

## **ENG 150: Handmaids and Heroines in American Literature**

TR 11:00 am -12:15 pm, Tribble Hall C115  
Spring 2019

Dr. Carrie Johnston  
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-2:00 pm, and by appointment

### **Course Description**

In this course, we will discuss the ways American women have narrated their experiences in literature. Beginning with Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), the class will move through literary texts in which women address ideas such as republican motherhood and the doctrine of separate spheres. Concluding with Alison Bechdel's "tragicomic," *Fun Home* (2006), we will also analyze how the genre of a literary work influences its message. Ultimately, our goal is to consider women writers' dynamic place in the literary canon, and the ways that women have constructed or resisted social, economic, and cultural norms through literary production.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Required Texts**

*Listed in the order we will read them*

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)  
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (1899)  
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1977)  
Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986)  
Edwidge Danticat, *Brother, I'm Dying* (2007)  
Hannah Gadsby, *Nanette* (2018) available via Netflix  
Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (2006)

#### **Assignments and Grade Calculation**

*Each written assignment must be submitted via Sakai to be considered for a grade*

10% Reading Responses (8 responses, 250 words each)  
10% Participation and Class Discussion  
15% Essay 1 (750 words)  
20% Essay 2 (1100 words)  
25% Essay 3 (1700 words)  
5% Digital Exhibit  
15% Final Exam

## Reading Responses

Over the course of the semester you will complete **8 reading responses** of 250 words each. They should be substantive, analytical considerations of that day's assigned reading, or over an issue within the last week's worth of reading that we did not have time to discuss in class. To receive full credit, you must quote and close read at least one passage from the assigned reading. You will submit all responses via Sakai. They must be submitted by 9:00 am on the due date.

## Participation

*For full participation credit:*

- Come to class on time
- Remain in the room through the duration of the class
- Contribute to each class discussion by providing comments or questions
- Bring the assigned reading in hard copy to class on the day it is due
- Respond to your peers and the instructor with respect, keeping in mind that a person's circumstances are not always or immediately apparent

## Essays

Grading criteria for each of your 3 required essays will be outlined in a detailed assignment sheet to be distributed well in advance of the essay's due date. Due dates are indicated on the course schedule (below) as a range of dates; you may submit your essay at any time during this range for full credit. You are granted one two-day grace period for any *one* essay, which allows you to submit the essay up to 2 days late without penalty to your grade. Outside of these allowances, one-half of a letter grade will be deducted for each day an essay is submitted late.

## Final Exam

The final exam will be administered via Sakai on Saturday, May 4 at 9:00 am and you will have 2 hours to complete it. You will submit it via Sakai when complete. The final exam is required and will not be administered early or late.

## Extra Credit

If there are campus or local events during the semester that are relevant to the theme of our class, I may offer extra credit to those who attend and respond to these events. Stay tuned!

## Learning Outcomes

*By the end of the course, you should be able to:*

- Identify formal elements in a work of literature
- Write an analysis of an interpretive problem in a work of literature
- Demonstrate knowledge of a genre
- Write a clearly written essay addressing a literary topic
- Analyze literary texts and respond to their formal and cultural value

## Course Schedule

Complete all readings and assignments before class on the day they are listed. Bring the assigned reading to each class.

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes of readings, assignments, or class location will be communicated to you via email and posted to Sakai well in advance of due dates and/or class meeting time.

