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LS 119H.01: Philosophical Perspectives on Women in the Western Hemisphere

Kelly McGanon

University of Montana, Missoula

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University of Montana, Missoula
Spring Semester, 2007
WS 119/LS 119/Phil. 119

Introduction to Women's Studies
Perspectives on Women in Western Hemisphere

Instructor: Kelly McGannon
Office: LA 142A
Office Hours: T: 11am-12.30pm/TH: 2-3.30pm
Phone: Office: x4894/Home: 609-240-6318
Email: kellymcgannon@gmail.com
Grader: Colin Smith; ravendigitalis@gmail.com

Course Description

Welcome to the Department of Women's Studies! WS 119 is designed to introduce you to the rich world of women – who they are, what they think, what they struggle against, how they have grown, and how they are perceived by others. In short, this class will present you with the opportunity to explore what it means to be a woman from the perspective of women.

My hope for you is that by absorbing and mulling over these readings, you will be able to more fully understand the world of the “fairer sex” – its simplicities and its complexities; its experiences and its struggles; its laughter and its pain. We will study how women have evolved with time and how they continue to evolve today.

Requirements and Grading

To successfully complete this course, you must submit and do the following:

- ❖ Come to class prepared and ready to participate [15%]
- ❖ Quick Writes – both in class and out of class [15%]
- ❖ Three Essays [1st = 10%; 2nd & 3rd = 15% each]
- ❖ Complete a midterm & final exam [15% each/30% total]

1. Participation/Attendance

This course relies heavily upon your thoughts and questions. I would rather hear your fresh ideas and points of view than hear *myself* chat for three hours each and every class. Having said that, **COME PREPARED!** To help you do this, I will supply you with a list of questions upon which to focus your reading. In the event that a concept or point of view still evades you, do not hesitate to contact either myself or Colin. Also, please remember that your peers are excellent resources as well. Discussion brings illumination – chat away! Because I want to encourage discussion in this course whenever possible, I have included it in the class requirements. Therefore, attendance in this course becomes paramount. Unexcused absences and tardiness *hinder* your ability to successfully complete this course.

nota bene: Excessive absences will result in the failure of this course! Attendance is taken in the beginning of class; if you are not present at that time, then I consider you absent. **Missing more than ONE class will seriously affect your grade. Missing THREE or more will lower your overall letter grade by one whole letter every day you are absent. (If you have an A in the course and you miss three classes your grade will automatically become a B. Miss a fourth class and it becomes a C and so on). Miss SIX courses and you've failed.**

You are responsible for all work you miss. Nothing can be made up unless you have a terrific reason (this includes documentation) for missing yours. Finally, *be considerate of others:* **NO** meals in class, **NO** cell phones (make sure yours is turned off; I've been known to answer students' phones in class), head to the bathroom before class starts, etc...

A word on tardiness: aside from being one of my largest pet peeves, I also consider it both disruptive and disrespectful. I understand there are times that arriving late cannot be avoided but do *make an effort* to be on time.

2. Quick Writes

Periodically, I will give you an in-class writing assignment centered on previous readings, often from the class before. You will be given approximately 15 minutes to write on these assigned topics. In order to keep you on your toes, there will be times when I will assign you a topic or question to write upon outside of class. For this assignment, you will write a one page, typed, double spaced response to be handed in on the next class session.

3. *Essays*

Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to write a variety of essays. These essays will vary in topic and due date – you may write on any book you wish! However, I ask that you turn in **one paper to me before Spring Break and another before the Final Exam.** The third paper may be written at any point in the semester.

Several broad topics will be provided in advance; you should choose one of these topics and apply it to a text or texts from our reading. These essays should offer your interpretation, supported by ample evidence (including quotations and page numbers from the reading). Plot summaries and reports will not receive passing grades.

Often one is not certain what one thinks about a text or piece of literature until one writes on it. Your goal with these essays then is to take the idea at hand and mull it over until it becomes something uniquely yours. I will be on hand to help you achieve this objective. You will find that even as these three weeks progress, your writing, no matter how excellent, will be taken to a new level. You will learn to refine and polish your thinking, as well as write your thoughts in a concise, yet creative manner. Feel free to approach me about rough drafts or ideas. I am happy to help you any way I can.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated! I expect your essays to be your own work. **Any student caught plagiarizing or cheating will fail this course.** If you are uncertain of what constitutes plagiarism, do come and see me. For further details, refer to the section on Academic Misconduct in the Student Conduct Code.

