

Spring 2015

**WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of English**

Professor Ethel Morgan Smith  
331 Colson Hall  
304-293-9732  
Ethel.smith@mail.wvu.edu  
(I don't use mix)

Office Hours-4:00-5:30 pm  
Tuesday and by appointment

**English 285 Images of Women in Literature**

This course will examine relationships in the lives of women of various ages in different circumstances as they are presented to us in fiction and drama. The selected works should heighten familiarity with an appreciation for representations of women and women literature as well as enhance close reading, writing, and speaking skills. Student participation is essential to the development of competency in analyzing these literary works, thus students are expected to be prepared for class by completing the reading prior to class discussion, and further to participate in class orally. **Reading is a must in this class!**

**CLASS OBJECTIVES**

To stimulate the understanding and enjoyment of women's literary works in relation to their historical period and their relationship to experience and culture

To develop the ability to read literary texts for meaning, structure and style

To develop critical reading, writing, and thinking skills through the analysis of literary works of various groups of women

To deepen your understanding of American literature and culture through the specialized study of and focus on works by women as important components of American literature, culture, and aesthetics

To recognize and critically analyze selected women's works through genre, predominate themes, literary movements, and relationship to historical and social contexts.

**CLASS PROCEDURES**

1. **Attendance** is very necessary! If you cannot attend class for some reason, you are responsible for finding out from a classmate what you have missed, and what the assignment is for the next class meeting. **Please do not call or email me to ask me for assignments you've missed.** You are expected to be prepared to participate fully in the class discussion on the day you return to class, and to hand in any assignment that is due. **If you miss more than two class periods, losing one point from your total grade for each class period you miss will penalize you.**

2. **Class participation** will be an important portion of your grade, not that it will be equivalent in value to quizzes and exams. I will assume that each of you would have read the assignment, and I will, therefore, feel free to call on you. Furthermore, student questions and comments provide a springboard for starting class discussions. The rationale is that this allows me to see if students are reading and understanding the texts. And there might be students who have questions and feel embarrassed to share them with the class.

3. **To prepare yourself** for class discussions, **mark what you read by underlining passages**, or by writing the page and paragraph number down so that you can easily refer to materials quickly. What I mean by that is material that strikes you as important or interesting, or part of the text that you simply do not understand. This is a time to raise questions as well. You will also receive a work sheet with elements of fiction that is very helpful when analyzing literary work.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Class Participation	20%
Two Quizzes (Unannounced)	20%
Midterm Examination	25%
Final Examination	35%

**Grading Rubric:** 100-90=A; 89-80=B; 79-70=C; 69-60=D; 59-below =F

### **Grading Criteria for Short and Long Essay Exam Questions**

**90%-100%-A Excellent Work** The essay states an interesting thesis, clearly and originally phrased, which responds directly to the question or prompt. The essay goes on to support the thesis with substantial reference to and analysis of the primary texts. The analysis demonstrates original insight into literary and historical issues discussed in class. The argument is logically and coherently developed. The style is fluent; grammar and mechanics demonstrate mastery of the conventions of standard written English.

**80%-89%-B Good Work** The essay states an interesting thesis, clearly phrased, which responds directly to the question or prompt. The essay goes on to support the thesis with reference to and analysis of the primary texts. The analysis demonstrates good awareness of the literary and historical issues discussed in class. The argument is logically and coherently developed. Grammar and mechanics demonstrate mastery of the conventions of standard written English.

**70%-79%-C Average Work** The essay states a thesis that responds directly to the question or prompts. The essay goes on to support the thesis with reference to the primary texts. The analysis demonstrates awareness of the literary and historical issues discussed in class. The argument is logically and coherently developed. Grammar and mechanics demonstrate competence in conventions of standard written English.

**60%-69%-D Below Average Work** The essay frames a topic that responds to the question or prompts. The essay goes on to identify primary texts relevant to that topic. The essay demonstrates some awareness of the literary and historical issues discussed in class. Grammar and mechanics demonstrate competence in conventions of standard written English.

