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WGSS 379.01: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth Century English Fiction

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Spring 2018

Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century English Fiction

GH 327L LIT 379L-1B WGS 379L-1B

Prof. Vanita

TR 12.30-1.50, LA103B

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Office Hours: Tuesday 11-12, Thursday 2.00-3.00, and by appointment

This course fulfills the Gen Ed Lit requirement and also fulfills requirements for the Global Humanities major (both options), the English major, and the Women & Gender Studies major and minor. It is also a capstone course for GHR majors.

Required Texts (only these editions are to be used)

1. E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924; Mariner Books)
2. Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925; Harvest Books, Harcourt)
3. James Baldwin, *Go Tell it on the Mountain* (1953; Vintage)
4. Christopher Isherwood, *A Single Man* (1964; U of Minnesota Press)
5. Vikram Seth, *The Golden Gate* (1986; Vintage)
6. Suniti Namjoshi, *The Conversations of Cow* (1985; on Moodle)
7. Coetzee, *Disgrace* (1999; Penguin)
8. Short stories on Moodle: D. H. Lawrence, "Odour of Chrysanthemums"(1911); James Joyce, "The Dead" (1914); Katherine Mansfield, "A Cup of Tea" (1922), "The Fly" (. [Go to my.umt.edu](http://my.umt.edu), click on Moodle, sign in and download these readings. Please print them out and bring them to class or bring them on a laptop)

Recommended Readings

1. Walter Pater, "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance* <http://www.authorama.com/renaissance-11.html>
2. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*.

Supplementary Readings on Moodle

Read these with the relevant texts, as follows:

1. With D. H. Lawrence, "Odour of Chrysanthemums," read his poem "Piano."
2. With Joyce, "The Dead," read "The Lass of Aughrim" and "Information about 'The Dead'"
3. With Mansfield's "The Fly," read William Blake, "The Fly."
4. With *A Passage to India*, read Lawrence's poem, "Snake."
5. With *Go Tell It*, read excerpts from Augustine's *Confessions* and *The Well of Loneliness*.

6. With *A Single Man*, read “F.O. Matthiessen’s Suicide,” poems by Tennyson and Tagore, and, if you wish, the interview with Isherwood.
7. With *Disgrace*, read Byron’s poem, and, if you wish, the excerpts from the Bible and Shakespeare
8. Notes on writing, interpretation, and authorial intention.

Goals

To examine how gender and sexuality are represented and explored in major twentieth-century fiction in English, including the following themes: gender roles, power conflicts, gender inequality, friendship, celibacy, heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, transsexual and transgender existence, androgyny, religion, animals, experience that may be beyond gender. To examine gender and sexuality as inflected by species, age, race, class, nationality, health, physical appearance, and intellectual capacity.

Learning Outcomes

Students will acquire an understanding of

1. The representations of and debates around gender and sexuality in twentieth-century English fiction
2. The way in which these representations and debates draw on and speak to earlier representations and debates in English fiction, from the eighteenth century onwards

Requirements

This course entails considerable amounts of reading, and also requires upper-level writing skills. If you feel unable to do the reading, please do not take this class. **If you have not yet taken a lower-division writing class, you are probably not prepared for this class.**

Students are required to

- (a) attend classes regularly. More than four absences not explained to my satisfaction will result in halving your grade for attendance and class participation, and seven or more absences will result in a zero for attendance; leaving early or coming late without explanation will be treated as an absence. Explanations must be backed up with documentation, communicated to me in person and accepted by me.
- (b) keep up with the assigned reading, bring the text to class, and participate in discussion.
- (c) bring a thoughtful **typed** question or comment on the text to every class, use it in discussion, and hand it to me at the end of class. Attendance may be given on the basis of these questions, therefore if you are ever unable to hand in a question, it is your responsibility to tell me this and to have yourself marked present. Handwritten comments will not be accepted as the purpose of these comments is to ascertain whether you have read the text before class
- (d) write a paper. Topics will be given in advance.
- (e) take all quizzes, the mid-term and the final exams, and complete any other assignments that may be given. Quizzes can be made up within the week by contacting me, but not thereafter
- (f) **Check UM email regularly**, especially the day before class. I send out notifications and changes by email. UM policy forbids me to write to you on any email address other than the UM one. The best way to communicate with me is by email.

