

**ENG 3430 &
WGS 3200:
Survey of
Women and
Literature**

Dr. Hope Jennings

Wright State University





Introduction to the Course: Syllabus & Project

- This course introduces students to literary works by and about women of diverse backgrounds and through a variety of thematic concerns.
- Students will examine representations of women in literature, and the mutually constitutive relationship between language, literature, and identity.
- Assigned readings will cover a multiethnic range of works by women; although we are primarily reading contemporary fiction by North American and British writers, these works explore the diversity of women's experiences across social, cultural, historical, and geographic differences.

Course Objectives

- To learn about the diversity of women's contributions to literature across a diverse range of women's representation within literary practices;
- To analyze the feminist politics and implications of women's writing and the ways in which women writers have either resisted or reinforced traditional roles and identities through their explorations of language, voice, and genre;
- To demonstrate knowledge of the broader social, material, cultural, and historical contexts influencing representations of women in literature, and the production of literature by and about women.
- To explore the major critical and thematic concerns in women's writing and the ways in which women writers resist or reinforce traditional roles and identities through diverse modes of language, voice, and genre.



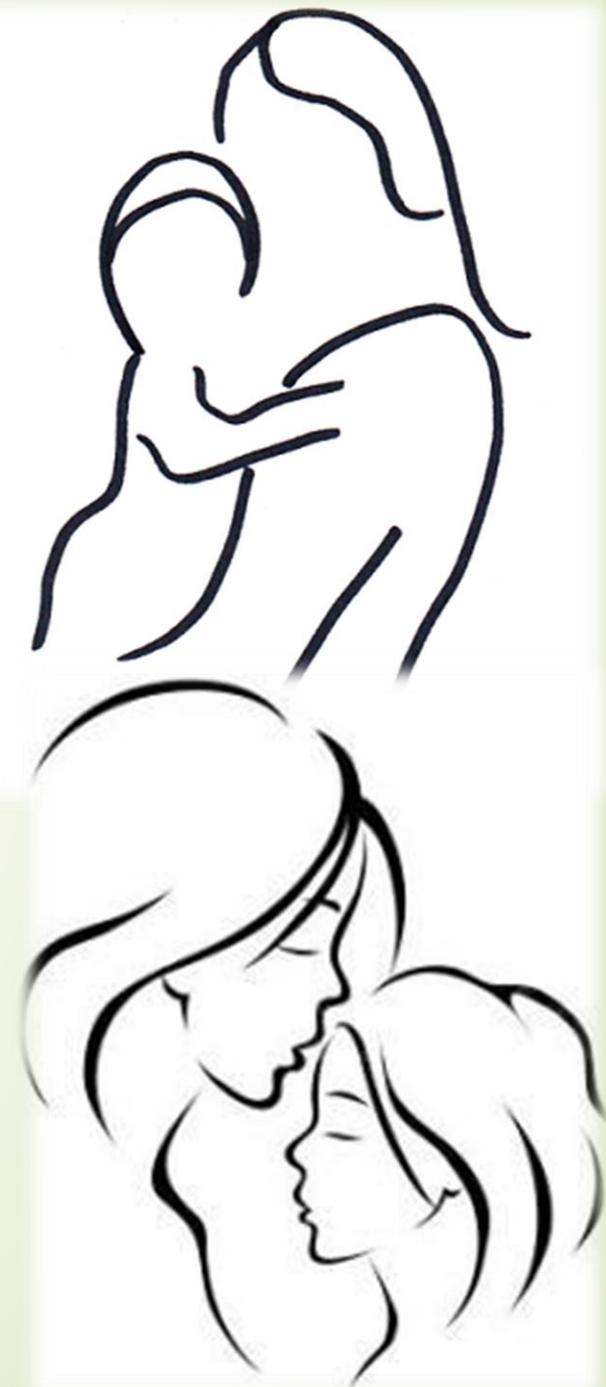
Texts & Themes

All the books selected for this course, except one, have been recently published in the last four years (2014-2018); focusing on contemporary women's writing provides a more cohesive and concentrated survey that generates understanding of themes and experiences that are of immediate interest to women writers and their readers.

