

ENG 260: Women & Literature, Summer 2026

Professor Heather Johnson

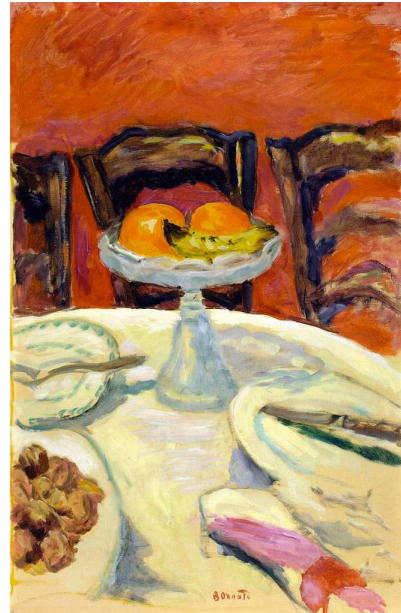
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Office Hours: Email for Apt on Zoom

## Women & Literature

This course will focus on women's writing from a variety of national and cultural traditions in a variety of genres including poetry, 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. In these works writers employ storytelling to explore themes of liberation, social justice, self-respect, and gendered identities.

Welcome! I look forward to working with each of you this summer.



### Overview:

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 writing mechanics, grammar & style.*

Required Course Texts\*

- Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* (9780140178210)
- Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (978-0802135162)
- Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (978-0393352566)
- Claire Keegan, *Foster* (978-0571255658)

*\*NOTE: Readings not included in the above list will be distributed online as PDFs on Brightspace in each weekly module.*

What is the course grade based on?

Discussion posts	25%
Responses (4 out of 5)	20%
Oral Exam	15%
Close Reading Task	10%
Thematic Essay	25%
Peer Review	05%

GRADING SCALE

A	93	B+	88	C+	78	D+	68
A-	90	B	83	C	73	D	63
		B-	80	C-	70	F	59

*The University of Rhode Island land acknowledgment is a statement written by members of the University community in close partnership with members of the Narragansett Tribe. The statement recognizes and pays tribute to the people who lived on and stewarded the land on which the University now resides. The statement seeks to show gratitude and respect to Indigenous people and cultures and build community with the Narragansett Nation and other Native American tribes.*

University of Rhode Island Land Acknowledgment

The University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. We honor and respect the enduring and continuing relationship between the

Indigenous people and this land by teaching and learning more about their history and present-day communities, and by becoming stewards of the land we, too, inhabit.

## HOW THE COURSE WORKS

**Discussion Posts.** These will incorporate evidence of active reading, responses to exploratory questions, and development of peers' comments. Your active participation in Discussions is a key contribution to building our learning environment. New discussion threads will open throughout the session, and you will post an original response to one of the threads, before offering two thoughtful and constructive responses to posts from other classmates. Please read Guidelines attached to Reading Discussions to learn more about the expectations of these posts.

**Thematic Essay.** For this project, you will each select a theme and write a 5-6 page essay. This project involves developing and crafting an argument supported by evidence across texts from this session. Your notes, responses, and researched secondary sources will inform the essay, demonstrating familiarity with the texts and the ability to find pertinent articles to support your own points.

**Oral Exam.** There will be a sign-up sheet for this. Please do not be nervous about this. We will have a 15-20 minute conversation over zoom (cameras on required) about some of the texts. I will ask you to identify a passage or two and to demonstrate your familiarity with some of the assigned material. If you carefully read each text, you will do fine. If you skim read (or don't read), in my experience it will be difficult to participate in a conversation about the material. Please schedule an online meeting if you would like to 'practice' or ask me any questions about this component of the course.

**4/5 Responses.** These short writing assignments invite you to respond to assigned readings and reflect on what we have learned in each section of the course; due dates will be listed throughout the schedule. The lowest score will be dropped. *Why?* These short responses aim to make you critical thinkers, stronger writers, and will prepare you to discuss assigned readings in Discussions and the Oral Exam.

**Peer Review.** In a course that includes writing, peer review is a component: we will use it primarily for the Thematic Essay. You will upload a "best draft" to your group in Eli Peer Review, and your classmates will give you guided and respectful feedback. Likewise, you will offer constructive and supportive feedback on their work. Writers need readers and getting reader responses can be very helpful to writers – and learning to give quality feedback is also itself an important skill to practice. If you have not used Eli Review before, don't worry: I will guide you, it's embedded in our course, and it's straightforward.

## "ATTENDANCE" AND PARTICIPATION

Because this is an online course, "attendance" looks different than in a traditional face-to-face class.

Do know that I am able to track your activity on the course site. Some weeks you will be required to post to Discussions. For more specifics, please carefully read the Guidelines in Discussions. Those who miss deadlines, post assignments late or not at all, do not upload drafts, and/or contribute very little or nothing to online discussions will receive a grade of zero, unless clear and timely communication has occurred and we have agreed on a course of action *prior to the deadline*. Other non-participation (for illness, accident, or personal tragedy) may be instructor-approved; however, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor—via email or text—to explain the absence within 12 hours of the missed deadline, or to provide documentation in support of the missed deadline. Absences that are not university-sanctioned or instructor-approved will mean a loss of points or a deduction to the final grade. Significant non-participation will mean an "F" for the course. This will be at the instructor's discretion in consultation with the Department Chair. That's the end of that heavy statement.

