

ENG/WS 2393.90
INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE BY WOMEN

Contact Information for Dr. Cole

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Course Description

During this semester, we will explore different genres of writing and some of the women who wrote in those genres. Our readings will take us from Haiti to New York, from the present back to the early 1800s, and a look to possible futures. We will hear from a variety of women's voices: women of color, immigrants, and time travelers. In addition to reading these voices, we will add our own voices by writing in and about these genres for our writing assignments.

Our job will be to look at these texts in order to wrestle with questions such as: What can these stories tell us about the women who tell and listen to those stories? How do these women address the issues of their time? What are some similarities that these texts produced by different women share with each other? How have women's voices been silenced or listened to by societies? And, perhaps the most interesting question: What are our stories and what do they tell us about ourselves?

16-week course. Meets once a week for 1.5-hour lectures/seminars and online discussions.

Course Aims and Objectives

This course aims to foster the development of critical thinking skills, communication skills, and a sense of personal and social responsibility:

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| Critical Thinking Skills [CTS] - <i>to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information</i> | Articulates reasonable, learning-oriented metacognitive conclusions. |
| Communication Skills [CS] - <i>to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication</i> | Clearly narrates past thinking and accurately discusses course material. |
| Personal Responsibility [PR] - <i>to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making</i> | Clearly identifies connections between the field of study and the author's own rights, obligations, values, principles, or character. |
| Social Responsibility [SR] - <i>to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities</i> | Clearly describes plausible connections between the field of study and the values or needs of society. |

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Accurately employ literary terms appropriate for the study of fiction introduced in the course.
- Thoughtfully explain the relationships among literature, gender and cultural influences.
- Effectively compare/contrast women's history, texts, themes, and/or writing styles introduced in the class.
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- Formulate a reasonable assertion about women's literature and support it with evidence.
- Perform an effective close reading of a women's literary text.

Required Texts

This course has three required texts. Additional readings will be provided by the instructor.

Butler, Octavia. *Kindred*. (2004). ISBN: 0807083690

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. (2002). ISBN: 0618249060

Dandicat, Edwidge. *Brother, I'm Dying*. (2008). ISBN: 1400034302

You will also need access to the following:

- Internet access outside of class for the online component;
- A computer with access to the Internet;
- The computer will be able to play audio or video for lectures and supplementary materials (though transcripts will be made available for lectures);
- A word-processing program that is capable of saving as .docx, .rtf, or .pdf (Some online programs will convert a document for you if necessary);
- Access to TWU e-mail for announcements or personal correspondence.
- Adobe Reader or some other PDF reader to open PDFs.
- Blackboard IM

Assignments and Grading

Your grade will be calculated according to a points system with a total possible points of 1000 points. Your grade will be determined by your written work and two exams.

Writing Assignments (60%)

- Unit 1 (100 points; 800-1000 words): Memoir/Creative-Nonfiction. Due Week 5.
- Unit 2 (150 points; 800-1000 words): Poetry analysis. Due in Week 9.
- Unit 3 (200 points; 1000-1500 words): Research essay. **Due in Week 15.****
- Unit 4 (150 points; 800-1000 words): Informational essay. Due in Week 15.

Other Assignments (40%)

- Reading journal (75 points): Each week will have a set question requiring a written response.
- Class Participation (150 points): Attendance *and* engagement during class meetings.
- Online Participation (150 points): Each week will have discussion board questions related to the journal questions.
- Conferences (25 points): Two one-one-one meetings with Dr. Cole.

**** YES, the essays for Unit 3 and Unit 4 are due the same week.** This is to allow you more time to work on the *research* component of the *research essay* for Unit 3.

UNIVERSITY AND COURSE POLICIES

Attendance Policy

Note that you will be graded for participation and not attendance. **However, attendance still matters - especially because this course meets in person only once per week.** You do not participate merely by showing up to class. Participation means engaging with the class and contributing to discussion: this can be done by making a comment, asking a question, or otherwise just speaking up in class. **Shyness is not an excuse for lack of participation.**

For the online component: You do not participate merely by posting a couple of sentences on Blackboard. Participation means engaging with the class and contributing to discussion. I will have more guidelines for Blackboard Discussions below.

CHECK your TWU e-mail and Blackboard DAILY to stay on top of information!