Themes and experiences include: girlhood, motherhood, pregnancy, marriage, family, sexuality/sexual desire, friendship, home and community, education, work, religion, race, class, age, disability, violence, trauma, displacement, and immigration.

In our discussions of the assigned texts we will include consideration of the many historical contexts and connections between women writers of the past and present; that is, we will explore the contemporary literature as part of a robust tradition of women's writing that is still developing and expanding.

See the "Texts & Themes" PowerPoint for a more detailed introduction to the history of women's writing and an overview of the texts and themes explored in this class.



Course Evaluation

"A woman who
writes has power,
and a woman with
power is feared."

Gloria E. Anzaldúa

Website Design	100
Reading Response Blogs	300
Thematic Research/Analysis	200
Creative/Personal Narrative	200
In-Class/Online Participation	200

Grading Scale

90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
0-59%	F

Website Project

1

Students will create a personalized, individual website that engages various aspects of women's writing through exploration of both critical and creative approaches.

2

By the end of Week 3, you will need to have your website set up with a public URL, a homepage with your first blog post, and a brief bio. See the Website Project Guidelines for directions on how to get your website started.

3

You may host the website through any preferred platform; your website must be separate from your own personal website, but you may still use the same platform.

4

The website set-up is worth 50 points and the finalized, overall design of the website, including an expanded bio page, is worth 50 points. Project rubrics are available in Pilot.

- On your website, you will write reading response blogs that discuss each of the assigned novels. You are not expected to write formal book reviews but conversational and exploratory reflections on the readings.
- You must write a minimum total of 6 blog posts (50 points each) that reflect on any themes, issues, or questions in the books that we discuss in class (see class calendar in syllabus); alternatively, you might break these up into shorter posts discussing each of the books on their own (worth 25 points each).
- You don't have to stick to this approach for every blog; for instance, you might decide to do a comparative blog for two books, then write separate blogs for other books.
- Use what works best for you, but no matter how you approach structuring your blogs, you are required to write on ALL the readings and each set of required blogs—whether you do one comparative or two separate responses—are due on the same day listed in the class calendar.
- Keep in mind that blogs are a form of public writing (more tips for online writing available in Pilot), so you will want to ensure your writing is as clear and free of errors/typos as possible; in other words, blogs (and peer responses) must meet the general evaluation criteria for academic writing (see syllabus).



Basic Blog Requirement Checklist



- **Title:** For each blog post, provide an engaging title to attract readers!
- **Format:** Each blog post must be public online by the deadline and a copy submitted in a Word document to the Pilot dropbox.
- **Length:** Comparative blog posts should be at least 600-800 words; shorter single-book posts at least 300-400 words; anything below the minimum will not be graded.
- **Links:** Good blogging etiquette includes linking to relevant sources or other bloggers, news articles, etc. wherever you discuss these in your post; see the handouts for tips on blogging.
- **Images:** Each blog post should be readable and visually appealing (think about font and make sure you use the same font for all posts). You must include at least one picture in each blog post: these can be photos you take, hand-drawings, an original meme, or other relevant images found online (credit the source if it is not from an open access website).
- **Copyediting:** Once I have graded your blog post and provided copyediting notes (for typos, writing errors, organization, etc.), you are expected to make these edits within a week of receiving my feedback. This is to ensure the quality and clarity of your writing so that your website is as professional as possible. If you don't make these edits, five points will be deducted from the original blog post grade; likewise, five points will be added once I see that you've made the corrections.

See handouts:

- “Tips for Writing & Responding to Blogs” and [“Blogging Basics”](#).
- Also, if you want to see various types of personal blogs, and since this is a class about women’s writing, then here’s a link to a list of recommended [100 Women Bloggers](#).

