Women & Literature

This course will focus on women’s writing from a variety of national and cultural traditions in a variety of genres including lyric poetry, journalism, the short story, and the novel. Although the women we read come from diverse backgrounds, they share a common interest in the power of voice. These works celebrate storytelling as a vehicle for liberation, social justice, and self-respect. Reading, for these women, is an activity that forges bonds. It allows us to empathize with one another; it cultivates critical thinking and awareness, and it can change historical ideology and the cultural status quo.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Rationale:

This course is designed to provide the training required for you to become a good reader of literature. The skills necessary for reading well include: the ability to read at varying paces, rereading texts to understand them better, recognizing words you do not know and looking them up, annotating your readings so that you are constantly note-taking and thinking with the text; analyzing, synthesizing, and interpreting texts; and finally, forming sound arguments about the significance and value of texts. The more dedication you bring to the study of literature, the more rewarding and pleasurable it will become.

General Education: This course provides general education credit for the following outcomes:

1. Humanities.
2. Writing

Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Discuss and make arguments about literary works (both orally and in writing).
- Compose convincing interpretations of literary works and their ideas by applying the skills of close reading, textual analysis, and literary terminology.
- Examine and appreciate human differences and similarities by considering the power of language to embrace and celebrate cultural diversity and to free people from states of marginalization or oppression.
• Practice and improve writing skills through frequent assignments both formal and informal, submitted to the instructor for regular feedback.
• Learn basic skills of grammar & style.

Required Course Texts*:

• Persuasion by Jane Austen (Norton Critical Edition)

*NOTE: The above required text is available in the bookstore. Readings not included in the above list will be distributed electronically as PDFs on Brightspace in each weekly module.

Technology Requirements:

To successfully complete this course, you will need access to a computer with reliable, high-speed Internet access and appropriate system and software to support the Brightspace learning platform. Typical technical requirements for users are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Windows 7 (XP or Vista)</th>
<th>Mac OS X or higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64 MB Ram</td>
<td>32 MB Ram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.8 kbps modem (56k or higher recommended)</td>
<td>28.8 kbps modem (56k or higher recommended)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SoundCard &amp; Speakers</td>
<td>SoundCard &amp; Speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External headphones with built-in microphone</td>
<td>External headphones with built-in microphone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozilla Firefox 9.0 or higher</td>
<td>Mozilla Firefox 9.0 or higher; Safari 5.0 or higher</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Also requires Word 2007 (PC) 2011 (MAC) or newer, PowerPoint, Excel, Adobe Flash, and Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Brightspace Help:

Here is the link to access Brightspace https://brightspace.uri.edu as well as the Brightspace resource page https://web.uri.edu/brightspace/.

Classroom Protocol:

For this online course, Brightspace is our “classroom.” Please refer to the Brightspace YouTube video tutorials before you get started and refer back to them as a resource as needed while you complete this course.

In the online learning environment, “attendance” is measured by your presence in the site as well as your contributions to the site. The importance of regular log-ins and active participation cannot be overstated. Brightspace tracks this for the instructor.
Attendance Policy

- Students are expected to participate in all weekly forum discussions.
- Monday of each week is considered the first day of class for online asynchronous instruction. Every Monday, begin reading the content in the Brightspace module for that week.
- Regular onsite attendance is expected for student success. Students who will miss more than one “class” (discussion post or assignment) have the responsibility to discuss their attendance with the instructor in advance. Instructors may accommodate students under extraordinary circumstances.
- If a student misses a portion of an onsite course, the student’s grade will be adversely affected. Attendance is counted as your timely participation in all discussion forums. Students should discuss missing portions of a class with their instructor to determine how their grade may be affected and/or how to catch up on missing work.
- Regular online attendance/participation and engagement is expected for student success in both fully online and blended courses. Online participation is evident through posting to a discussion board, wiki, virtual office or classroom meeting, a drop box, attending a virtual seminar, completing real-time activities or quizzes, submitting assignments, or other course-related activities.

Netiquette for Online Courses

- Be polite and respectful of one another.
- Avoid personal attacks. Keep dialogue friendly and supportive, even when you disagree or wish to present a controversial idea or response.
- Please refrain from any comments that may be construed as racist, sexist, homophobic or ableist. Although you are entitled to your own political beliefs, hate speech will not be tolerated in my class. I seek to foster a learning environment that embraces our diverse backgrounds and perspectives, since this is indeed how we learn best from one another. Ideas grow out of the conversations we have with one another. Always remember the immense power of language before using it.
- Be helpful and share your expertise. Foster community communication and collaboration.
- Contribute constructively and completely to each discussion. Avoid short repetitive “I agree” responses and don’t make everyone else do the work.
- Consider carefully what you write. Re-read all e-mail and discussion before sending or posting. **Consider saving your work to your desktop before posting.**
- Remember that e-mail is considered a permanent record that may be forwarded to others.
- Use descriptive subject headings for each e-mail message & discussion post.
- Respect privacy. Don’t forward a personal message without permission.
- Cite references. Include web addresses, authors, names of articles, date of publication, etc.
• Keep responses professional and educational. Do not advertise or send chain letters.
• Do not send large attachments unless you have been requested to do so by the instructor.
• 2 word postings (e.g.: I agree, Oh yeah, No way, Me too) do not count as postings.

