

TITLE OF COURSE AND COURSE NUMBER: Nineteenth Century Women's Voices,
English 2190 Credits: 3 Undergraduate level

COURSE PREREQUISITES: ENG 1100

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE: A study of various writers of the nineteenth century whose work challenges traditional assumptions about women's roles. Writers include Mary Shelley, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charlotte Bronte, Louisa May Alcott, and Kate Chopin.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. The primary goal of the course is to introduce students to literature written by women from the nineteenth century in Great Britain and the United States. The specific objectives under this broad goal are as follows:
2. To enable students to determine what a "female tradition" in literature written by white women and by women of color means.
3. To enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the relation of feminist theory and scholarship to literature written by women.
4. To enable students to determine what the various texts suggest about women's lives and identities as the century progressed.
5. To help students understand the ways in which different texts overtly and/or covertly challenge prevailing gender ideologies .
6. To enable students to compare texts around certain themes: the use of the gothic, female sexuality, marriage, madness, women's friendships, motherhood, and work.
7. To enable students to recognize the ways race, class, and sexual orientation, as well as gender, shape subject matter, style, content, and theme.
8. To teach students about the social/cultural/political history of the period, so they can better read the texts.
9. To provide students with the opportunity to evaluate the various texts aesthetically.
10. To prepare students for upper-level English courses by giving them experience in reading and writing about literature.
11. To enhance students' ability to make connections between literature and literary themes and their own lives.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate, in writing, an understanding of the major themes in nineteenth century women's literary texts.

2. Demonstrate, in writing, an ability to incorporate lecture material and secondary sources into their interpretations of nineteenth century women's texts.
3. Demonstrate, in writing and orally, an understanding of race and class differences as they impact on women's texts of the period.
4. Participate actively and in an informed way in class discussions, group work, and oral presentations by revealing their close readings of the texts and relevant secondary readings .
5. Demonstrate an understanding of feminist theory and scholarship as it relates to the texts studied.
6. Improve as critical readers and writers by completing regular written assignment assignments on the literature.
7. Demonstrate an ability to compare the literature studied and contemporary literature by women.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the similarities and differences between the nineteenth century world of women and our own.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF THE COURSE CONTENT:

The course focuses on nineteenth century literature written by women in the United States and Britain. While the individual instructor might choose to stress different writers and topics, as well as various genres, the course should consider literature by women of color as well as by white women. The following would be a typical outline:

- Week I: Background: Mary Wollstonecraft and the Situation of Women at the end of the 18th century; women writers before Jane Austen
- Week II: The Subversive Gothic Tradition: Mary Shelley
- Week III: Victorian Girlhood: Louisa May Alcott
- Week IV: The Angel in the House: Alcott, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Frances E. W. Harper, Mid-nineteenth century conduct books for women
- Week V: The Feminist Hero: Charlotte Bronte
- Week VI: The Feminist Hero, continued.
- Week VII: Women and Work: Rebecca Harding Davis, Florence Nightingale, Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- Week VIII: White Women Abolitionists: Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lydia Maria Child, the Grimke Sisters
- Week IX: The Female Slave Narrative: Harriet Jacobs
- Week X: The Female Slave Narrative, continued
- Week XI: The Woman Question: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Margaret Fuller, Sojourner Truth
- Week XII: Female Friendships: Christina Rossetti, Sarah Orne Jewett, Constance Fenimore Woolson, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman
- Week XIII: The Woman as Artist: Emily Dickinson
- Week XIV: Resistance to Patriarchy: Kate Chopin
- Week XV: Conclusion: the Situation of Women at the end of the 19th century

GUIDELINES/SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING METHODS AND STUDENT LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

Lecture and discussion, in-class group work, student presentations and projects (individual and/or group), daily reaction papers and/or notecards, and visual aids (film versions of some of the novels; videos on individual writers; documentaries on such topics as Seneca Falls and the Women's Movement, Abolition and Slavery, or Women and Work).

GUIDELINES/SUGGESTIONS FOR METHODS OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES):

Papers (5-7 pages), essay examinations (in-class and/or take-home), inclass group work, group presentations, individual oral presentations, reaction papers (1-2 pages), response notecards, and creative writing options.

SUGGESTED READINGS, TEXTS, OBJECTS OF STUDY:

Louisa May Alcott, Little Women or Work Jane Austen, Emma or Pride and Prejudice
Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre or Villette
Kate Chopin, The Awakening
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" and other stories
Frances E. W. Harper, Iola LeRo
Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
Mary Shelley, Frankenstein
Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin
Elaine Showalter, ed. Scribbling Women: Short Stories by 19-th Centu
American Women

Instructor may also include nonfiction works like Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual," *Signs*, 1 (1975), 1-29; essays/speeches by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Margaret Fuller, Sojourner Truth, and others; and poetry by women of the period, like Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Dickinson, or Christina Rossetti.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SUPPORTIVE TEXTS AND OTHER MATERIALS:

Auerbach, Nina. Communities of Women: An Idea in Fiction. Harvard University Press, 1978.
David, Deirdre. Rule Britannia: Women, Empire, and Victorian Writing. Cornell University Press, 1995.
Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination. Yale University Press, 1979.
Kilcup, Karen, ed. Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: An Anthology. Blackwell, 1997.
Koppelman, Susan. Two Friends
Nineteenth-Century Lesbian
Stories by American Women Writers. Penguin, 1994.
Langland, Elizabeth. Nobody's Angels: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Ideology in Victorian Culture. Cornell University Press, 1995.
Meyer, Susan. Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women's Fiction. Cornell University Press, 1996.
Poovey, Mary. Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in MidVictorian England. University of Chicago Press, 1988.
Walker, Alice. In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983.

Wall, Cheryl A., ed. Changing Our Own Words: Essays on Criticism, Theory, and Writing by Black Women. Rutgers University Press, 1989.

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REVISER'S NAME AND DATE: Dr. Arlene Holpp Scala, December 1, 2004