Grades

Class attendance and participation will be worth 20%, typed questions and comments 10%, quizzes 20%, the mid-term exam 15%, the final exam 20% and the paper 15%.

Plagiarism or academic dishonesty of any kind, in any assignment, will result in your failing the class and may also result in other penalties such as expulsion from the University (for further details, refer to the section on Academic Misconduct in the Student Conduct Code).

Papers and exam essays must (a) address the topic given by me (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. Papers must be handed to me on the due date, in class. 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.

Quizzes, tests and exams may contain both multiple-choice type questions and essay-type questions and are designed to test (a) knowledge of the prescribed texts (b) assimilation of information communicated in class and plenary lectures (c) writing skills (d) analytical skills.

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 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.

“Trigger Warning”

Please be advised that the texts in this course deal with a variety of issues, including but not limited to many types of gender and sexuality, murder, suicide, poverty, deprivation, gender and race discrimination, slavery, rape, molestation (real and imagined), domestic violence, disability, PTSD, and misery of many kinds (along with joy, love, mystical visions, and happiness). A variety of interpretations of the texts will be offered, many of which may not agree with your own interpretations, views or opinions.

Reading Schedule

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

Page numbers refer to the editions listed in this syllabus (see page 1) and sold in the UC bookstore. It is very important that you use these editions, so that we are all on the same page.

Readings listed for a particular day are to be read before coming to class on that day, e.g. come to class on 25 January, having read “Odour of Chrysanthemums.”

23 January Introduction, explanation of syllabus, background on gender and sexuality in 18th and 19th century English fiction

25 January “Odour of Chrysanthemums.”

- 30 January “The Dead.”
- 1 February Katherine Mansfield’s short stories, “A Cup of Tea,” “Miss Brill” and “The Fly.”
Background for *A Passage to India*.
- 6 February Read *A Passage to India*, pp.1-85 (Chapters 1-7). **Quiz** on the three short stories.
- 8 February Read *A Passage to India*, pp. 86-179 (chaps 8-16).
- 13 February Read *A Passage to India*, pp. 180-264 (chaps 17-25). **Quiz 1** on *A Passage to India*.
- 15 February Read *A Passage to India*, pp. 265-end. Background for *Mrs. Dalloway*.
- 20 February *Mrs. Dalloway*, 3-48. **Quiz 2** on *A Passage to India*
- 22 February *Mrs. Dalloway*, 48-103
- 27 February *Mrs. Dalloway*, 104-151
- 1 March *Mrs. Dalloway*, 151-194. **Quiz** on *Mrs. Dalloway*
- 6 March Movie: *Mrs. Dalloway*
- 8 March Movie continues. Review, and background for *Go Tell It On the Mountain*.
- 13 March **Mid-term exam**
- 15 March *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, 2-74.
- 20 March *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, 75-150.
- 22 March *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, 151-226.
- 26-30 March Spring Break
- 3 April *A Single Man*, **Quiz** on *Go Tell It*
- 5 April *A Single Man*,
- 10 April *A Single Man* Review, and background for *The Golden Gate*
- 12 April *The Golden Gate*, 1-4. **Quiz** on *A Single Man*
- 17 April *The Golden Gate*, 5-8 (100-191). Background for *Disgrace*.

19 April *The Golden Gate*, 9-13 (192-305), and *Disgrace*, 1-10.

24 April *Disgrace*, 11-87 **Quiz** on *The Golden Gate*

26 April *Disgrace*, 88-195 **Paper due in class**

1 May 1 *Disgrace*, 196-220, and *The Conversations of Cow*, 13-76

3 May *The Conversations of Cow*, 79-end **Quiz** on *Disgrace*

Final Exam 11 May, 8.00-10.00 a.m.