**COURTESY & CIVILITY:** In teaching this class, I commit to doing my utmost to promote a positive learning environment for its members. Engaging in this class with your intellect switched on, a willingness to actively participate in class work, a commitment to show respect to others, and a positive learning attitude – these are key to a successful completion of this course. Negative behavior (disrespect of others, repeated complaining, reluctance to engage in reflection/writing process, dismissive attitude toward assignments) will affect a student's grade and, in cases where this adversely impacts the learning environment of this class, may result in referral to the Dean of Students.

#### STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

*Mental Health and Wellness:* We understand that college comes with challenges and stress associated with your courses, job/family responsibilities and personal life. URI offers students a range of services to support your [mental health and wellbeing](#), including the [URI Counseling Center](#), [TELUS Health Student Support](#) App, the [Wellness Resource Center](#), and [Well-being Coaching](#).

*Anti-Bias Syllabus Statement:* We respect the rights and dignity of each individual and group. We reject prejudice and intolerance, and we work to understand differences. We believe that equity and inclusion are critical components for campus community members to thrive. If you are a target or a witness of a bias incident, you are encouraged to submit a report to the URI Bias Resource Team at [www.uri.edu/brt](http://www.uri.edu/brt). There you will also find people and resources to help.

*Disability, Access, and Inclusion Services for Students Statement:* Your access in this course is important. Please send me your Disability, Access, and Inclusion (DAI) accommodation letter early in the semester so that we have adequate time to discuss and arrange your approved academic accommodations. If you have not yet established services through DAI, please contact them to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations in the classroom. DAI can be reached by calling: 401-874-2098, visiting: [web.uri.edu/disability](http://web.uri.edu/disability), or

emailing: [dai@uri.edu](mailto:dai@uri.edu).

*Academic Enhancement Center:* The Academic Enhancement Center (AEC) offers face-to-face and online services to undergraduate students seeking academic support. Services are based out of Roosevelt Hall, the Carothers Library room LL004, and online. This is a challenging course. Success requires that you keep pace with the work, understand course concepts, and study effectively. Academic Skills Development resources helps students plan work, manage time, and study more effectively.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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
- Presenting work as human-generated that has been created using AI. If submitted work bears the hallmarks of AI-generated work, I reserve the right to require a meeting to discuss this and decide on a course of action. Faculty are obliged to report incidents of academic dishonesty, and the measures taken by the Dean of Students range from failed assignment to failed course to dismissal. Do the reading and thinking yourself, and this won't be an issue. Plus, reading and viewing and thinking and writing *for yourself* will make you feel alive as a human because your brain will *feel the experience of learning*.
- 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 instructors

You can always seek help from others, but ultimately you must do your own work. In all of your classes, it will be assumed that you understand plagiarism and its consequences. Please consult the URI Student Handbook about academic honesty and related issues. The penalty for plagiarism can be a zero for the assignment and a report to your academic dean, who has the option to fail you

for the course; in addition, the charge of academic dishonesty will go on your record in the Office of Student Life. If you need more help understanding when to cite something or how to make clear your references, PLEASE ASK.

\* AI Use Not Permitted in This Course \*

In this class, it is essential that all submitted work reflects your own understanding and skills. The use of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, or similar technologies is not permitted. This ensures that your submitted work genuinely represents your personal knowledge and capabilities. Any use of AI tools on submitted work in this course will be considered a violation of the university's [Academic Requirements in the University Manual](#) (see 8.27.10 – 8.27.22). Avoid what recent MIT research has termed “cognitive surrender” by exercising your own mind’s capabilities.

*You must complete all responses and the major writing project in order to pass the course.* It is your responsibility to make sure that your work is successfully and promptly uploaded to Brightspace. Please use Brightspace Tech Help if needed.

## PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE

A more detailed schedule will be provided.

Week 1	Focus	Reading/Viewing	Due
	Feminist Revisions	Watch <i>Jane Eyre</i>	Discussion 1
	Postcolonialism	Read <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>	Response 1
		Orientalist Art	
Week 2	Focus	Reading/Viewing	Due
	Intertextuality	<i>The Bloody Chamber</i> selected stories	Discussion 2
	The Gothic	Documentary on Angela Carter	Response 2
		Selected Poems	Close Reading
Week 3	Focus	Reading/Viewing	Due
	Queer Identity	<i>Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit</i>	Discussion 3
	The Postmodern Text	Selected Poems	Response 3
Week 4	Focus	Reading/Viewing	Due
	Silence in Writing	Claire Keegan, "Foster"	Response 4
	Film Adaptation	<i>The Quiet Girl</i> (2023), in Irish with English subtitles	Essay Topic & Peer Review
Week 5	Focus	Writing/Discussion	Due
	Claims & Evidence	Oral Exam	Thematic Essay