Essays are to be handed to me during class on the day they are due. Late papers will only be accepted if I am made aware of the reason at least 24 hours before they are due. If you have a family emergency or serious illness, please contact me as soon as possible.

4. *Exams*

There will be both a midterm and a final exam. They will each equal 15% of your final grade and will include IDs, passages, and essays. Together they equal 30% of your final grade. As the time nears, I will be sure to go over expectations and answer any questions you may have. Keep these dates in mind – they are final and cannot be changed. **Midterm: March 22/Final: Monday, May 7, 8am-10am**

Texts

All of the following texts can be found in the bookstore or online. Additionally, there will be several supplementary handouts during the course of the semester. I encourage you to mark up your texts with any thoughts and ideas that come your way in the midst of reading. These will become important in class, as I will ask you what passages struck you most, etc...

- ✦ Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Purple Hibiscus*. (Anchor Books)
- ✦ de Pizan, Christine. *The Book of the City of Ladies*. (Penguin)
- ✦ Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Woman Warrior*. (Vintage)
- ✦ Larsen, Nella. *Passing*. (Dover)
- ✦ Mernissi, Fatima. *Dreams of Trespass*. (Basic Books)
- ✦ Undset, Sigrid. *Kristin Lavransdatter I: The Wreath*. (trans. Tiina Nunnally, Penguin)
- ✦ Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. (Dover Thrift Editions)
- ✦ Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. (Harcourt)

INTRO:

1/23 T Introduction to course & each other

PART I: A Woman's Voice in a Man's World

1/25 TH *The Book of the City of Ladies*
Part I: 1-4, 11, 16, 18, 27, 37, 43 (pp. 5-23; 29-30; 37-38; 40-43; 57-58; 70-71, 78-80)

1/30 T *The Book of the City of Ladies*
Part II: 22-23, 25, 29-30, 34, 47, 62-63 (pp. 107-110; 123-124; 128-131; 139-141; 150-152; 169-170; 188-189).
Part III: 1-2, 18-19 (pp. 201-203, 235-240)

2/1 TH *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
Letter to M. Talleyrand-Perigord (pp. 1-4), Introduction (pp. 6-10),
Chapters 1-3 (pp. 11-51).

2/6 T *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
Chapters 5, 9, 12-13 (pp. 79-117; 145-154; 163-201)

PART II: Women Creating Lives of Their Own

2/8 TH *A Room of One's Own*
(pp. 3-57)

2/13 T*	<i>A Room of One's Own</i> (pp. 58-114)	[<i>City of Ladies</i> paper due]
2/15 TH	<i>Kristin Lavransdatter</i> (pp. 3-73)	
2/20 T	<i>Kristin Lavransdatter</i> (pp. 74-121)	
2/22 TH	<i>Kristin Lavransdatter</i> (pp. 122-181)	
2/27 T*	<i>Kristin Lavransdatter</i> (pp. 182-297)	[<i>Vindication</i> paper due]

PART III: Women Confronting Other Women

3/1 TH	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> (pp. 3-53)	
3/6 T*	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> (pp. 57-109)	[<i>Kristin Lavransdatter</i> paper due]
3/8 TH	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> (pp. 113-160)	
3/13 T	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> (pp. 163-209)	
3/15 TH	<i>Passing</i> (read the Introduction, pp. 1-47)	
3/20 T	<i>Passing</i> (pp. 47-94)	
3/22 TH*	Midterm	[<i>Warrior Woman</i> paper due]

March 26-30 Spring Break

PART IV: Women: Concealed and Revealed

4/3 T*	<i>Dreams of Trespass</i> (pp. 1-47)	[<i>Passing</i> paper due]
4/5 TH	<i>Dreams of Trespass</i> (pp. 49-100)	
4/10 T	<i>Dreams of Trespass</i> (pp. 103-173)	
4/12 TH	<i>Dreams of Trespass</i> (pp. 175-242)	
4/17 T*	<i>Purple Hibiscus</i> (pp. 3-70)	[<i>Dreams of Trespass</i> paper due]
4/19 TH	<i>Purple Hibiscus</i> (pp. 71-139)	
4/24 T	<i>Purple Hibiscus</i> (pp. 140-239)	
4/26 TH	<i>Purple Hibiscus</i> (pp. 240-307)	
5/1 T*	Review	[<i>Purple Hibiscus</i> paper due]
5/3 TH	TBA	

Final Exam, Monday, May 7, 8-10am