Online Participation Guidelines

- ▶ This portion of your participation grade includes actively, substantively, and respectfully engaging with peers online by reading and providing comments on their blog postings.
- ▶ Your peer responses will be assessed according to the same criteria as your in-class participation (full credit, partial credit, no credit) and will be included in the overall average for your participation grade.
- ▶ Peer responses may be submitted to each other's websites any time after the blogs have been posted but no later than the deadline for the next set of blogs. For example, after everyone has submitted their first reading response blog by the end of Week 3, you then have until the end of Week 5 to post at least one comment.
- ▶ You are required to provide a minimum of 10 peer responses, one for each set of the first five required blog posts, and another 5 of your choice; to ensure that you engage broadly with other people in the class, at least five peer responses must be to a different student. Each of the required peer responses must be to a different student (you may not always respond to just one or two people in the class).
- ▶ You are more than welcome to provide comments on each other's blogs beyond the required minimum, and for each additional peer response that is meaningful and substantive (beyond simply saying, "Hey, I really liked what you said about *Red Clocks!*") you will earn five points extra credit (same for responding to peer comments on your own post).
- ▶ You **may not** earn these extra credit points by writing a bunch of comments at the end of the semester as a last-ditch effort to boost your grade. Blog writing is intended to be interactive writing, and so extra credit points for additional comments will only be earned if posted within the time-frame for each blog set.

18 REASONS

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS SHOULD BLOG

Owning Your Content



Your Online Hub

Traditional Literacies



New Literacies



All Subjects



Creativity

Home-School Connections

Digital Citizenship



Digital Footprints

Social Skills & Confidence

ICT Skills



Developing Thinking



Reflections



Classroom Community

Authenticity



Having a Voice



Global Connections



Purposeful & Productive

Blogs and Student Participation

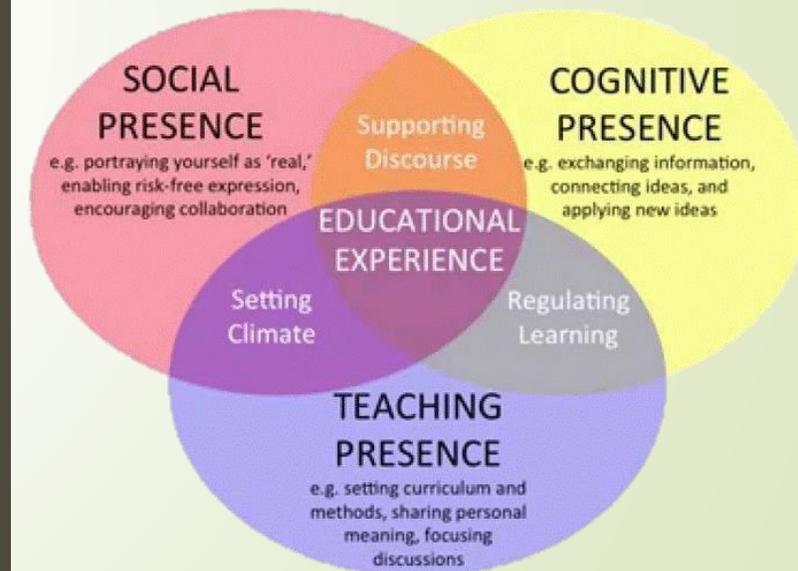
- Reading and responding to each other's blogs can help create an interpersonal classroom community, both online and in class discussions.
- Fostering a sense of shared purpose and mutual care can mean the difference between a lackluster, superficial conversation and a dynamic interactive space.
- Addressing peers by name in comments on each other's blogs and commenting on specific points in someone's blog can instill a sense of responsibility to, respect for, and familiarity with each other.
- Cultivating your own voices on the blog and leaning into your individuality and personality while engaging with the material will help you learn from each other through a lateral, peer-to-peer process (rather than simply learning from the professor, which often tends to be a more hierarchical than heterarchical experience).
- See syllabus for grading criteria (including classroom participation expectations), and refer to the handout, "Tips on Writing and Responding to Blogs."