Communication Policy

Communication is key in any course, but especially so in an online course. Please feel free to contact me with questions about the course. You can e-mail me at any time, but please keep the following in mind:

1. I will hold office hours on Thursdays from 2.30-4.00 PM. I am guaranteed -- unless otherwise noted in the case of an emergency -- to be at the computer during these times. I will answer your e-mails and will be on Blackboard IM.
2. If you want to talk on Blackboard IM but are unavailable during my office hours, e-mail me and we can arrange an alternate time.
3. As a rule, I try to respond to e-mails within 48 hours. If I haven't responded by that time, you may e-mail me again with a reminder e-mail. **If your question or request is time sensitive, then please note this in the subject line.**
4. Please practice professionalism in your e-mails. This means including a greeting and sign-off, referring to me as Dr. Cole, and including your name and course number.

Note: I will not reply to e-mails after 6.00 PM during the week and not at all on Sundays.

Time Expectations

Due to the nature of introductory courses, you will be required to keep up with the readings and assignments for each week. **I strongly encourage you to get into a reading schedule in which you are doing the readings the week before we discuss them in class.**

Our class time on Tuesday is only 1.5 hours but this class is worth **3 credit hours**. This means that the remaining 1.5 hours of *class time* must be done on your own time. The discussion board deadlines are designed to keep discussion moving.

This does *not* mean that the readings, journals, and quizzes can be done in that 1.5 hours. These assignments take extra time, just like you would have work outside of the courses that meet in person for every session.

Participation Requirements

Participating in an online course is rather different from how you would participate in a face-to-face classroom. You might think that literature would be an easy course to do online - all you have to do is stay on top of the reading, right?

Not quite. This IS a reading intensive course, but as scholars of literature we don't learn much by reading in isolation. It is just as important to discuss what we are reading with your peers and with me as it is for you to keep up with the texts.

This is why you have required discussion questions each week. You can post your responses and read those of your classmates' in the discussion forums. You can also reply to each other (in fact, that's part of the discussion assignment. More on that below.). You may also start your own threads in each unit's discussion forum if you have other questions or topics you'd like to talk about that I hadn't posted.

What are the participation requirements, then?

- To stay on top of the reading for each week;
- To post regularly on the discussion boards;
- To keep up with your personal journal.

Student Conferences

Each student is required to have two 10-minute conferences with me during the semester. The first conference must sometime during Weeks 3-8 and the second conference must be during Weeks 9-15. I will provide a sign-up sheet at the end of Week 2. Students are welcome to come to my office hours outside of their scheduled conference time.

Discussion Boards

In order to make the discussion forums more manageable, I have randomly divided the class into four discussion groups. This way you only have to keep up with the posts written by the other members in your group, rather than posts written by the entire class. Half way through the semester, you will be sorted into new groups so that you can interact with different peers. To find your group, go to "My Groups" on the bottom of the left navigation menu.

There will be discussion questions about the readings for each week. Responses to forum discussion questions must be posted by 11.59 PM on Wednesday of each week. **In order to receive full credit you need to respond to a question that I have posted and also reply or comment on TWO of your peers' responses.**

- Your initial response to the discussion question should be at least 200 words.
- Your responses to your peers should be at least 100 words.
- Sign all of your posts with your full name.

Keep in mind that "basic" responses and using the minimum word count will result in "basic" grades. Doing minimal work earns minimal grades.

Your initial response should include significant analysis discussing all of the assigned texts. The responses to other students should actually engage with what they have written, either adding to or analyzing further what the student has written. When replying, try to engage deeply (instead of superficially) with the position you are responding to. **Simple responses such as "I agree," one-sentence responses, or copies of the same response posted to multiple people even with a few words changed will not be graded.**

Here are the deadlines and my reasoning behind the discussion board deadlines for each week:

- **Journals are due Monday night by 11.59 PM.** The idea of the journal is to work out your thoughts on your own in your Journal before sharing them with your peers. It is also an opportunity to ask questions that I can address in our class meeting on Tuesday.
- **Discussion Board questions are due Wednesday night by 11.59 PM.** The Discussion Board questions build off of the class discussion we had the day before. Everyone in your group needs to have your responses posted so that you can each fulfill the peer response requirement. *Wait to reply to any of your peers' posts until Thursday.*
- **Peer responses on the DBs are due Thursday night by 11.59 PM.** You can't respond to your peers until they've all posted their responses. Likewise, you can't write your personal reflection about the discussion questions until everyone has posted responses.
- **Personal Reflections about the online discussion are due Friday night by 11.59 PM.** You have a day to review everyone's posts and responses in the discussion forum before writing your personal reflection. The reflection helps me to know what you are learning each week. It is also an opportunity to ask me further questions on the topic.

