

COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer II 2008
English 574: Studies in Women's Literature: 3 credit hours

MEETING LOCATION: SHSU campus: Evans #154, and the University Center in The Woodlands. Class is conducted by interactive television. Dr. Cook will teach class from the SHSU location.

MEETING TIMES: M-F 12-2 pm.

PROFESSOR: Dr. Linda Byrd Cook

OFFICE LOCATION: Evans 412

PROFESSOR CONTACT INFORMATION: Tel. # and Voice Mail: 294-1425
E-mail: LindaCook@shsu.edu
Eng. Dept. Fax #: 936/294-1408

OFFICE HOURS: M-Th: 9-10 am., 2-3 pm.
Others by appt. only

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The purpose of the course is to introduce (in some cases) or develop an understanding and appreciation of literature written by women in various genres during the twentieth century. By reading the texts of such writers as Alice Walker, Adrienne Rich, Sylvia Plath, Carson McCullers, Djuna Barnes and others, students will come to recognize common concerns that have troubled a generation of women writers of disparate backgrounds. By utilizing feminist criticism, students will learn strategies for analyzing texts to emphasize issues related to gender and sexuality in works written by women. Students will probe the issues presented in women's literature and discover their applicability to their own lives.

Class will be conducted primarily as a combination of lecture and class/group discussion. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and presentations.

A detailed course calendar, announcing class assignments, activities, due dates, and reminders, will be distributed separately. Dr. Cook reserves the right to make changes to this calendar at any time during the semester. These will be announced during class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- ***Learn to *analyze* and *critically evaluate* ideas, arguments, and points of view
- **Gain a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, *literature*, etc.)
- **Gain factual knowledge (terminology, classification, methods, trends)

REQUIRED TEXTS: *It is the student's responsibility to obtain the following texts at the beginning of the semester.**

Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*. 1982. Orlando: Harvest Books, 2003. ISBN: 0156028352.

McCullers, Carson. *The Ballad of the Sad Café*. 1944. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005. ISBN: 0618565868.

Barnes, Djuna. *Nightwood*. 1936. New York: New Directions, 1961. ISBN: 0811200051.

Plath, Sylvia. *Collected Poems*. New York: Perennial, 1981. ISBN: 0060909005.

Smith, Lee. *Fair and Tender Ladies*. 1988: Putnam. New York: Random House, Inc., 1993. ISBN: 0345383990.

Gelpi, Barbara C., and Albert Gelpi, eds. *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1993. ISBN: 0393961478.

Winterson, Jeanette. *Written on the Body*. New York: Vintage, 1994. ISBN: 0679744479.

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *Feminist Literary Theory and Criticism*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. (to be published August 2007). ISBN: 0393927903.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: The university stresses the importance of punctuality and regular attendance. All students are expected to attend every class, and attendance will definitely be taken into consideration in final computation of a student's course grade. Attendance will be recorded each class day, so a student must notify the professor of a legitimate absence BEFORE class time on that day (via e-mail

or phone message). With appropriate **prior** notification of a student's absence, the professor will work with the student to make up any missed work. A student who misses more than THREE classes during the semester is in danger of **failing the course**.

GRADE DETERMINATION:	Seminar Paper	45%	GRADING SCALE: 90-100=A	
	Oral Presentations and Microthemes	15%		80-89 =B
	Final Exam	40%		70-79 =C 60-69 =D 59 or below=F

FINAL EXAM: This comprehensive exam will have two objectives: 1) to give you a chance to synthesize material from the course that has not engaged your research attention; and 2) to help you prepare for the departmental Comprehensive Exam. (You will thank me later; trust me.) This exam will be constructed in the following way: short objective section to check reading (quotations and identification)—15-20 minutes; one or two long essay questions in which you will focus on writers OTHER than your chosen one for your seminar paper. The essay question(s) will be broad and general. This exam will be taken during the scheduled final exam period and written in a blue book/exam book.

SEMINAR PAPER: This should be a scholarly exercise, thoroughly researched and cogently written and argued. You may choose to focus on any one of the writers from this course. Your purpose will be to write a critical analysis of one of the course texts, applying the feminist theory and criticism we cover in class. Please give me a short proposal (1 page) that outlines your main ideas no later than Monday, July 21st. Please feel free to consult with me about your topic any time. Length of final paper: 15-18 pages. MLA format, of course.

TURN-IT-IN.COM: SEMINAR PAPER will be submitted to Dr. Cook in hard copy and also through this site.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS:

This category covers attendance, involvement in the class, and oral reports. "Involvement" means a range of participation from active discussion to intelligent questions to enthusiastic nods and thoughtful facial expressions. I strongly encourage each of you to contribute verbally to class discussions because I believe you learn much more that way. Also, the only foolproof way for me to tell that you are prepared for class is if you are an active contributor to discussions. But some people are more comfortable with discussion than others, and there are different ways of being an active class member.

Each of you will do four or five brief, informal, and informative report(s) on feminist critics/texts pertinent to the material of our course. Reports should be about 15 minutes long; the objective is to provide the class with basic information, not to be exhaustive. Highlight for the class what you think are the most important or relevant points related to your critic/text, speculating on its significance to the course texts and our own culture. A class handout is not necessary but might prove helpful. If you choose to prepare a handout, please format the information as an OUTLINE, not several pages of NOTES. You should send the handout to class members through BLACKBOARD as an e-mail attachment.

MICROTHERMES:

These will be assigned throughout the course. For each one, I will provide a prompt (an image from a photograph, magazine ad, book, poster, internet site, etc.). After observing and considering the prompt, each student will respond to the image, answering various questions that probe the women's issues presented. Microthemes should be written on **large index cards** (4" X 6") and used to lead into discussion of the literature.

Purpose of microthemes:

- *To raise students' awareness of the impact of the media on society's view of women
- *To help students understand that the issues/problems/concerns of women writers are important to them in their lives today
- *To challenge students to re-think their own preconceptions about women's roles as daughters, sisters, lovers, wives, mothers, and friends.

SHSU WRITING CENTER: Sam Houston State University Writing Center, located in Farrington 111, is open Monday-Friday, 8 am. To 4 pm. Writing tutors will work with you one-on-one to help you generate a draft, organize a draft, or revise a draft of any assignment. You can just drop by to work with a tutor or call 936/294-3680 to schedule an appointment.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is defined as identifying someone else's words or ideas as if they were your own. This can range from submitting a paper written by someone else as if it were your own work, to copying words or sentences from someone else without putting them in quotation marks and properly citing the source. Plagiarism can also mean using someone else's ideas without acknowledging that person as the source. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic and legal offense in our culture. Penalties for plagiarism can range from a failing grade on the assignment to expulsion from the university. The course instructor can determine the penalties of failure for the assignment to failure of the course. The university disciplinary committee determines penalties of suspension or expulsion.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: Requests for accommodations must be initiated by the student. It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher learning excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM: Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT: Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the University.

1. **Cellular telephones and pagers** must be turned off before class begins.
2. Students are prohibited from using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking in inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction.
3. Absolutely **NO LAPTOP computers** will be allowed in class.
4. Students should bring appropriate materials to class every day. The appropriate text should be with you at **every** class meeting.
5. Drinks (nonalcoholic) may be consumed during class. Snacking is also allowed if it does not distract other students or the professor.
6. Except in the rare case of an absolute emergency, leaving the classroom during class time is considered rude and inappropriate and will not be tolerated. Only when the professor dismisses class should students leave the room. In a special situation where a student needs to leave early on a particular day, he/she should discuss the matter with the professor BEFORE class.
7. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with University policy.