle age
- ✚ Adolescence and obstacles to self esteem and maturation: subordinating messages from media and school
- ✚ Sexuality and gender: sexuality and gender identities, lesbianism, abuse, fears/pressures
- ✚ Prejudice and discrimination: race, class barriers
- ✚ Abilities and Disabilities
- ✚ Marriage/partnership
- ✚ Motherhood
- ✚ Divorce and child custody
- ✚ Menopause
- ✚ Old age
- ✚ Life cycles

## 7. GUIDELINES/SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING METHODS AND STUDENT LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

- ✚ Lectures
- ✚ Discussion
- ✚ Groups work
- ✚ Films
- ✚ In-class writing
- ✚ Guest speakers

## 8. TEACHING METHODS AND STUDENT LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

- ✚ Journals
- ✚ Oral presentations
- ✚ Reader-response logs
- ✚ In-class writing
- ✚ Essays
- ✚ Research projects
- ✚ Service learning projects

## 8. SUGESTED READINGS, TEXTS, OBJECTS OF STUDY

Angelou, Maya. I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings  
Brown, Rita Mae. Rubyfruit Jungle

Brumberg, Joan Jacobs . The Body Project  
Cisneros, Sandra. The House on Mango Street  
Cofer, Judith Ortiz. Sielnt Dancing: A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood  
Feinberg, Leslie. Stone Butch Blues  
Hegi, Ursula. Stones From the River  
Heilbrun, Carolyn. Writing a Woman's Life  
Jen, Gish. Mona in the Promised Land  
Kincaid, Jamaica. Annie John  
Kingston, Maxine Hong. The Woman Warrior  
Miller, Sue. The Good Mother  
Morrison, Toni. Sula  
Panzarino, Connie. The Me in the Mirror  
Pipher, Mary. Reviving Ophelia; Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls  
Robinson, Marilynne. Housekeeping  
Rule, Jane. Memory Board  
Sarton, May. After the Stroke: A Journal  
Scholinski, Daphne. The Last Time I Wore a Dress  
Sebold, Alice. Lucky  
handouts of essays in criticism, theory, and a cross-section of videos to complement the texts.

## **Films**

Acting Our Age: A Film about Women Growing Old  
Addressing Economic Inequality in Marriage: A New Therapeutic Approach  
Childhood and Adolescence, documentary (VC 2669)  
The Good Mother, feature film  
Her Mother Before Her, documentary (grandmother, mother, daughter relationships, Native American)  
Iris (feature film about Iris Murdoch through old age and dementia)  
Lucille Clifton  
Maya Angelou  
Menstruation  
The Motherhood Manifesto  
Rape Is: A Crime Against Humanity  
Ruthie and Connie: Every Room in the House ( a lesbian relationship at late mid-life)  
Women At Midlife, documentary (VC 4675)

## **10. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SUPPORTIVE TEXTS AND OTHER MATERIALS:**

Historical Perspectives on Feminism  
Allen, Paula Gunn. The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions.  
Boston: Beacon Press. 1986.  
Bell-Scott et al , Eds. Double Stitch: Black Women Write About Mothers and Daughters. NY:  
Harper, 1991.  
Brownmiller, Susan. Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape. New York: Simon and Schuster.  
1975.  
Davis, Angela. Women, Race, and Class. New York; Vintage, 1981.

- Delamontte, Eugenia, et al, Eds. Women Imagine Change: A Global Anthology of Women's Resistance. NY Routledge, 1997.
- Friedan, Betty. The Feminine Mystique. New York: Dell. 1963.
- Jeffreys, Sheila. The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexual Identity 1880-1930, London. Pandora, 1985.
- Millet, Kate. Sexual Politics. New York: Doubleday. 1969.
- Nekola, Charlotte and Paula Rabinowitz, Eds. Writing Red: An Anthology of American Women Writers, 1030-1940. New York: The Feminist Press. 1987.
- Rich, Adrienne. Of Woman Born: Motherhood As Experience and Institution. 1976.  
----- On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose, 1966-1978. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 1979.
- Ruiz, Vicki L and DuBois, Ellen C , Eds. Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History. NY: Rutledge, 1994.
- Schneir, Miriam. Feminism: The Essential Historical Readings. NY: Vantage. 1994.  
----- Feminism in our Time: WWII-Present. NY: Vantage. 1992.
- Showalter, Elaine. Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siecle. NY: Viking, 1990.
- Spender, Dale. Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done To Them. London: Pandora, 1990.
- Woolf, Virginia. A Room of One's Own. NY: Harvest/Harcourt Brace. 1981 [1929].

#### Health, Medicine, Psychology and "the Body"

- Barbach, Lonnie Garfield. For Yourself: The Fulfillment of Female Sexuality. New York: Doubleday, 1976.
- Belenky, Mary, et al. Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind. NY: Basic Harper Collins, 1986.
- Boston Women's Health Collective. Our Bodies Our Selves. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1973.
- Brumberg, Joan. Fasting Girls: The History of Anorexia Nervosa. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara. For Her Own Good: 150 of the Experts' Advice to Women. Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1978.
- Friday, Nancy. My Mother/My Self: The Daughter's Search for Identity. New York: Dell. 1977.
- Kaufman, Gershen & Raphael, Lev. Coming Out of Shame: Transforming Gay and Lesbian Lives. NY: Doubleday, 1996.
- Macdonald, Barbara. With Cynthia Rich. Look Me in the Eye: Old Women, Aging and Ageism. San Francisco: Spinsters/ Aunt Lute. 1983.
- Pipher, Mary. Ophelia Speaks: NY: Ballantine, 1999.

#### Media and Other Cultural Messages

- Hollinger, Karen. In the Company of Women: Contemporary Female Friendship Films. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Huffer, Lynne. Maternal Pasts, Feminists Future: Nostalgia Ethics and the Question of Difference. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Isaacs, Susan. Brave Dames and Wimpettes: What Women Are Really Doing on Page and Screen. NY: Ballantine, 1999.

Leadbeater, Bonnie J. Ross and Niobe Way, (eds.). Urban Girls: Resisting Stereotypes, Creating Identities. New York: New York University Press. 1996.  
Moore, Lisa C. Does Your Mama Know: An Anthology of Black Lesbian Coming Out Stories. Austin. TX: Redbone Press, 1997.  
Wolf, Naomi. Promiscuities: The Secret Struggle for Womanhood. NY: Random House. 1997.

#### Theory and Literary Criticism

Davidson and Wagner-Martin (eds.). The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing in the United States. NY: Oxford University Press, 1995.  
Eagleton, Mary , Ed. Feminist Literary Theory (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.  
Heilbrun, Carolyn. Hamlet's Mother and Other Women. NY: Ballantine, 1990.  
Inge, Tonette Bond, Ed. Southern Women Writers: The New Generation. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. 1990.  
Lorde, Audre. Sister Outsider. Ithica, NY: Firebrand. 1984.  
Showalter, Elaine. Speaking of Gender. New York: Routledge. 1989.  
Showalter, Elaine , Ed. The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory. NY: Pantheon. 1985.

**11. PREPARER'S NAME AND DATE: Dr. Arlene Holpp Scala , November 13, 2002.**

**12. ORIGINAL DEPARTMENT APPROVAL DATE: December 2002.**

**13. REVISER'S NAMES AND DATE: Arlene Holpp Scala, May 2008.**

**14. DEPARTMENTAL REVISION APPROVAL DATE: May 2008.**