

ENGL 285: Images of Women in Irish Literature

Spring 2014

Prof. Lisa Weihman

Tuesdays/Thursdays 10:00 – 11:15

CRN 15854 Spring 2014

301 Hodges Hall

Office Hours: 1:00-2:00 T/TH and by appointment in 313 Colson Hall

Course Description:

This class will explore images of women in Irish literature, with a focus on gender and nationalism in the twentieth century. Authors will include Elizabeth Bowen, W. B. Yeats, Sean O'Casey, Julia O'Faolain, Eilean Ni Chuilleanain, Eavan Boland, Medbh McGuckian and many others. We will read plays, poem and short stories. There are seven writing and research based assignments, including a researched position paper, plus three exams. . In addition to learning quite a bit about the representation of women in Irish literature and culture, this course will also teach you information literacy skills you will need to be competitive in today's workforce: finding critical sources using a variety of research tools; analyzing sources of information for accuracy and value; forming an argument about the information you have found; reading analytically and critically, not just for superficial knowledge of plot; writing an argumentative essay; presenting information orally to an audience and fielding questions from the audience about your work in progress, among other skills. While all of these skills will be applied specifically to literature in this class, the basic skills themselves are widely transferrable and will be need in most future careers. In addition to building your information literacy skills and learning a lot of factual information about our subject, I hope that you will also experience the pleasure of immersing yourself in literature. Not everything we read will be to everyone's tastes every time, but it is my hope that you will find a treasure somewhere on our syllabus.

GEC Objectives: This course fulfills the General Education Curriculum objective #5 (Artistic Expression).

Learning Outcomes:

- ◆ You will understand significantly more about the critical, formal and intellectual heritage of Irish literature and culture in the 20th century, as well as the representation of women in that literature.
- ◆ You will practice the critical reading of both literary texts and academic writing about those texts
- ◆ You will analyze literature within its historical context and evaluate how literature reflects and effects social, political and economic forces
- ◆ You will learn more about the theoretical methodologies critics use when writing about literature
- ◆ You will employ oral communications skills through class discussion and formal presentations
- ◆ You will organize and compose research projects using a variety of source materials
 - Understand the structure of information within the field of literary research
 - Identify and use key literary research tools to locate relevant information
 - Plan effective search strategies
 - Recognize and make appropriate use of library services in the research process
 - Understand that some information sources are more authoritative than others and demonstrate critical thinking in the research process

Required Texts:

Modern and Contemporary Irish Drama, ed. Harrington (MCID)

The Wake Forest Book of Irish Women's Poetry 1967-2000, ed. O'Brien (WFBIWP)

Cutting the Night in Two, ed. Conlon (CNIT)

Suggestions for Success and General Notes:

- 1) You must read ahead for our class discussions. I want conversation in this class, not just lecture, so I depend on you to keep up with the reading and to come prepared with good discussion questions.
- 2) Check your MIX account regularly for updates.
- 3) Be polite about entering and exiting the classroom, cell phones, computer usage, etc. during class.
- 4) TAKE NOTES. Exams are drawn almost exclusively from our daily discussions, so your notes are going to be crucial to your success in this class. Write them in a notebook or on a computer, but definitely write things down.
- 5) Use your resources wisely and well. WVU provides you with experts in many areas that we will be discussing, along with free Writing Center resources, Term Paper Clinic resources, and kindly, experienced librarians who will help you in all sorts of ways to succeed. Learn to use these resources and then use them to your advantage.
- 6) If you are absent it is your responsibility to get the day's notes from a fellow classmate. Make friends, exchange emails and phone numbers, and take responsibility for coming to class whenever physically possible. If you want to discuss what you missed in detail, make an appointment to meet with me.
- 7) If you are getting a D or an F in the class by mid-semester, you will receive a midterm report. Drop the class while there is still time.
- 8) I check my email regularly but not obsessively, and I do not generally respond to emails over the weekend. If you write to say you are ill, I will only respond if you ask me to respond to a specific query. If you write and do not receive a reply within a day or two, please let me know at the next class. There have been issues with email systems at WVU in recent years and sometimes emails go astray.
- 9) I have a mailbox in the English Department's main office in Colson Hall.