**60%-F Failing Work** The essay fails to frame a response to the question or prompt. The essay demonstrates only minimal awareness of the literary and historical issues discussed in class.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

### **Books**

*House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros

*The Truly Needy* by Lucy Honig

*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs

*Her* by Crista Parravani

*Ghana Must Go* by Taiye Selasi

### **Films**

*The Children's Hour*

*A Raisin in the Sun*

*Revolutionary Road*

**By the end of the semester, students will be able to read and analyze literary texts of women's literature for meaning, structure, style, culture, and history. Furthermore, students should also be able to discuss and explore the unique experiences of women and apply knowledge from the texts to contemporary issues faced by women. Skills acquired in the classroom can also be applied to other literary works as well.**

**CLASS SCHEDULE (subject to change)****Week of:**

- Aug 18<sup>th</sup>** Introduction-Review of Syllabus-Discussion and Expectations  
**Assignment:** Continue *The Children's Hour*
- Aug 25<sup>th</sup>** Complete film and class discussion about the text  
**Assignment:** *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
- Sept 1<sup>st</sup>** Continue *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
- Sept 7<sup>th</sup>** **Labor Day Recess**
- Sept 8<sup>th</sup>** Complete: *IITLOASG*  
**Assignment:** *House on Mango Street*
- Sept 9<sup>th</sup>** **Mark Brazaitis & Faith Shearin Reading-Robinson Reading Room  
WVU Downtown Library- 7:30-9:00 pm.**
- Sept 15<sup>th</sup>** Discussion *House on Mango Street*  
**Assignment:** *Ghana Must Go*
- Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>** Start discussion of novel discussion
- Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>** **Yom Kippur (Day of Special Concern)**
- Sept 29<sup>th</sup>** Continue *Ghana Must Go*
- Oct 6<sup>th</sup>** **Mid Term Examination**
- Oct 7<sup>th</sup>** **Alison Bass Reading- 130 Colson Hall- 7:30-9:00 pm**
- Oct 13<sup>th</sup>** **Fall Recess**
- Oct 14<sup>th</sup>** **Semi Annual Pizza Party  
130 Colson Hall- 11:30-1:00 pm**
- Oct 15<sup>th</sup>** **Susan Straight Reading-Robinson Reading Room-WVU Downtown  
Library- 7:30-9:00 pm**
- Oct 15-20<sup>th</sup>** **Professor Smith-Turin Literary Festival**
- Oct 15<sup>th</sup>** *Revolutionary Road*

<b>Oct 20<sup>th</sup></b>	Continue film
<b>Oct 27<sup>th</sup></b>	Discussion of Film
<b>Nov 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>Election Day (no class)</b>
<b>Nov 5-17<sup>th</sup></b>	Wrap up the semester. Some of the texts will take longer than others. All of the time allotted will be used.
<b>Oct 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Susan Straight-Robinson Reading Room- 7:30-9:00 pm</b>
<b>Nov 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Kevin Oderman &amp; Sarah Einstein Reading-Robinson Reading-7:30-9:00 pm</b>
<b>Nov 21-29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Thanksgiving Recess</b>
<b>Dec 1<sup>st</sup></b>	Complete Details before Final Exam (TBA)
<b>Dec 8<sup>th</sup></b>	Last Day of Classes
<b>Dec 10-16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Final Exam Week</b>

## **HONOR CODE**

Any work that you submit must be your own. In addition, any words, ideas, or data that you use from another source (individual, website, and published text) must be properly documented. It is your responsibility to learn the rules and conventions of citing sources in your academic work. If you have questions about academic citation, consult with me during office hours or raise your issue in class. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses. Clear cases will result in an **F** for the course and appropriate academic sanctions. Please see the WVU Undergraduate Catalog section on Academic Integrity/Dishonesty for a full explanations and procedures.

## **LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

WVU is committed to social justice. I support that commitment and will work to create a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and nondiscrimination. I welcome suggestions for further such an environment. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran's status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. If you are an individual in a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me, and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services at 304-293-6700.