Student Performance Requirements & Description of Assignments:

This class will require your active participation and a close attention to textual detail. Readings include primary texts such as: poems, journalistic essays, short stories, and a novel. There will also be audiovisual material that you are asked to listen to and watch in Brightspace. You will need to purchase copies of the required course texts listed on page 2; however, all remaining poems, essays & PDFs will be provided for you in each weekly Brightspace module. To succeed in this course you must be able to keep up with the reading and also with weekly discussion forum posts. Forum posts are heavily weighted. It is important in these posts to answer questions fully.

In addition to these forum posts, the course has other assignments. Essays 1 & 2 are weighted significantly. The Notebook and PennSound projects are short assignments that assist with your writing, listening, and analytical/perceptual skills. It is important to submit all assignments and take them seriously to pass the course. It is also important to review all content in the “Writing Materials” module as these videos and handouts guide you in writing a quality final paper.

Methods of Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Deliverables</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Discussion Forum Posts</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notebook &amp; PennSound Assignments</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Assignments (Passage Selection, Thesis Paragraph Draft)</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Schedule

Week 1: START HERE. (Course Introduction & Syllabus).

Module Reading Assignments include:

bell hooks, “On critical Thinking”, “Practical Wisdom”; All About Love (Selections)
Joan Didion “On Keeping a Notebook”
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “We Should All be Feminists” (Watch TED Talk)
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story” (Watch TED Talk)

Submit:
Introductory Activity (by Tuesday)
Discussion Forum Post 1: (by Friday)
Notebook Assignment: (by Sunday)

Week 2:

Module Reading Assignments include:

Louise Erdrich, “Matchimanito”
Sandra Cisneros, “Woman Hollering Creek”
Zadie Smith, “Lazy River”
Watch: Jamaica Kincaid reading, *Girl*

Submit:
Discussion Forum Post 2: (by Thursday)
Discussion Forum Post 3 (by Sunday)

Week 3:

Module Reading Assignments include:

*Patterns of Poetry*, selections
Audre Lorde, “Coal”
Slyvia Plath, “Metaphors”
Rita Dove, “Canary”
*Gwendolyn Brooks, “We Real Cool”*
Emily Dickinson, “After great pain, a formal feeling comes—” “Because I could not stop for death—”
Sylvia Curbelo, “Listening to a White Man Play the Blues”
Jorie Graham, “San Sepolcro”

Watch: Rita Dove & Gwendolyn Brooks read their work aloud! 😊

Submit:
PennSound Assignment (Worksheet by Friday)
Discussion Forum Post 4 (by Sunday)

Week 4:

Module Reading Assignments include:

Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, Chapters I-XIV (pp. 3-96)
Week 5:

Module Reading Assignments include:

Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, Chapters XV-XXIV (pp. 96-176)
Watch: Video Lectures on *Persuasion*

In “Writing Materials” module:
Watch: Video Content, “Introductions, Thesis Statements & Topic Sentences
Review Handouts on Writing & Revising Thesis Statements

Submit:
Thesis Paragraph Draft (by Email to Instructor by Wednesday; Optional)
Discussion Post (by Friday)
Essay #2 (5 pages, by Sunday)

Office Hours, Email & Instructor Availability:

Please take advantage of office hours! These occur via Zoom. They are scheduled by appointment only. Please make this request via email (preferably two days prior, or further in advance if it is finals period) to secure an appointment. I will send a link and passcode for your personalized Zoom meeting. Appointments are on a first-email, first-serve basis. If you need to cancel an appointment, please do so in advance as there are likely other students on the waitlist who could benefit from my time. No-shows will be given last priority in the future.

Typically, appointments last 15-30 minutes, depending on the reason for the appointment. For final papers, please anticipate 30-45 minute appointments. I may ask you to bring materials to our meeting (a passage from a text, a thesis statement etc.) so that I can better address your needs. I am always available to assist via email or through online methods. However, please do not leave your inquiries until the last minute! I check email 9:00AM-5 PM M-F. Finally, I am only too happy to work your schedules and meet with you, so please do not hesitate to take advantage of virtual meetings. I look forward to working with you all one-on-one so as to enhance your educational experience in my course! If students are struggling, I also offer group extra help sessions via Zoom.

**Essays:**

All essays must meet the length requirement or they will not be accepted. All papers must be
formatted as follows:

• word-processed with numbered pages and submitted as a word file (no PDFs!)
• double-spaced
• submitted in Times New Roman, 12-point, black font, with 1 inch margins on all sides
• formatted with your name, course number, assignment number, date, and essay title

Should you require an extension for a paper, it is expected that you will submit your request via email at least three days prior to the date on which the paper is due. Please note: there will be no extensions granted for final papers (Essay 2).

