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WS 119.01: Philosophical Perspectives on Women in the Western Hemisphere

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Spring 2003

Philosophical Perspectives on Women in the Western Hemisphere
LS119/Phil.119/WS 119

Dr. Ruth Vanita

Grader: Bridget Whearty

Tuesday, Thursday, 9.40-11 a.m. SS344. 3 credits

Office: Liberal Arts 146-A. Office Phone: 243-4894. Email: rvanita@selway.umt.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday, 11-12, Wednesday, 12-1, and by appointment

Texts

1. Sappho, Poems
2. Euripides, Medea
3. Christine de Pizan The Book of the City of Ladies
4. Henrik Ibsen, A Doll's House
5. Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland
6. Jeannette Winterson, Written on the Body
7. Facpac, available from Denny's Copy Stop, 2330 South Higgins (Corner of South and Higgins).

Requirements

Students are required to
(a) attend classes regularly. More than two absences not explained to my satisfaction will result in a zero for attendance and class participation; leaving early or coming late without explanation will be treated as an absence. Explanations must be communicated to me in person and accepted by me. Acceptable explanations are illness (backed up by a medical certificate) and emergencies such as major sickness in the family or serious weather conditions.
(b) keep up with the assigned reading, bring the text to class, participate in class discussions.
(c) hand in a written discussion question/comment on the prescribed reading in each class.
(d) complete weekly quizzes and other in-class assignments, and take the mid-term exam.
(e) write a paper (4-5 pages double-spaced typed). Topics for papers must be selected from those given by me.
(f) Hand in a one-page titled abstract of the paper in advance, and discuss it with me during office hours. The abstract must state your thesis, and summarize your argument.
Grades:

The mid-term exam will be worth 20%, the paper 15%, the abstract 5%, class attendance and participation 20%, quizzes and other in-class assignments 20%, written questions and comments 20%.

Quizzes will contain both multiple-choice type questions and short answer questions and are designed to test whether you have read the prescribed texts and remember the basic facts about the author and the text, as well as information communicated in lectures.

Papers must (a) address the topic (b) have a clear thesis/argument (c) support the argument with textual evidence (d) adhere to the conventions of academic writing, including correct grammar and syntax. Except in the case of proven emergency demonstrated to my satisfaction, papers handed in late without prior permission from me, will result in a decreased grade.

If you take this class for a letter grade, D is a passing grade. However, if you take this class Pass/Not Pass, you need to earn a C to pass since D is not a passing grade for Pass/Not Pass students.

If you have any condition, such as a physical or learning disability, that will make it difficult for you to complete the work as I have outlined it, please notify me in the first week of class.

Reading Schedule

This schedule is tentative. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with any changes.

January 28 Introduction

January 30 Sappho, Poems, Nos. 1-61

February 4 Sappho, Poems Nos. 62-100. In-class written response to a Sappho poem.

February 6 Extract from Plato, Symposium (facpac). Quiz. Lecture on Greek goddesses.

February 11 Book of Genesis, Chapters 1, 2, 3 (facpac). Quiz.

February 13 Euripides, Medea.

February 18 Euripides, Medea continued. Quiz.

February 20 Ecclesiasticus, chapter 24, and Gospel according to St Luke, Chapter 1 (both in facpac). Quiz.
February 25 *The Book of the City of Ladies* Part I, chapters 1-19. **Quiz.**

February 27 *The Book of the City of Ladies* Part I, chapters 27-32, 34, 35, 43, 44. **Quiz.**

March 6 *The Book of the City of Ladies* Part II, 36, 44, 47, 53, 56, Part III, chapters 1, 2, 12, 17, 19. **Quiz.**

March 11 Extract from Henricus Cornelius Agrippa, *Declaration on the Nobility and Preeminence of the Female Sex* and extract from Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* (facpac). **Quiz.**

March 13 Mid-term exam.

March 18 Lecture and slide show by Monica Bachmann on sex and gender categorization, followed by discussion.

March 20 Selections from *History of Woman Suffrage* and John Ruskin, “Of Queens’ Gardens” (facpac). **Quiz.**

March 24-28 Spring Break.

April 1 *Alice in Wonderland*, chapters 1-6. **Quiz.**

April 3 *Alice in Wonderland*, 7-12, and Freud, “On the Sexual Enlightenment of Children” (facpac). **Quiz.**

April 8 Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll’s House* Acts I and II. **Quiz.**

April 10 *A Doll’s House*, Act III, and Virginia Woolf, “Professions for Women” (facpac). **Quiz.**


April 17 Simone de Beauvoir, extract from *The Second Sex* (facpac). **Quiz.**

April 22 Joan Dunayer, “Sexist Words, Speciesist Roots” (facpac). **Quiz**

April 24 Andrew Sullivan, extract from *Virtually Normal*; Suzanne Kessler, “The Medical Construction of Gender”; Florence Dillon, “Tell Grandma I’m a Boy.” (facpac). **Quiz.**

April 29 *Written on the Body*, 1-76. **Hand in abstract of paper, in class.**

May 1 *Written on the Body*, 76-140.
May 6 Written on the Body, 141-end.

May 8 Conclusion. Hand in paper, in class.

May 15, 8-10 a.m. Final meeting