Attendance Policy

I expect you to attend class regularly and significant absences will negatively impact your final grade. People who do not attend do poorly on the quizzes and miss important information about the work in progress; people who attend regularly can expect to do well in this class. If you are contagious, stay home. Attendance will be taken for every class. There is no such thing as an "excused" absence other than university sanctioned events. You do not need to email or call if you are ill, but it is wise to do so if you are going to miss more than two classes in a row for any reason. **I reserve the right to give you an "F" for the semester if you miss a total of six classes over the course of the semester. Come to class on time, try to participate in every class, and expect to stay for the entire time.** Do not schedule advising, medical or other appointments during our class time – an absence is an absence, regardless of your reason for missing class. If you are going to miss a lot of class due to a family emergency, illness, or some other personal crisis, please contact the Office of Student Life (304-293-5611). The Office of Student Life will contact all of your professors regarding your emergency and will help you work through the impact of your crisis on your academic career.

West Virginia University Academic Integrity Statement

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the Student Conduct Code http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct/student_conduct_code. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

Inclusivity Statement

The West Virginia University community 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 (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

Student Evaluation of Instruction Statement

Effective teaching is a primary mission of West Virginia University. Student evaluation of instruction provides the university and the instructor with feedback about your experiences in the course for review and course improvement. Your participation in the evaluation of course instruction is both strongly encouraged and highly valued. Results are strictly confidential, anonymous, and not available to the instructor until after final grades are released by Admissions and Records. Information about how you can complete this evaluation will be provided.

Submission Requirements:

- 1) All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins, in a standard font.
- 2) MLA citation methodology is our default method in English, but you should use what is most common in your major. Consistency and accuracy are necessary.
- 3) **Hard Copy Only – all work. Budget both time and money for printing. Do not email attachments to me unless I have told you to do so (because of special circumstances).**
- 4) Keep copies of all your work.
- 5) The paper length is a suggestion, not a mandate, but you should hit the minimum page requirements for each assignment.
- 6) Hand in work on time. **Late submissions will lose 5pts per day.** If you run into trouble, talk to me before the assignment is due.

Grading Criteria: Note that while I indicate what it takes to reach a “plus” or “minus” grade, the letter grade alone is what factors into your GPA. The “plus” or “minus” is an indicator of your standing within the grade range. For example, you must achieve 80% of all possible points in order to earn the lowest possible B in the class (a B-). In order to earn a B, you must earn at least 83% of the points possible, or 332 points, and a B+ begins at 352 points. I give an A+ to the person who scores the most points in the class.

372 – 400: A

360 – 371: A-

352 – 359: B+

332 – 351: B

320 – 331: B-

312 – 319: C+

292 – 311: C

280 – 291: C-

272 – 279: D+

252 – 271: D

240 – 251: D-

0 – 239: F

A – Excellent Work. The assignments for this course have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The written assignments are clearly organized, choose compelling evidence to substantiate analysis, and engage with the subject at hand in a thoughtful and thought-provoking manner. Final drafts of written work requires no substantive or stylistic revisions, whether it appears on an exam, quiz, or in an essay. Oral work is well-researched, and presented in an articulate, easy-to-follow manner, with clearly designed and relevant support materials.

B – Good Work. The assignments for the course have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The written assignments show substantial engagement with the subject at hand, but the analysis is either partially incomplete, invoking weak evidence, or manifests some difficulty with organization. Written work requires some substantive revisions, but few or no stylistic ones. Oral work is well-researched and presented in a reasonably organized, if not consistently articulate, fashion; the supporting materials are relevant, with minimal flaws in design.

C – Average Work. The assignments for this course have been completed, but not necessarily in a timely or professional manner. The written assignments show effort by the student, but the analysis is incomplete, evidence is inappropriate or there is a lack of evidence, or there is significant difficulty with organization. Written work, whether on a test, essay, or

quiz, requires significant substantive or stylistic revisions. Oral work reflects some, but not thorough, research; the presentation is organized, but not presented in an articulate fashion; the supporting materials are relevant, but not complete.

