**LITR 355 Gender and Literature**

Spring 2016

Professor Funston

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Office hours: MWF 11-11:50 and by appointment

**Description:**

We will examine a range of writers, mainly active in the 19th and early 20th centuries, as a way to understand the perception of “the other” in American society and culture. During this time, the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant male was regarded as the norm, and so we will survey how “otherness” (gender and race) was construed in literary texts. In addition, we will examine how authors often critique the texts of their predecessors, especially in the construction of race and gender.

**Objectives**:

1. To survey a range of literature focusing on gender issues

2. To examine how texts create meaning through various elements, such as point of view, metaphors, characterization, etc.

3. To formulate a logically coherent analytical critique of a work of literature, using the specialized terminology of literary criticism

4. To demonstrate a critical perspective in a formal analysis of literature that is not limited to one’s personal experience or aesthetic values, but draws on various contextual categories (such as genre conventions, social or political or historical background, etc.).

5. To demonstrate the ability to analyze texts synthetically in order to form a new, logically defensible position

6. To find and evaluate secondary materials to support literary analysis

7. To use MLA documentation correctly

**Texts:**

Rowlandson, *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682)

Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* (1793)

Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850)

Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852)

Stoddard, *The Morgesons* (1862)

Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1863)

Howells, *A Modern Instance* (1882)

Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925)

Faulkner, *Sanctuary* (1931)

Jordan, *When She Woke* (2011)

**Requirements**:

1. Engagement: I expect that you come to class prepared to engage seriously in the work of the class, which includes reading, thinking, and writing. Engagement will be demonstrated by the following:

a. submitting required work on time

b. reading and thinking through the scheduled assignment

c. writing a thoughtful response to the reading as required

d. responding to questions for writing in class as required

e. participating in class discussions in a constructive manner (constructive means comments that show insight and move the class forward…not comments that are repetitive, obstructive, or tangential)

2. Writing: a. three scholarship papers

b. homework responses

c. summation

3. Attendance: I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences; an absence is an absence—you miss course material regardless of the reason for your absence. You are allowed three absences penalty-free. **50 points** will be deducted from your final point total for each additional absence; 6 or more absences, regardless of the reasons, will result in automatic failure in LITR 355 (0.0). Please consult the College’s attendance policy in the Undergraduate Catalogue.

Tardiness will also lower your point total: **25 points** will be deducted each time you come to class late (after 12:00).

**Formats:**

1. Scholarship analysis: You will use the MLA on-line database to locate and obtain a substantial (minimum 10 page) article published in a reputable professional journal three times this semester. The scholarly articles must be focused on an author or a text covered in this course; you will be expected to contribute your findings to the class. Your analyses should be typed and error-free; they may be in the form of detailed paragraphs or an essay.

Essentially, you will be examining and evaluating the arguments put forward in these scholarly articles. You must identify the writer’s thesis as well as the structure of the writer’s argument and the evidence the writer gives to support the argument. In addition, you must identify how the writer situates his or her work in relation to what others have done previously in the same area; you must also identify how the writer sees his or her findings in relation to the author’s total body of work. Finally, you must discuss how this article relates to your own experience of and thinking about the text. Failure to use MLA format for citations will greatly lower your grade.

See also the handout “Scholarship Analysis Guidelines,” available on Moodle.

2. Homework "responses" (200 words minimum) will be judged on content rather than correct form; the responses must be typed. Since homework responses will form the basis for that day’s class discussion, they must be completed prior to the class meeting and brought to class. The point of these homework responses is to demonstrate your insight into the reading—generally, there will be no one “right” answer.

Summaries of the reading or tangential discussions are unacceptable. Addressing the assignment minimally or superficially is just barely acceptable. College-level work reflects serious engagement with and a thorough understanding of the reading as well as evidence of real thought and the use of skills and concepts from class.

ALL homework responses will be collected on Friday May 6 and will be returned during the scheduled final exam period (Weds May 18 2:45).

3. Summation: This essay is your opportunity to reflect on what you have accomplished in this course. You will be describing your sense of this period as reflected in the literary texts, as well as your evolution as an analytical reader of these texts. It is due May 13.

**Plagiarism**:

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another person without giving proper credit. IT IS THEFT. It includes

--word-for-word copying without quotes and documentation

--using material from the Internet without documentation

--paraphrasing without proper credit

--patching a paper together from a variety of sources

--turning in another student’s work (essays, paragraphs,

sentences, words, ideas) as your own

--using ideas or structures from sources without credit

The penalty for plagiarism: 0.0 for the course and referral to the College's judicial system for disciplinary action. Ignorance or “honest mistakes” are not excuses for plagiarism. You should consult the College’s catalogue on academic honesty.

**Grading**

The grade for LITR 355 will be calculated on 1000 points, distributed as follows:

Scholarship papers 300

Homework responses 300

Summation 100

Engagement 300

**Course Grading Scale**:

4.0 900-1000

3.7 870

3.3 830

3.0 800

2.7 770

2.3 730

2.0 700

1.7 670

1.3 630

1.0 600

**Final Grades:**

The overarching goal of a Literature course is to enable you to read literary texts critically and analytically, and to arrive at sound interpretation of that text based on its form and its historical context.

The Department of English and Communication has mandated student learning objectives (SLOs) to achieve that goal; SLOs are available on the Department’s website and in print in the Department office, 120 Morey. The Department’s SLOs for Literature inform the objectives for this course.

A final grade in a course indicates the degree to which the course objectives have been met. In short, a final grade is a judgment of competency based on **evidence** (performance in class, but above all, in written work).

1. None of the course objectives have been met
2. Several of the course objectives have been met
3. All of the objectives have been met in a satisfactory manner
4. All objectives have been met, and several exceed satisfactory
5. All objectives have been met in a consistently excellent manner

Course schedule:

I: Syllabus, introduction; Rowlandson

II: Rowson: pref and chap 1-6; 17-35; Hawthorne: pref and chap 1-4

III: library session; Hawthorne: 5-10; 11-15

IV: Hawthorne: 16-20; 21-24; Stowe: 1-9

V: scholarship 1 due 2-22; Stowe: 10-20; 21-32

VI: Stowe: 33-45

VII: Stoddard: 1-19; 20-27; 28-35

VIII: Stoddard: 36-41; Jacobs: pref, intro and 1-17; 18-41 and appendix

IX: Howells: 1-8; 9-16; scholarship 2 due 4-1

X: Howells: 17-25; 26-32; 33-41

XI: Fitzgerald: 1-2; 3-5

XII: Fitzgerald:6-7; 8-9; Faulkner: 1-6

XIII: Faulkner: 7-12; 13-18; 19-25

XIV: scholarship 3 due 5-2; Faulkner: 26-31; Jordan: 1-2; all HR due 5-6

XV: Jordan: 3-4; 5; summation and evaluation 5-13