

**AMERICAN
INTERSECTIONS**

**STUDIES IN LITERATURE BY WOMEN
ENGL 4185—DR. REBECCA HARRISON—FALL 2017**

CRN 81945, Section 01W, MW 11:00 am-12:15pm, PAFF 307

Professor: Dr. Rebecca Harrison
Office: TLC 2225
Office Hours: M/W 1:00-2:30
& by appointment

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Class Description: How does the construction of “woman” intersect with issues of race, class, sexuality, and nation? In what ways do female authors respond to the pressing issues at the core of systematic, interconnected, and co-constitutive oppression in America? This class will examine the complex intersections of race, class, sexuality, and nationality in the multi-cultural literatures by and/or about American women (historical and contemporary), and the multifaceted ways in which these writers, as Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill articulate, “challenge systems of domination, not merely as gendered subjects but as women whose lives are affected by . . . [their] location in multiple hierarchies.”

Course Goals:

- ✚ Students will demonstrate an enhanced familiarity with selected texts by female authors from the United States, the British Isles, and/or other areas of the world.
- ✚ Students will develop theoretical and critical foundations for interpreting literature by women and will use these foundations in their interaction with the course texts.
- ✚ Students will gain an understanding of the practice of canon formation in the construction of literary history and of alternative feminist and cultural literary histories.
- ✚ Students will recognize the particular social and political consumption of female-authored literature.
- ✚ Students will demonstrate in both oral and written work a discipline-specific critical facility through convincing and well-supported analysis of related material.
- ✚ Students will demonstrate their command of academic English and the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose.

Required Texts (Please purchase listed editions.):

- ✚ Alvarez, Julia. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, Algonquin (978-1565129757).
- ✚ Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*, Anchor (978-0385490818).
- ✚ Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*, Penguin (978-0143038092).
- ✚ Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*, Mariner (978-0143038092).
- ✚ All poetry, short fiction, and non-fiction essays will be provided electronically.

Required Materials:

- ✚ Bound reading journal.
- ✚ Spiral notebook for taking notes.
- ✚ Pocket folder for submitting essays.

Attendance: Attendance and punctuality are mandatory and key to your success in this course. Arrive to class on time having completed any reading/writing assignments and be prepared to participate in class discussions and group work. As this class meets twice per week, a student is allowed *three (3) absences* over the course of the semester. Upon the fourth absence, the student *will no longer be able to pass the class*. Be aware that no distinction exists between excused and unexcused absences. In addition, should you choose to withdraw, students should be aware that if the withdrawal date falls before the midpoint, the student will receive a “W.” If the withdrawal date falls after the midpoint, the student will receive a “WF.” Please note that tardiness counts against your two allotted absences at a rate of 0.25 per day late. In other words, if you are late to class four times, it will count as one missed class period. Tardiness may also negatively affect your class participation grade and may result in missed in-class work that cannot be made up. FYI—University policy regarding severe weather and emergency closings is posted at <https://www.westga.edu/police/policies.php> under the “Emergency Plans” link; official announcements about class and/or examination cancellations will be made by the university President and posted on the UWG homepage.

Assignments & Grade Distribution: In-class presentations, group work, and other activities will complement class discussions on a regular basis. As the semester progresses, I will discuss and/or distribute specific guidelines for each written assignment. Please Note: You must complete *all* assignment to pass this course.

- ✚ (40%) (2) Critical Essays (20% each).
- ✚ (30%) Research Project.
- ✚ (10%) Journals.
- ✚ (10%) Festival of Stories Presentation.
- ✚ (10%) Class Participation & Group Work.

Grading Summary:

See <https://www.westga.edu/academics/coah/english/learning-outcomes.php> for the upper-division grading rubric.

Papers will be graded according to the following scale:

A+ = 98	B+ = 88	C+ = 78	D+ = 68	F = 50
A = 95	B = 85	C = 75	D = 65	
A- = 92	B- = 82	C- = 72	D- = 62	

Paper Format: All work for this class must be typed, double-spaced, use standard 1 inch margins, and conform to standard MLA guidelines. Please use Times New Roman 12 point font. Papers must be submitted in a clearly labeled two pocket folder.

Make-Up Work, Late Work, Recycled Papers, Etc.:

- ✚ In-class work *cannot* be made up and may count as zeros in the daily grade component.
- ✚ If you miss a class, it is up to you to check with a classmate in a timely fashion concerning missed notes and any homework assignments due the next period.
- ✚ All formal assignments are due at the start of class on the date specified in the course schedule. If you must miss a class on a date when an assignment is due, you need to make prior arrangements with me to submit your work on time.
- ✚ Late assignments are subject to a *five point deduction* for *each day* submitted after the due date, including weekend days.
- ✚ Recycled work (i.e. turning in material written for other professors) is not permissible in this class and will result in a non-passing grade on the assignment.

Plagiarism: The Department of English and Philosophy defines plagiarism as taking personal credit for the words and ideas of others as they are presented in electronic, print, and verbal sources. The use of another individual's words, phrases, or ideas without proper citation will result in the following *at my discretion* (no questions):

- ✚ a zero on the assignment.
- ✚ possible failure of this course.
- ✚ an official academic dishonesty report filed with UWG, which could lead to suspension from the university.

In short, as members of the UWG community, I expect you to fully abide by the university honor code, which can be found at <http://www.westga.edu/handbook/59.php>

Conferences: Each student is *required* to attend *at least one* conference with me during the course of the semester about the research project. Having that said, my office door is always open to you. Please come by during the hours noted on this syllabus whenever you have questions concerning class discussions, need advice or help with reading/writing assignments, etc. If you cannot attend my scheduled office hours, email me for an appointment.