D – Less than average work. The assignments for the course have not been completed in a professional or timely manner. The written assignments show a lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment. Written assignments lack analysis, evidence, and organization; extensive substantive and stylistic revisions are necessary. Oral work shows minimal effort at research, organization, and design, undermining the student's ability to explain the subject of his/her presentation to the class.

F – Inadequate work. The assignments for the course have not been completed. Written assignments, when submitted, show a significant lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment and the subject matter of the course. Such work is marked by the absence of analysis, evidence, and organization; engagement with the course materials is necessary before extensive revisions are even possible. Oral work demonstrates a lack of effort by the student to pursue or to organize the research necessary for oral presentation.

Grades of Incomplete will ONLY be given if you have completed at least 75% of our class work, and only at my discretion; you must discuss your situation with me before grades are due and complete a work contract with me in advance of the end of the semester.

Assignment Details

Assignment #1: There are three women represented in the play *Cathleen ni Houlihan*: Bridget Gillane, Delia Cahel, and the Poor Old Woman, and each may be said to represent a different facet of Irish womanhood. Write a paragraph about how Yeats portrays each woman (drawing upon quotes from the play to support your points) and make a claim about what you think each woman represents to readers or viewers of the play. Due 1/16/14 **25 points**

Assignment #2: "The Playboy of the Western World": Write a short essay (3 paragraphs) that argues for three reasons why Irish nationalists might have been offended by the Abbey Theatre's production of this play in 1907. Cite any sources you use to aid you in this assignment. Due 1/23/14 **25 points**

Assignment #3: Write a short essay (3 paragraphs) about the representation of motherhood in O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*. Four mothers are represented in the text: Juno Boyle, Mrs. Tancred, Mary (the mother to be) and, more obliquely but still importantly, the Virgin Mary. How does O'Casey characterize motherhood, and how does the representation of mothers reflect or impact your understanding of the play's message? Due 2/4/14 **25 points**

Assignment #4: Write a paragraph from the perspective of the Catwoman about what happens in Act Two of *By the Bog of Cats* by Marina Carr. Be creative. Due 2/11/14 **25 points**

Assignment #5: Partnered Poetry Presentation: Working with a partner (or in groups of three), you will find two authoritative sources of information about the poet/poem you are assigned. Each person will write up a source summary of one of the essays (1-2 pp; **25 points**); if you are in a group of three, two people can write on the same essay. Together you will present your interpretation of the poem to the class, with reference to the research essays, and will lead class discussion of the poem on the assigned day. 10-12 minutes; **25 points. (50 points total for this assignment)**

Eavan Boland, "Making Up" (4-5) 2/18/14

Eavan Boland, "Night Feed" (10) 2/18/14

Eavan Boland, "The Oral Tradition" (11) 2/20/14

Eavan Boland, "The Achill Woman" (20-21) 2/20/14

Eavan Boland, "That the Science of Cartography is Limited" (23-4) 2/20/14

Eavan Boland, "The Dolls Museum in Dublin" (24-5) 2/20/14

Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, "The Lady's Tower" (47) 2/25/14

Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, "J'ai Mal à nos Dents" (63) 2/25/14

Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, "The Real Thing" (70) 2/25/14

Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, "Bessboro" (81) 2/25/14

Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, "Translation: For the reburial of the Magdalens" (82-3) 2/25/14

Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, "Poem for Melissa" (133) 3/4/14

Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill "As for the Quince" (142-3) 3/4/14

Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill "Nude" (150-51) 3/6/14

Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, "Hag" (153) 3/6/14

Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, "First Communion" (166) 3/6/14

Assignment #6 Eilis Ni Dhuibhne's "Summer Pudding" Write a short essay examining how Ni Dhuibhne's short story "Summer Pudding" interrogates/examines/contests/resurrects/reifies (whatever verb you feel is most appropriate to the story) images of Irish womanhood we have examined throughout the semester. What does Ni Dhuibhne want us to take away from her story about how Irish women are portrayed in literature? You might consider our conversations about women's mobility; class issues; the relationship of women to the nation, nationalism, political life; their roles within the family; religious faith; sexuality, etc. (25 points) 4/8/13