T = Tuesday; R = Thursday

		<b>Unit 1: Creating New Narratives</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Jan. 15</b>	Course introduction  <b>Text (to be distributed and read during class):</b> Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, <i>The American Woman's Home</i> (excerpt)
<b>R</b>	<b>Jan. 17</b>	<b>Reading Due (to be read before class):</b>  Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> , pp. 25-87 (Preface by Author, Introduction by Editor, and Chapters 1-11)
<b>T</b>	<b>Jan. 22</b>	<b>Reading Due:</b> Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> , pp. 87-150 (Chapters 12-25)  <b>Reading Response 1 due by 9:00 am (via Sakai)</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Jan. 24</b>	<b>Reading Due:</b> Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> , pp. 150-215 (Chapters 26-Appendix)
<b>T</b>	<b>Jan. 29</b>	<b>Reading Due:</b> Kate Chopin, <i>The Awakening</i> , pp. 29-91 (Chapters 1-20)  <b>Reading Response 2 due by 9:00 am (via Sakai)</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Jan. 31</b>	<b>Reading Due:</b> Chopin, <i>The Awakening</i> , pp. 91-147 (Chapters 21-39)
<b>T</b>	<b>Feb. 5</b>	<b>Chopin discussion</b> (Bring <i>The Awakening</i> to class)
<b>R</b>	<b>Feb. 7</b>	<b>Class cancelled: Professor attending a conference</b>

R-Su	Feb. 7-10	<b>Essay 1 due via Sakai</b>
		<b>Unit 2: Imagining Other Worlds</b>
T	Feb. 12	<b>Reading Due:</b> Leslie Marmon Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> , pp. 1-66
R	Feb. 14	<b>Reading Due:</b> Leslie Marmon Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> , pp. 67-120  <b>Reading Response 3 due by 9:00 am (via Sakai)</b>
T	Feb. 19	Last day to drop classes
T	Feb. 19	<b>Reading Due:</b> Leslie Marmon Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> , pp. 121-183
R	Feb. 21	<b>Reading Due:</b> Leslie Marmon Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> , pp. 183-244  <b>Reading Response 4 due by 9:00 am (via Sakai)</b>
T	Feb. 26	<b>Silko discussion</b> (Bring <i>Ceremony</i> to class)
R	Feb. 28	<b>Reading Due:</b> Margaret Atwood, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , pp. 1-53 (Chapters 1-9)
R-Su	Feb. 28-Mar. 3	<b>Paper 2 due via Sakai</b>
T	Mar. 5	<b>Reading Due:</b> Margaret Atwood, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , pp. 54-106 (Chapters 10-18)
R	Mar. 7	<b>Reading Due:</b> Margaret Atwood, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , pp. 107-159 (Chapters 19-25)  <b>Reading Response 5 due by 9:00 am (via Sakai)</b>
TR	Mar. 12, 14	<i>Enjoy your Spring Break!</i>
T	Mar. 19	<b>Reading Due:</b> Margaret Atwood, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , pp. 160-211 (Chapters 26-32)
R	Mar. 21	<b>Reading Due:</b> Margaret Atwood, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , pp. 212-263 (Chapter 33-40)

<b>T</b>	<b>Mar. 26</b>	<b>Reading Due:</b> Margaret Atwood, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , pp. 264-311 (Chapter 41-Historical Notes)
		<b>Unit 3: Crossing Borders and Boundaries</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Mar. 28</b>	<b>Reading Due:</b> Edwidge Danticat, <i>Brother, I'm Dying</i> , pp. 1-61
R-Su	Mar. 28-31	<b>Essay 3 due via Sakai</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Apr. 2</b>	<b>Reading Due:</b> Edwidge Danticat, <i>Brother, I'm Dying</i> , pp. 62-123  <b>Reading response 6 due by 9:00 am (via Sakai)</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Apr. 4</b>	<b>Reading Due:</b> Edwidge Danticat, <i>Brother, I'm Dying</i> , pp. 124-192
<b>T</b>	<b>Apr. 9</b>	<b>Reading Due:</b> Edwidge Danticat, <i>Brother, I'm Dying</i> , pp. 193-269  <b>Reading Response 7 due by 9:00 am (via Sakai)</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Apr. 11</b>	<b>Before class:</b> Watch Hannah Gadsby, <i>Nanette</i> on Netflix  <b>Mandatory response 8 due by 9:00 am (via Sakai)</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Apr. 16</b>	<b>Reading Due:</b> Alison Bechdel, <i>Fun Home</i> , pp. 1-86  <b>Reading Response 9 due by 9:00 am (via Sakai)</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Apr. 18</b>	<b>Reading Due:</b> Alison Bechdel, <i>Fun Home</i> , pp. 87-150
<b>T</b>	<b>Apr. 23</b>	<b>Reading Due:</b> Alison Bechdel, <i>Fun Home</i> , pp. 151-232  <b>Reading Response 10 due by 9:00 am (via Sakai)</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Apr. 25</b>	<b>Bechdel discussion</b> (Bring <i>Fun Home</i> to class)
Su	Apr. 28	<i>Fun Home</i> digital exhibit due

