

# WGSS 163L

## Historical and Literary Perspectives on Women TR 9:30-10:50, LA 138

### Instructor Information:

#### Professor Elizabeth Hubble

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### Required Texts:

- Sappho, *Poems* (Oxford)
- Euripides, *Medea* (Dover)
- Hildegard of Bingen, *Selected Writings* (Penguin Classics)
- Christine de Pizan, *Book of the City of Ladies* (Penguin)
- Madame de Lafayette, *The Princess of Cleves* (Penguin Classics)
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (Dover Thrift Edition)
- Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Penguin Classics)
- Virginia Woolf, *Room of One's Own* (Harcourt)
- Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass* (Addison Wesley)
- Jeanette Winterson, *Written on the Body* (Vintage)
- Additional Readings on Moodle

### Course Description:

WGSS 163L is an introduction to the discipline and scope of Western thought focusing on women as the subject rather than men. The objective of the course is to give you an understanding and critical appreciation of seminal texts by and about women through readings, class discussion and written assignments. We will explore the historical development of gender norms, identities and roles from antiquity through the present as they have been shaped and changed by cultural, historical and political factors. You will gain an understanding of the significance that gender plays in societies as you develop your ability to think critically on these issues and situate yourself, as a thinker, within these contexts.

This course fulfills a requirement for the Major and the Minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. It is also one of the required courses for the Liberal Studies Major with an Emphasis in Women's Studies. If you enjoy this course and would like to know more about the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, please contact me or drop by our office, LA 138A-B, or visit the [WGSS website \(www.cas.umt.edu/wsprog\)](http://www.cas.umt.edu/wsprog).

### Learning Outcomes

1. Students will develop an understanding of the different ways Western societies and cultures have viewed and constructed gender, oppression, and privilege.
2. Students will learn to analyze social norms and institutions (including governments, educational systems, the church, and the family) as they relate to gender and other concepts such as sexuality, race, and class.

3. Students will develop an awareness of the role women authors have played throughout history and learn to evaluate texts authored by women within and against the context of the Western canonical tradition.
4. Students will develop critical thinking and communication skills through in-class discussions, exams, informal writing assignments, and online discussion forums.
5. Students will learn the basics of how Western historiographical and literary studies traditions have evaluated, included, and/or excluded women authors' texts and contributions.

### **Methods:**

This class is a reading and discussion course. Your active participation is essential and counts as part of your grade. I will present certain biographical, historical, and cultural information to provide you with a context for your readings, discussions, and writings. I will propose my own interpretations of the texts we read, but you are not expected to accept these interpretations blindly. Each reader brings his or her own experiences to a literary text. If you disagree with my reading of a text, you should feel free to say so.

You will hear many different opinions and ideas during this course, some of which you may disagree with. One of the objectives of this class is to improve your written and oral communication skills so that each of you can become more confident in your own unique personal voice. I expect each student to respect the opinions and beliefs of their classmates and for the level of discourse in class to remain civil and academic. A failure to treat others with fairness and respect will have an adverse effect on your grade.

### **Classroom Etiquette:**

Students should arrive on time and not leave until class is over. All cell phones must be turned off. Students may use laptop computers to take notes. Students should not text while in class, and internet use should be limited to topics related to class. First offense=tardy. Second offense=absence.

### **Attendance:**

This is a discussion course and attendance is required. After one unexcused absence, your participation grade will be lowered one notch for each absence (A to A-). An excess of 5 unexcused absences will result in an F in the course. A failure to prepare and participate may also be grounds for being counted absent. Tardiness will not be tolerated. Two tardies will equal one absence. There will be NO make-up exams or late submission of homework for unexcused absences. If you are sick or have some other emergency, please contact me.

### **Readings:**

In addition to the books listed above which you must buy, there are also a few required readings on Moodle. To access the Moodle readings: Go to the UOnline site and use your NetID and password to login. WGSS 163L should appear as one of your courses.

### **Grading:**

- Preparation and Participation (inc. quizzes): 10%
- Response Papers (5): 20%
- Moodle Discussion Forums: 20%
- Midterm Exam/Paper: 25%
- Final Exam/Paper: 25%

## Grading Scale:

93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
63-66%	D
60-62%	D-
59% and below	F

## Assignments and Assessment

### Preparation and Participation:

Coming to class prepared, i.e. having read all material and ready to participate in discussions, is essential and counts for a large percentage of your final grade. Participation does not merely mean responding when called upon but showing a willingness to raise your hand and enter discussions. Classroom work will include both general discussions and small group discussions. Quizzes may be given at the beginning of class as necessary. Attendance will be taken.

### Response Papers:

This semester you will submit 5 response papers, each of which must be 2-3 pages, typed, and double-spaced. Margins must be 1 inch on the left, right, and bottom, and 2 inches on the top. Your name and other identifying information should be in the top margin. Papers of less than two full pages will not be accepted. These papers are responses to the readings and class/online discussions.