I agree that you have a lot of miniature deadlines, but I hope you can see why they are arranged the way they are. The deadlines are supposed to help prevent the scenario in which a few people always post early and only their posts get peer responses. Everyone needs to have the chance that their posts are going to get peer responses.

For you to get the most out of the discussion boards, of course, you will need to go beyond the minimum two-peer response requirement. The goal is to encourage *discussion*, after all.

Netiquette

Remember that when you post on the discussion board, you are interacting with real people. It is easy to dash something off quickly from the comfort of our homes without really thinking about how someone might react when they read what we've written. So, while we **DO** want open, intellectual, and vigorous discussion, avoid "rudeness" or "ugliness." Pay attention to your tone and practice diplomacy. Use emoticons when you need to help convey tone. (In truly extraordinary circumstances I will consider deleting a post. Anyone who thinks a posting should be deleted should e-mail me.)

Writing Assignments

Each unit has a writing assignment that is due on the last Sunday of the unit (see the course schedule for due dates). This assignment is an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the genre we studied in that unit.

The writing assignments must be submitted via Blackboard **only**. Do NOT e-mail me your essay as an attachment. **The essay should be:**

- Adhere to the word limit guidelines (points will be deducted if the essay goes over or under the word limits);
- Written in Times New Roman font, size 12;
- Have 1-inch margins on all four sides.
- Include a Works Cited (when needed) and use MLA citation styles.

If you have trouble submitting the assignment on Blackboard, e-mail me **well before** the deadline so that I can help you.

Late Work

As a rule, I do *not* accept late assignments. Absence is not an excuse for late work. **If you know you will be absent on the day an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to turn that assignment in on or before the due date.** I may accept a late assignment, but only in extremely extraordinary circumstances and with prior approval.

Additional University/Program Information

Academic Dishonesty Statement

In submitting graded assignments, you are affirming that you have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance and that **you are submitting new, original work** (that is, brand-new writing that you have not used in any other class).

Honesty in completing assignments is essential to the mission of the University and to the development of the personal integrity of students. In submitting graded assignments, students affirm that they have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance, and that they have abided by all other provisions of the Code of Conduct in the *TWU Student Handbook*. Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or other kinds of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate sanctions that may include failing an assignment, failing the class, or being suspended or expelled. Suspected cases in this course may be reported to Student Life. The specific disciplinary process for academic dishonesty is found in the *TWU Student Handbook*. The TWU library link, "Avoiding Plagiarism," will aid students in completing their assignments with integrity.

Turnitin Statement

In an effort to ensure the integrity of the academic process, Texas Woman's University vigorously affirms the importance of academic honesty as defined by the *Student Handbook*. Therefore, in an effort to detect and prevent plagiarism, faculty members at Texas Woman's University may use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student's work with multiple sources. It then reports a percentage of similarity and provides links to those specific sources. The tool itself does not determine whether a paper has been plagiarized. Instead, that judgment must be made by the individual faculty member.

Disability Support Policy Statement

If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the office of Disability Support Services (CFO 106, 940-898-3835, dss@twu.edu) in order to obtain the required official notification of your accommodation needs. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss approved accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.

Dropping this Course

Students may drop a course without penalty *before* the census day of each regular semester. However, *after the census date*, students enrolling fall 2007 or later (at TWU or any Texas public higher education institution), are allowed only 6 unexcused drops during their

undergraduate academic careers. Drops after the census day will count toward the 6-drop limit unless they are supported by timely, appropriate documentation and excused by the university review process. Drop forms are available in the Registrar's Office and require the signature of the student, instructor, and academic advisor.

The New Campus Carry Law and Texas Woman's University: Texas Woman's University is committed to providing a safe environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Texas Woman's University respects the right of properly licensed individuals to carry concealed handguns where permitted by law. It is the policy of Texas Woman's University that individuals who are licensed to carry concealed handguns may do so on campus premises except in locations and at activities prohibited by law or by this policy. This policy establishes GUN FREE ZONES, pursuant to state and federal law.

Under the new Campus Carry law, effective August 1, 2016, TWU has established reasonable rules, regulations or other provisions regarding the carrying of concealed handguns by license holders on its campuses. Under the law, TWU may not create provisions that generally prohibit license holders from carrying concealed handguns on TWU campuses.