Blogs and Instructor Participation

- My own experience and various research studies show that instructor prominence or high activity in online discussions/projects can stifle student participation; so, I find that the best practice is to step in enough that students know I am following and valuing their work, but not so much that students rely on me for keeping the conversation going.
- Occasionally, I will provide comments on individual blogs in ways that “cheerlead” strong posts or follow up with questions that encourage deeper thought; this kind of encouragement and positive highlighting of student work often inspires students to engage the material and assignments with purpose and confidence.
- I will try to comment at least once on each student’s blog over the course of the semester; my comments should not be interpreted as any form of critique or favoritism.
- Also, I will engage in the online discussions of the texts through writing my own blog posts on my website; not as an instructional tool but a form of participation with students’ own exploratory process. In other words, as much as possible, instructors should put into practice what they teach or require of students.
- Creating my own blog for this course means I am also learning alongside you, reflecting on the texts from a more personal rather than academic perspective. You are not required to read or post comments on my blog but are of course welcome to do so.

Teachers and researchers should ask which ideas awaken the curiosity, the thoughtful questions, and the wonder in students’ minds that naturally lead to a lifetime of self-motivated learning.

Charles Rop, 2002



10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT DIGITAL FOOTPRINTS

1 When you search and interact online, a **trail of info** is left behind.

2 Elements of your digital footprints can be **searched or shared**.

3 Digital footprints can be **helpful or harmful** to your reputation both now and in the future.

4 Once online, things can exist **forever** (even if deleted).

5 Always **think** before you post online.

6 Personal information or opinions sent to one person can be **shared** with a larger audience.

7 **Googling yourself** can be a worthwhile exercise.

8 Old or inactive accounts should be **disabled or deleted**.

9 Keep personal details private and control the **privacy settings** on your accounts.

10 Be mindful of the digital footprints of **others** (e.g. Ask before tagging photos).

TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT YOUR BLOG POST

TITLE

- CATCHY: INSTANTLY APPEALING OR MEMORABLE
- GRABS POTENTIAL READERS' ATTENTION
- DESCRIBES YOUR POST
- MEANINGFUL
- USEFUL
- MAKES THE READER CURIOUS
- KEYWORDS
- WHAT-WHEN-WHY- HOW?

QUALITY WRITING

- VERY INFORMATIVE OR DEEPLY REFLECTIVE
- INFORMATIONAL POST: SYNTHESIZES LEARNED CONTENT AND CONSTRUCTS NEW MEANING
- WELL ORGANIZED

VOICE

- WRITTEN IN INTERESTING STYLE & VOICE
- WORDS ARE CAREFULLY CHOSEN
- WORDS BRING CONTENT TO LIFE
- SENTENCE FLUENCY IS SMOOTH, NATURAL & EXPRESSIVE

PRESENTATION

- CORRECT SPELLING & GRAMMAR
- FORMATTING MAKES THE POST MORE INTERESTING TO READ

MULTIMEDIA

- PIECES OF MULTIMEDIA ARE EMBEDDED
- MULTIMEDIA ADDS NEW INFORMATION OR PERSPECTIVE TO POST

COMMUNITY

- SEVERAL LINKS TO PLACES THAT ADD TO READERS' UNDERSTANDING
- LINKS ARE RELEVANT AND "FLOW" WITHIN THE CONTENT
- POST IS CLEARLY WRITTEN WITH A GLOBAL AUDIENCE IN MIND
- POST IS CATEGORIZED

SILVIA ROSENTHAL TOLISANO ~ LANGWITCHES.ORG



Thematic Research/Analysis and Creative/Personal Narrative

By the end of the semester you will be expected to create for your website two sections or pages additional to the blog section. Like the blogs, you are allowed complete creative and academic freedom, but should still follow the general guidelines outlined here.

Both sections should fit coherently into the overall design and focus of your website. They should be informed by and/or related to the theme(s) that you primarily explored in your blogs.