Plagiarism & Professional Conduct

Cheating and plagiarism are serious academic offenses, which are dealt with firmly by the College and University. Scholastic integrity presumes that students are honest in all academic work. Cheating is the failure to give credit for work not done independently (i.e., submitting a paper written by someone other than yourself), unauthorized communication during an examination, or the claiming of credit for work not done (i.e., falsifying information). Plagiarism is the failure to give credit for another person’s written or oral statement, thereby falsely presuming that such work is originally and solely your own.

If you have any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, visit the following website: https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/whatisplagiarism, the URI Student Handbook, and University Manual sections on plagiarism and cheating at http://web.uri.edu/studentconduct/student-handbook/.

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student’s name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student’s own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student’s own words, properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity. The following are examples of academic dishonesty.

● Using material, directly or paraphrasing, from published sources (print or electronic) without appropriate citation;
● Claiming disproportionate credit for work not done independently;
● Unauthorized possession or access to exams;
● Unauthorized communication during exams;
● Unauthorized use of another’s work or preparing work for another student;
● Taking an exam for another student;
● Altering or attempting to alter grades;
● The use of notes or electronic devices to gain an unauthorized advantage during exams;
• Fabricating or falsifying facts, data or references;
• Facilitating or aiding another’s academic dishonesty;
• Submitting the same paper for more than one course without prior approval from the Instructor.

Please note the following section from the University Manual:
8.27.17. Instructors shall have the explicit duty to take action in known cases of cheating or plagiarism. The instructor shall have the right to fail a student on the assignment on which the instructor has determined that a student has cheated or plagiarized. The circumstances of this failure shall be reported to the student’s academic dean, the instructor’s dean, and the Office of Student Life. The student may appeal the matter to the instructor’s dean, and the decision by the dean shall be expeditious and final. Such action will be initiated by the instructor if it is determined that any written assignment is copied or falsified or inappropriately referenced.

In this course, you will not be asked to do outside research. Do not search for information outside of the course (including Google or Wikipedon) unless instructed to do so by the professor.

Please note: Students are responsible for being familiar with and adhering to the published “Community Standards of Behavior: University Policies and Regulations” which can be accessed in the University Student Handbook.

Academic Support Services

Office of Disability Services

Any student with a documented disability should contact me at the very start of the semester so that we may work out reasonable accommodations to support your success in this course. Students should also contact Disability Services for Students, Office of Student Life, 330 Memorial Union, 401-874-2098. Important: If you are not sure if you have a disability or if you qualify for accommodations, please reach out to Disability Services. Your confidentiality must be legally respected. Although you may not consider yourself as having a “disability”, the need for accommodations is, in fact, fairly common. Accommodations are what allow many students to succeed in courses and to have an optimal learning experience. We are here to meet your needs and support you as needed.

Americans With Disabilities Act Statement

Any personal learning accommodations that may be needed by a student covered by the “Americans with Disabilities Act” should be made known to the university as soon as possible. Information about services, academic modifications and documentation requirements can be obtained from the The Office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity (AAEOD). https://web.uri.edu/affirmativeaction/
From the University Manual: 6.40.10 and 6.40.11 Accommodations for Qualified Students With Disabilities.

Students are expected to notify faculty at the onset of the semester if any special considerations are required in the classroom. If any special considerations are required for examinations, it is expected the student will notify the faculty a week before the examination with the appropriate paperwork.

**URI Online Library Resources:**

https://web.uri.edu/library/

**URI Writing Center:**

https://web.uri.edu/aec/writing/

**URI Academic Writing Standards**

Specific writing standards differ from discipline to discipline, and learning to write persuasively in any genre is a complex process, both individual and social, that takes place over time with continued practice and guidance. Nonetheless, URI has identified some common assumptions and practices that apply to most academic writing done at the university level. These generally understood elements are articulated here to help students see how they can best express their ideas effectively, regardless of their discipline or any particular writing assignment.

Venues for writing include the widespread use of e-mail, electronic chat spaces and interactive blackboards. URI is committed to guaranteeing that students can expect all electronic communication to meet Federal and State regulations concerning harassment or other “hate” speech. Individual integrity and social decency require common courtesies and a mutual understanding that writing--in all its educational configurations--is an attempt to share information, knowledge, opinions and insights in fruitful ways.

Academic writing (as commonly understood in the university) always aims at correct Standard English grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

The following details are meant to give students accurate, useful, and practical assistance for writing across the curriculum of URI.

Students can assume that successful collegiate writing will generally:

- Delineate the relationships among writer, purpose and audience by means of a clear focus (thesis statements, hypotheses or instructor-posed questions are examples of such focusing methods, but are by no means the only ones) and a topic that’s managed and developed appropriately for the specific task.
- Display a familiarity with and understanding of the particular discourse styles of the discipline and/or particular assignment.
- Demonstrate the analytical skills of the writer rather than just repeating what others have said by summarizing or paraphrasing.
- Substantiate abstractions, judgments, and assertions with evidence specifically applicable for the occasion whether illustrations, quotations, or relevant data.
- Draw upon contextualized research whenever necessary, properly acknowledging the explicit work or intellectual property of others.
- Require more than one carefully proofread and documented draft, typed or computer printed unless otherwise specified.