Any individual who holds a current and valid Texas License to Carry (LTC) may carry a concealed handgun where permitted on university property. If a License to Carry (LTC) holder is in compliance with the law, you should be unaware that the individual has a gun. The law prohibits licensed holders from carrying a handgun that is partially or wholly visible, or displaying the handgun intentionally and knowingly in plain view of another person. **Campus Carry is concealed carry only. Open Carry is not permitted** on university property. Violators of the Campus Carry law will be subject to gun confiscation, legal action and possible revocation of their LTC by state authorities. Those who hold a LTC are expected to maintain a high level of responsibility for the care and control of their **concealed handgun** at all times. Any violation – even accidental – will have consequences and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.twu.edu/dps/campus-carry.asp>

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE

What follows is a skeletal outline of reading and writing assignments for the semester. This calendar is subject to change.

Unit 1: Memoir

Week 1: August 30, 2016

Readings: Edwidge Dandicat, *Brother, I'm Dying*, pp. 3-75
Zora Neale Hurston, "How it feels to be colored me"

Week 2: September 6, 2016

Readings: Edwidge Dandicat, *Brother, I'm Dying*, pp.76-144
Mary McCarthy, "Artists in uniform"

Week 3: September 13, 2016

Readings: Edwidge Dandicat, *Brother, I'm Dying*, pp. 145-205
Maxine Hong Kingston, "No Name Woman"

Week 4: September 20, 2016

Readings: Edwidge Dandicat, *Brother, I'm Dying*, pp. 206-269

Unit 1: Memoir writing assignment due 11.59 PM on Sunday, Sept. 25th.

Unit 2: Poetry

Week 5: September 27, 2016

Readings: Selected poems by Naomi Shihab Nye

Week 6: October 4, 2016

Readings: Selected poems by Laurie Ann Guerrero and Joy Harjo

Week 7: October 11, 2016

Readings: Selected poems by Kimiko Hahn, Vandana Khanna, Hannah Sanghee Park

Unit 2: Poetry close reading due 11.59 PM on Sunday, Oct. 16th.

Unit 3: Fiction

Week 8: October 18, 2016

Readings: Octavia E. Butler, *Kindred*, Prologue, The River, The Fire (pp. 9-51)
Toni Morrison, "Recitatif"

Week 9: October 25, 2016

Readings: Octavia E. Butler, *Kindred*, The Fall (pp. 52-107)
Leslie Marmon Silko, "Yellow Woman"

Week 10: November 1, 2016

Readings: Octavia E. Butler, *Kindred*, The Fight (pp. 108-88)
Ursula K. Le Guin, "Nine Lives"

Week 11: November 8, 2016

Readings: Octavia E. Butler, *Kindred*, The Storm, The Rope, Epilogue (pp. 189-264)
Jhumpa Lahiri, "The Third and Final Continent"

Unit 3: Kindred research paper due 11.59 PM on Monday, Dec. 5th.

Unit 4: Essays

Week 12: November 15, 2016

Readings: Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, Introduction to Realms of the Soil
Rebecca Solnit, "The Future Needs Us"

Week 13: November 22, 2016

Readings: Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, Earth's Green Mantle to Rivers of Death

*Check Blackboard for different discussion board schedule this week.
Happy Thanksgiving!*

Week 14: November 29, 2016

Readings: Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, Indiscriminately from the Skies to Through
a Narrow Window
Ursula K. Le Guin, "Introduction" from *The Left Hand of Darkness*

Week 15: December 6, 2016

Readings: Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, One in Every Four to Afterword
Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American
Presence in American Literature"

Finals Week: Tuesday, December 13, 1.30-3.30 PM

Presentations

Unit 4: Informational essay due 11.59 PM on Sunday, Dec. 11th.

SYLLABUS AGREEMENT FORM

Your success in this course depends on your preparation for class and your understanding of university academic policies. This syllabus provides you with valuable information regarding course objectives, required materials, grading policies, as well as a course calendar for the semester. **It is important you are well acquainted with the information provided in this syllabus.**

For this reason, I ask you to read through the syllabus very carefully and sign this Syllabus Agreement form.

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the course syllabus for

Course _____, Section _____, Semester 1 / 2 , 20____.

My class meets on (days) _____ at (time) _____ in room _____.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that:

1. I have read the syllabus and I understand the classroom policies, the department's and instructor's expectations, and rules (for example, technology and text requirements, grading system, attendance policy, academic honesty policy, assignment responsibilities, late work, etc.) as stated in the syllabus for this course.
2. If I have any questions or concerns, I will contact the instructor for further explanation.
3. I understand that I am responsible to complete all homework assignments, quizzes/in-class assignments, and written projects by the due dates as outlined in the syllabus.
4. I agree to be prepared for and attend class each day and to participate in class discussion.

Student Name _____

Date _____

Student Signature _____