Think of all three sections as presenting different angles and types of writing that address and expand upon a specific element of women's writing. This element or theme should be something broad enough that allows for variety and flexibility; you do not want your blogs alongside these other two sections to become too repetitive or narrow in focus.

Therefore, you need to put some careful thought into your choice of theme at the start of the semester. There is of course always room for editing and shifting your focus, especially if the theme you chose initially doesn't sustain your interests, or, there's something else that comes up out of the reading that interests you more; if you need my advice on this, just let me know.

Thematic Research/Analysis



In this section, you will create a page that explores a key theme in women's writing and/or how this theme is present in the work of any writers we've read in this class. How you approach this is ultimately up to you, and you might do one of the following:



Explore further any questions or issues that came up in your blog writing;



Research a key theme or topic and provide links to other online sources that readers of your website might want to explore;



Write a profile of one or more of the writers whose work we have read in this class, including analysis of their contemporary literary relevance as well as links to their own websites, interviews, book reviews, etc.



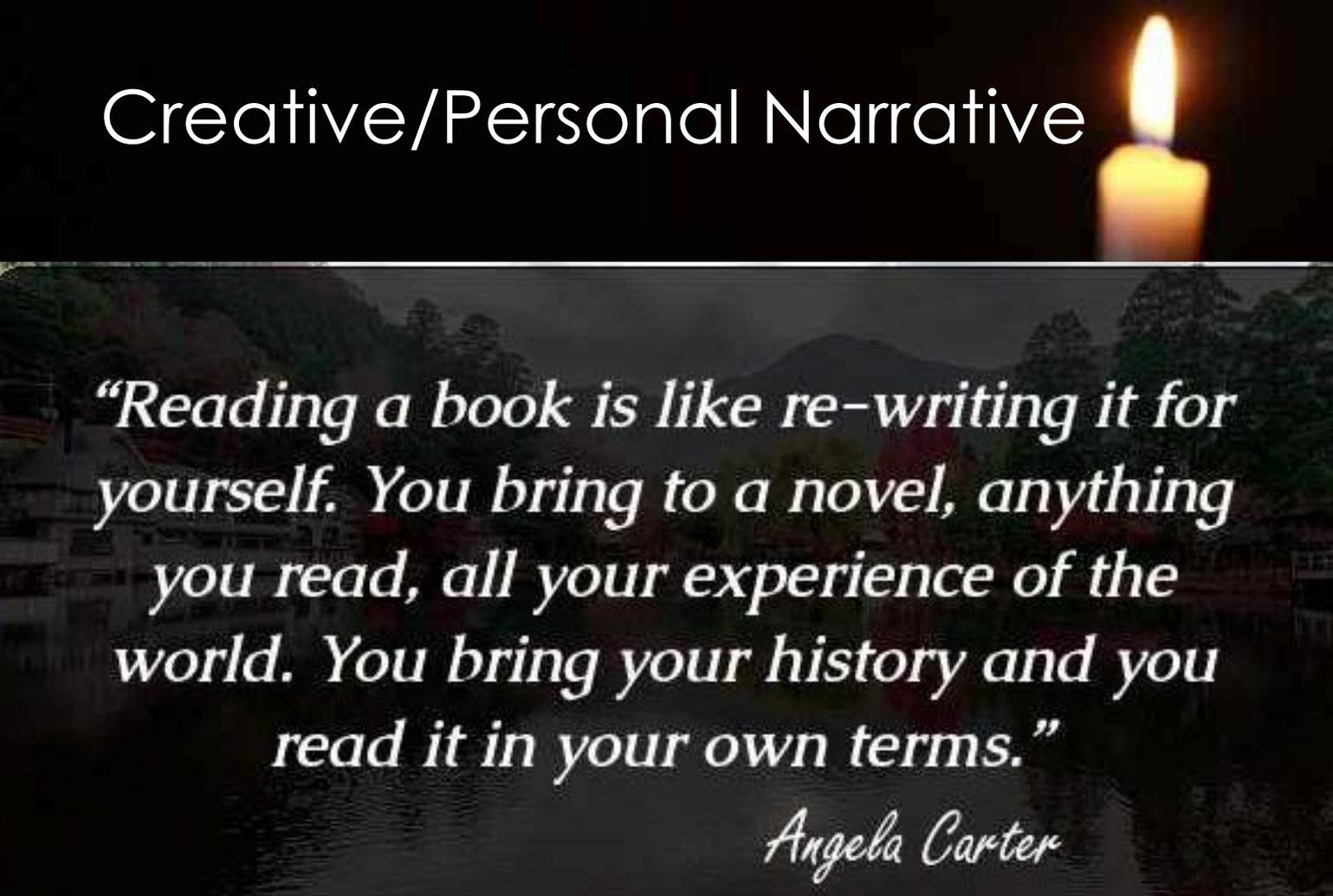
No matter the topic or approach, don't forget to include interesting visuals/images where appropriate (and credit these when necessary).