Assignment #7: The Research Paper on Women's Social History in Ireland. You will choose a topic relating to women's history and social life in Ireland to research. Topics include women's suffrage, immigration, women in the nationalist and unionist movements, women during wartime, infanticide, women's health (including sexuality, birth control, abortion rights); queer history and LGBTQ rights in Ireland, marriage and divorce in Irish culture and political life, and other topics with approval. You must find at least two authoritative sources on your topic, and write a 5+pp position paper (i.e., a paper in which you state an opinion and support that opinion with data from your research). The paper is worth **75 points**. We will be sharing our findings during class discussion, so be prepared to speak on your topic for 2-3 minutes in class. This project is due during Finals Week and is in lieu of a final exam. It needs to be submitted prior to 3:00 pm on Tuesday, April 29 to my mailbox in Colson Hall

EXAMS: There will be three scheduled exams, **each worth 50 points**. These will include both objective and subjective questions, including identification, short answer and short essay questions.

There will be no extra credit assigned in this class.

CLASS SCHEDULE: ENGL 285 Images of Women in Irish Literature

| WEEK | DATE | TOPIC/ASSIGNMENTS DUE | TO BE DISCUSSED |
|------|---------|--|---|
| 1 | 1/9/14 | INTRODUCTIONS | Class Policies; Syllabus |
| 2 | 1/14/14 | W.B. Yeats | <i>Cathleen ni Houlihan</i> |
| | 1/16/14 | W.B. Yeats | Essays on <i>Cathleen</i> : MCID 412-32 |
| 3 | 1/21/14 | J.M. Synge | <i>Playboy of the Western World</i> Acts 1 & 2 |
| | 1/23/14 | J.M. Synge | <i>Playboy of the Western World</i> Act 3 + MCID 453-72 |
| 4 | 1/28/14 | Library Instruction Day | Meet in the Downtown Library |
| | 1/30/14 | Sean O'Casey | <i>Juno and the Paycock</i> Acts 1 & 2 |
| 5 | 2/4/14 | Sean O'Casey | <i>Juno and the Paycock</i> Act 3 + MCID 502-16 |
| | 2/6/14 | Marina Carr | <i>By the Bog of Cats</i> Acts 1 & 2 |
| 6 | 2/11/14 | Marina Carr | <i>By the Bog of Cats</i> Act 3 + MCID 587-93 |
| | 2/13/14 | Exam One | |
| 7 | 2/18/14 | Eavan Boland | Poems in WFBIWP |
| | 2/20/14 | Eavan Boland | Poems in WFBIWP |
| 8 | 2/25/14 | Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin | Poems in WFBIWP |
| | 2/27/14 | Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin | Poems in WFBIWP (mid-semester is 2/28/14) |
| 9 | 3/4/14 | Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill | Poems in WFBIWP + handout: "Corpse" essay |
| | 3/6/14 | Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill | Poems in WFBIWP |
| 10 | 3/11/14 | SPRING BREAK 2014 | |
| | 3/13/14 | | |
| 11 | 3/18/14 | Medbh McGuckian | Poems in WFBIWP |
| | 3/20/14 | Medbh McGuckian | Poems in WFBIWP |
| 12 | 3/25/14 | Exam Two | |
| | 3/27/14 | <i>The Magdalene Sisters</i> (film) | Location TBA |
| 13 | 4/1/14 | <i>Sex in a Cold Climate</i> | Location TBA |
| | 4/3/14 | Edna O'Brien, "Sister Imelda" | (handout) |
| 14 | 4/8/14 | Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, "Summer Pudding" | CNIT |
| | 4/10/14 | Hoult/Bowen/Lavin | CNIT |
| 15 | 4/15/14 | Strong/O'Faolain/Boylan | CNIT |
| | 4/17/14 | Exam Three | |
| 16 | 4/22/14 | Sharing Research Projects | 2-3 minute presentations |
| | 4/24/14 | LAST CLASS | Course Evaluations, Sharing Research Projects |
| 17 | 4/29/14 | Research Projects due to Prof. Weihman's Colson Hall mailbox by 3:00 pm | |

This syllabus is subject to change with adequate notice. Be certain to pay attention in class for specific instructions regarding assignments.