Because this is a discussion course, you should spend a considerable amount of time reflecting on the readings and class discussions. Writing down and organizing your thoughts in a response paper is an effective way to prepare for class. The response paper is intended to help you better understand the reading and its relation to class discussions. Your response papers should not be a summary of the texts, but should record reflections on them. For example, you may choose a short citation or discrete part of the reading and write a reaction to it. You may also compare and contrast passages from different works and discussions that have similar themes. You may pose questions about particularly provocative or difficult readings. There is no right way to write your response papers, and there are no assigned topics. The sole requirement is that your response papers show internal organization and indicate that you have spent time thinking about the readings and discussions. See the schedule for due dates.

### Moodle Discussion Forums:

The class will be divided into rotating groups of 6-10 on Moodle. Each week you must post one question or comment about the readings and two replies to your classmates' questions. Replies must be at least 4 sentences long to receive credit. I will distribute a guideline for writing educationally valuable postings that will receive full credit. The class proctor will be responsible for monitoring the Moodle discussion forums.

### **Exams:**

You will take two take-home exams this semester, a midterm and a final. The exams will consist of short essays and identifications. The final exam will cover themes studied during the whole semester but will concentrate on the readings and lectures since the mid-term.

### **Extra Credit:**

You will have many opportunities over the course of the semester to submit an extra credit response paper. You may not submit more than three extra credit assignments. EC assignments include attending and/or participating in any event connected to WGSS. I will also distribute a list of movies you may watch for EC.

### **Disability Accommodations:**

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Disability Services for Students \(DSS\)](http://www.umt.edu/dss/) (<http://www.umt.edu/dss/>). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

### **Plagiarism Warning:**

A response paper or discussion forum post is not an occasion to show how well you can quote, paraphrase, or summarize an author, but how well you can think as an explorer of the work and ideas of your author. Any utilization of the words or work of others (including ideas) in any assignment must be given full reference credit. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism and will result in an F on the assignment. Plagiarism is a violation of The University of Montana Student Code of Conduct and may result in university sanctions. If you have questions about proper citation and/or plagiarism, please see me.

### **Trigger Warning:**

During the course of this class, some difficult topics may come up, including gender-based violence and sexual assault. There are other topics in this class that may also trigger difficult memories for you. You should feel free to talk to me about any issues you have with the topics we are discussing and ask for excused absences.

### **Statement of Inclusivity and Diversity:**

This classroom is a hate-free zone, and is part of WGSS's commitment to addressing and redressing racism, Islamophobia, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, anti-Blackness, and all systems of privilege and oppression in our classes, in our academic units, and in higher education.

## Schedule of Assignments (subject to change)

Date	Assignment	Due
August 30	Introduction to Course	
September 1	Sappho	
September 6	Euripides, <i>Medea</i> , pp 1-21	
September 8	Euripides, <i>Medea</i> , pp 21-47	<b>Response 1</b>
September 13	<i>Genesis</i> 1-4, <i>Song of Songs</i> , <i>Judith</i> Moodle	
September 15	Tertullian and Jerome, Moodle	
September 20	Hildegard of Bingen. <i>Selected Writings</i> , pp li-lv, 3-32, 53-62	
September 22	Hildegard of Bingen, pp 89-127, 146-203	
September 27	Christine de Pizan, <i>Book of the City of Ladies</i> , Part I	
September 29	Christine de Pizan, Part II	<b>Response 2</b>
October 4	Christine de Pizan, Part III	
October 6	<i>Malleus Maleficarum</i> , Moodle	
October 11	<i>Malleus Maleficarum</i> , Moodle	
October 13	Madame de Lafayette, <i>The Princess of Cleves</i> , Book 1	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
October 18	Madame de Lafayette, Book 2 & 3	
October 20	Madame de Lafayette, Book 4	
October 25	Mary Wollstonecraft, <i>Vindication</i> , pp 1-78	
October 27	Olympe de Gouges, Moodle	<b>Response 3</b>
November 1	Jane Austen, <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> , Chapters 1-31	
November 3	Jane Austen, <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> , Chapters 32-61	
November 8	<b>NO CLASS—VOTE!</b>	
November 10	Susan B. Anthony/Sojourner Truth, Moodle	
November 15	Mary Edwards Walker, Moodle	
November 17	Virginia Woolf, <i>Room of One's Own</i> , pp 3-56	<b>Response 4</b>
November 22	Virginia Woolf, pp 57-112	
November 24	<b>NO CLASS--THANKSGIVING</b>	
November 29	Fatima Mernissi, <i>Dreams of Trespass</i> , pp 1-122	
December 1	Fatima Mernissi, pp 124-242	
December 6	Jeanette Winterson, <i>Written on the Body</i> , pp 9-100	
December 8	Jeanette Winterson, pp 100-190	<b>Response 5</b>
<b>December 19</b>	<b>Final Exam: due Monday by 12:10</b>	