<b>T</b>	<b>Apr. 30</b>	<b>Last day of class Discussion, readings TBD</b>
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## Course Policies

### Attendance

Attendance in every class is required. You may miss two classes without penalty to your grade. Starting with your third absence, your final grade will be reduced by one-half of a letter grade for every class missed. Five or more absences will result in an automatic failure of the course.

### Due Dates and Late Submissions

I acknowledge that everyone's course schedules, social calendars, professional commitments, and personal responsibilities are different. Therefore, almost every written assignment has a flexible due date.

**Reading responses:** There are specific due dates indicated on the syllabus for each reading response. **10 opportunities** to submit responses are listed, but you are **required to complete only 8 responses**. You *may* turn in **all 10 of the assigned responses**. Any response turned in after you have submitted 8 may replace a previously-submitted response that received a lower grade; it will not, however, be counted as bonus/extra credit.

**Essays:** Each essay's due date is provided as a range of days, rather than a specific day and time. I encourage you to submit your essay as early as possible during the due date range, as I grade the essays as they are submitted. Additionally, you are granted **one two-day grace period for any one of your essays**. This means if you need to turn in *one* of the essays late, you may do so with no excuse provided or prior permission from me and with no penalty to your grade.

Keep in mind, I understand that sometimes an emergency happens (and that sometimes we don't plan things out as well as we should), but that I do not tolerate chronic or habitual lateness.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be given via Sakai on Saturday, May 4 at 9:00 am. No early or late exams will be administered. Failure to take the final exam will result in failure of the course.

### Email

I can be reached via email at johnstc@wfu.edu. Please be advised that I may take up to 24 hours to respond to an email sent during the work week (Monday-Friday). If an email is sent after 5pm on a Friday, I reserve the right to respond on the following Monday. When I communicate with you via email, you can expect me to include a relevant subject heading, address you by your name, communicate clearly and with complete sentences, and conclude the email with my signature. **I extend the same courtesies and expectations regarding email communication to you!**

## **Electronic Devices**

You can expect me to use my laptop in class for projecting course materials and taking notes. I will use my laptop during class only when it is necessary to complete a task relevant to class discussion. All other electronic devices (including watches) that I have with me during class will be silenced, switched to airplane mode, or powered off during class. **I extend the same courtesies and expectations regarding electronic devices to you.** Failure to abide by these expectations will result in a lowered class grade and/or being asked to leave class.

## **Food, Beverages, and Other Matters of Etiquette**

You may consume non-alcoholic beverages and odor-free snacks during class. Please do not eat meals during class. Do not use tobacco products (including smokeless tobacco) during class. Come to class sober and remain sober until you leave.

## **University Resources and Policies**

### **Sakai**

Sakai will be the primary way that I share materials, feedback, grades, and course resources with you outside of class. You will submit all written assignments via Sakai. Any supplementary materials I distribute will be posted to Sakai as a link or document.

### **Disability Accommodations**

Wake Forest provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you require an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact me privately as early in the term as possible and no later than 2 weeks into the semester. Retroactive accommodations will not be provided. Students requiring accommodations must also consult the Learning Assistance Center and Disability Services Office, located in Reynolda Hall 117. Contact information: x5929, lac.wfu.edu

### **Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism, or representing another person's ideas as your own, will not be tolerated regardless of circumstances. It will result in a failing course grade and possible disciplinary action. For questions about plagiarism and suggestions on how to avoid it, visit the library's guide at <https://zsr.wfu.edu/research/guides/recognizing-avoiding-plagiarism/>

### **Campus-Wide Emergencies and Weather**

If school is canceled for weather or other campus-wide emergencies, keep up with the assigned readings and complete any writing assignments as they are due.