I also expect to see you make relevant links to other pages/websites. All good bloggers promote other useful sites and/or sources of information.

Creative/Personal Narrative

- ▶ You might explore one or more women writers or artists who inspire you, including women you might personally know and/or any painters, filmmakers, songwriters, photographers, quilters— basically anyone who works through a storytelling genre; you will write about this person's work and their influence on your own creative growth/interests, discussing why and how they have inspired you.
- ▶ You might write a short story or memoir, a creative non-fiction essay, a one-act play, a series of poems, create a series of photographs or illustrations, anything in any narrative mode that connects to the theme(s) that you've explored throughout this class (such as family relationships/history, adolescence, education, marriage, work).
- ▶ Or, you might use digital storytelling (combining text, image and/or audio) to narrate something of personal or creative relevance to you; for example, you might provide a narrative mapping of your community or family relationships, a scrapbook style narrative of your family history or your experiences coming-of-age or becoming an adult, a podcast interviewing or discussing women writers/artists, or, a scripted podcast.



“Reading a book is like re-writing it for yourself. You bring to a novel, anything you read, all your experience of the world. You bring your history and you read it in your own terms.”

Angela Carter

Regardless of how you decide to approach this section, you are encouraged to create a narrative that uses new media tools and/or visual/audio elements. Both the STAC and Inc. are great resources here on campus and I've also provided a handout: "Digital Storytelling Resources and Tutorials." The main thing is that you should use your imagination, be creative, and tell a story in whatever way that best suits your interests, skills, and strengths.

Class Calendar

WEEK	Discussion Topic & Reading/Writing Assignments
ONE	Introduction to the Course: Syllabus and Project
	Introduction to the Course: Texts and Themes
TWO & THREE	Zumas, <i>Red Clocks</i>
	Due: Website Set-up and Blog 1 (Red Clocks), Fri 2/1
FOUR & FIVE	Oyeyemi, <i>Boy, Snow, Bird</i>
	Due: Blog 2 (Boy, Snow, Bird) and PR #1, Fri 2/15
SIX & SEVEN	Hunt, <i>Mr. Splitfoot</i>
	Due: Blog 3 (Mr. Splitfoot) and PR# 2, Fri 3/1
EIGHT	SPRING BREAK: No Classes
NINE	Cisneros, <i>The House on Mango Street</i>
TEN	Woodson, <i>Another Brooklyn</i>
	Due: Blog 4 (Mango Street & Brooklyn) and PR # 3, Fri 3/22
ELEVEN	Kwan, <i>The Incendiaries</i>
TWELVE	Shamsie, <i>Home Fire</i>
THIRTEEN	Shamsie, <i>Home Fire</i>
	Due: Blog 5 (Incendiaries & Home Fire) and PR# 4, Wed 4/10
FOURTEEN	Walbert, <i>His Favorites</i>
FIFTEEN	Mailhot, <i>Heart Berries</i>
	Due: Blog 6 (Hi Favorites & Heart Berries) and PR# 5, Fri 4/26
Exam Week	Due: Final Website, Fri 5/2, 12:30 pm