Class Decorum: Throughout the semester, we will examine controversial topics, materials, and our critical reactions to them. Everyone in this class has both the right and the responsibility to express his or her critical reads of the texts in class discussions and to treat one another's ideas respectfully and seriously, even if – or especially if – you disagree. Consequently, ill-spirited discussions, unmerited comments, and intolerance are not permitted in the classroom. Also, please raise your hand when you would like to have the floor. This format facilitates structured discussion and equal participation.

Controversial Content: Some of these texts contain offensive language, violence, and a host of adult themes. It is my expectation that you approach and discuss the content of each piece in class with intellectual maturity and professionalism.

Disruptive Behavior: Students may be dismissed from any class meeting at which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others. Such behavior includes—but is not limited to—arriving late for class, *sleeping* (or the appearance of it) in class, allowing cell phones to ring, *text-messaging*, frequently leaving class, and speaking disrespectfully to the instructor and/or to other students. Each dismissal of this kind will count as an absence and *will be applied* toward the attendance requirement policy above.

Breaks: There are none. Our class meets for only seventy-five minutes. As such, I expect that you go to the restroom, get tissues, and grab coffee *before* class starts. If you have emergency situations that may require you to leave and return during my class, you must make prior arrangement with me.

Email: In accordance with university policy, all email correspondence must take place through the UWG email system. I will email the class often; therefore, please be sure that your default address is set for your westga account in the Banner student system and that you check it regularly. Also, please keep in mind that email is professional correspondence; thus, remember to properly address your audience, use the same standards of writing that you would in any paper you write, and sign your email.

Writing Center (TLC 1201): The Writing Center is a valuable student resource and, while, consultants will not proofread, they will question, respond to, offer choices, and encourage revision in student essays. This is a free university service for you to take advantage of as often as you need. To schedule an appointment call the center at 678-839-6513. See <http://www.westga.edu/~writing/> for more information.

Special Accommodations: Students in the UWG community have a right to equal access to classes and materials, regardless of special needs, whether temporary or permanent. Students with needs on file with Accessibility Services will be accommodated in this class per West Georgia regulations. Please see me immediately for arrangements. Accessibility services may be reached at (770) 839-6428 or see <https://www.westga.edu/accessibility/>

Students should review the full common syllabus policies for UWG at

<https://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/>

Information about the regulations governing campus carry at UWG can be found at

<https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php>

Reading Schedule

This schedule provides a *tentative* layout of in-class and out-of-class activities and assignments. As it is based on the estimated progress of our class, some modification (including additions, postponements, or deletions) will be necessary as we move through the semester.

Class Date	Assignments	Due Dates & Notes.
W 8/9	Introductions and class overview.	FYI—Our four anchor texts are novels plan ahead with your reading.
M 8/14	Julia Alvarez (Essays) “A White Woman of Color” (e-copy). “A Vermont Writer from the Dominican Republic” (e-copy).	
W 8/16	Julia Alvarez (Fiction) “Antojos,” “The Kiss,” & “The Four Girls” (from <i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i>).	
M 8/21	“Joe,” “The Rudy Elmenhurst Story,” & “A Regular Revolution” (from <i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i>).	
W 8/23	“Daughter of Invention,” “Trespass,” & “Snow” (from <i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i>).	
M 8/28	“Floor Show,” “The Blood of the Conquistadores,” & “The Human Body” (from <i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i>).	
W 8/30	“Still Lives,” “An American Surprise,” & “The Drum” (from <i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i>).	Due: Journal check one.
M 9/4	Labor Day; No Class.	
W 9/6	In-class writing workshop; assignment tbd.	
M 9/11	Amy Tan “Feathers from a Thousand Li Away” (from <i>The Joy Luck Club</i>).	
W 9/13	“The Twenty-Six Malignant Gates” (from <i>The Joy Luck Club</i>).	
M 9/18	“American Translation” (from <i>The Joy Luck Club</i>).	
W 9/20	“Queen Mother of the Western Skies” (from <i>The Joy Luck Club</i>).	Due: Essay One.
M 9/25	Leslie Marmon Silko (Short Fiction & Poetry) Selections will be distributed electronically.	
W 9/27	Alice Walker (Fiction) <i>The Color Purple</i> (pages 1-99).	

	<i>Last day to withdraw with a grade of W from Full Term (non-eCore) 16 week courses is 9/29.</i>	
M 10/2	<i>The Color Purple</i> (pages 100-177).	
W 10/4	<i>The Color Purple</i> (pages 178-288).	Due: Journal check two.
M 10/9	Margaret Atwood (Poetry) Selections will be distributed electronically.	
W 10/11	In-class presentation workshop day 1. Assignments tbd.	
M 10/16	Margaret Atwood (Fiction) <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (1-75).	
W 10/18	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (79-140).	
M 10/23	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (143-255).	
W 10/25	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (259-311).	Due: Essay Two.
M 10/30	In-class presentation workshop day 2. Assignments tbd.	
W 11/1	Student Project Conferences; No Class.	
M 11/6	Student Project Conferences; No Class.	
W 11/8	Natasha Trethewey (Poetry) . Selections will be distributed electronically.	Due: Journal check three.
M 11/13	Surprise unit; assignment tbd. Seriously, you'll love it.	
W 11/15	Surprise unit (continued).	
M 11/20	Thanksgiving Break; No Class.	
W 11/22	Thanksgiving Break; No Class.	
M 11/27	Festival of Stories Presentations.	
W 11/29	Festival of Stories Presentations.	
W 12/6	Festival of Stories Presentations. (FYI—Class will meet during the exam block 11 to 1.)	
	Papers are due in my office (TLC 2225) by 5:00 p.m.	

Please Note: In the event West Georgia closes due to inclement weather, you should continue your out-of-class assignments according to this schedule.