

ENGL 386 British Women Writers **Rebels and Rulebreakers: British Women Writers from 1792 to the Present**

British women writers have long broken rules: societal, political, legal, and literary. Yet the extent of their rebellion has often been overlooked in narratives of British literary history. This course examines the many ways that British women writers have made formal and social innovations in and through their writings. We will read a wide range of genres (poetry, non-fiction, novels, short stories, film, and more) by female British writers of diverse backgrounds. We will ask questions about who gets to decide on literary value. And we will make our own innovations and interventions through critical essays and creative projects.

REQUIRED TEXTS (please use *only* the editions below)

Warsan Shire, *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth* (ISBN 9781905233298)
Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, ed. Mark Hussey (ISBN 9780156030410)
Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (ISBN 9780393352566)
Amma Asante, dir. *Belle* (available via iTunes, Amazon etc.)
Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (ISBN 9780199207558)
Leila Aboulela, *Minaret* (ISBN 9780802170149)
Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber: And Other Stories* (ISBN 9780140178210)

Selected articles and chapters, available via Connect:

John Guillory, Introduction from *Cultural Capital*
Elaine Showalter, "The Female Tradition" from *A Literature of Their Own*
Nancy Armstrong, "What Feminism Did to Novel Studies"
Chandra Talpady Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes"

ASSIGNMENTS

In-class essay 10%
Group Presentation 15%
Midterm essay (~ 4 pages) 20%
Creative rewrite 15%
Research paper (7-8 pages) 30%
Participation 10%

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Analyze and interpret British women's writing from 1792 to the present that is diverse historically, linguistically, culturally, geographically, politically, and in genre
- Explain, navigate, and synthesize some of the major theoretical issues with regard to women's writing
- Employ skills in close-reading and critical analysis to interpret literary texts
- Exhibit a general knowledge of the social aspects of the English language as it is used in literary contexts
- Think critically about the texts examined in this class, and about their relation to broader understandings of women's writing, representations of women, and gender equity
- Engage respectfully with peers in a way that encourages collaborative thinking, intellectual stimulation, scholarly community, and individual academic development

Policies

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: The term "academic dishonesty" means plagiarism; cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and/or projects; and forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud as it relates to academic or educational matters. **Academic dishonesty is a serious offence with serious consequences.** It is your responsibility to read the university's policies on academic integrity: <http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecreditstermsclassification/#academicintegritytext>

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS: West Virginia University is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS). For more information on WVU's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu/>

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is required in this course. Students who attend classes regularly tend to earn higher grades and have higher passing rates. Regular attendance also enhances the experience for the group as a whole. You are allowed up to four absences without penalty: these include school trips, illnesses, family emergencies, and days of special concern. If you miss five or more classes, you will receive an F for participation unless you have documented extenuating circumstances authorized by the Office of Student Life.

If serious circumstances arise that prevent you from attending class (for instance, prolonged illness, family tragedy, mental health or emotional well-being), please contact the Office of Student Life in Elizabeth Moore Hall (293-5611). The Dean of Student Life will authorize arrangements for you. Please also reach out to relevant support services on campus: e.g., the Carruth Center.

DEADLINES: The dates for work to be submitted are final. Exceptions will be made only in cases of illness or personal emergency, for which written documentation (e.g., a doctor's note) is required. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date: if they are not handed in at the beginning of class, they will be considered late. Please note: for each day that an assignment is late, you will lose 5% of your grade. This penalty includes both weekend days; hence, an assignment that is due on Friday but handed in on Monday will lose 15% (i.e., 5% for Saturday, Sunday, and Monday).

EMAIL: I am happy to respond to your emails but for any kind of substantive discussion about your work you should attend office hours or make an appointment to meet with me. Please expect me to respond to emails Monday to Friday only, and allow at least twenty-four hours for a response.

GRADING: Grades will be provided as letter grades, corresponding to the following percentage range:

A range	90-100%	A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79
B range	80-89%	A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76
C range	70-79%	A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72
D range	60-69%						
F	0-59%						

See, also, <http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/enrollmentandregistration/#gradestext>

PARTICIPATION: Participation includes completing the required reading on time, being punctual and professional, bringing detailed notes or questions to class, contributing to discussion, demonstrating active listening skills, and engaging respectfully with other people's ideas.

Participation will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

- A up to 4 absences and excellent participation
- B up to 4 absences and strong participation
- C up to 4 absences and weak participation
- D up to 4 absences and no participation
- F more than 4 absences

PUBLIC WRITING: The writing that you produce for this course is public work. You should expect to share your writing with your classmates as well as with me. You will share your work online, through e-campus, as well as in class.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS: All assignments *must* be printed out and handed to me. I will not accept emailed assignments. Assignments are due at the start of class unless otherwise stipulated, and they will be considered late if they are not handed in by this time. Papers should be typed in a legible 12pt font and they should be double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Always number your pages and staple together each essay; on the front page, include your name, my name, and the date. You should always use MLA style. Finally, always include a title for your assignments.

Resources

ACADEMIC SUPPORT (at WVU and ONLINE)

MLA Style: <https://lib.wvu.edu/instruction/guides/mla.pdf>; & <https://lib.wvu.edu/instruction/guides/citation/>

WVU Library: <https://lib.wvu.edu/collections/>

Online Writing Lab (“OWL”) at Purdue University: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Grammar: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/>

Mechanics: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/4/>

MLA Style: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

The Writing Studio: <http://speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio>

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Counseling Services: http://well.wvu.edu/ccpps/counseling_services

Division of Student Life: <http://studentlife.wvu.edu/about>

Emotional and Physical Wellbeing: <http://well.wvu.edu/>

Student Disability Services: <http://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/accomm>

NB: The course outline below is subject to change. If changes are made, adequate notice will be given and a new schedule will be distributed.

SCHEDULE

Date	Reading	Assignments Due
T 1/10 R 1/12	Introduction and Overview Warsan Shire, <i>Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth</i>	
T 1/17 R 1/19	Shire cont.; & Guillory chapter from <i>Cultural Capital</i> Shire cont., Showalter, "A Literature of their Own"	
T 1/24 R 1/26	IN-CLASS ESSAY, SHIRE No class	IN-CLASS ESSAY
T 1/31 R 2/2	Wikipedia & Women's Writing: w/ Kelly Doyle Woolf, <i>A Room of One's Own</i>	Group Presentation 1
T 2/7 R 2/9	Wollstonecraft, from <i>A Vindication</i> Rhys, <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>	Group Presentation 2
T 2/14 R 2/16	" " " "	
T 2/21 R 2/23	Asante, <i>Belle</i> " "	MID-TERM ESSAY (<i>Sargasso</i>)
T 2/28 R 3/2	Brontë, <i>The Tenant of Wildfell Hall</i> " "	Group Presentation 3
T 3/14 R 3/16	" " " "	Group Presentation 4
T 3/7 R 3/9	*** SPRING RECESS ***	
T 3/21 R 3/23	Aboulela, <i>Minaret</i> " "	Group Presentation 5
T 3/28 R 3/30	" " " "	CREATIVE PROJECT DUE
T 4/4 R 4/6	Carter, <i>The Bloody Chamber</i> " "	
T 4/11 R 4/13	" " " "	Group Presentation 6
T 4/18 R 4/20	Final Paper Proposal: Peer Review Writing Class	PROPOSAL DUE
T 4/25 R 4/27	Writing Class Essays Due	FINAL ESSAY DUE
May 1-5		