

Women & Literature Syllabus: LIT285W

Welcome to Women & Literature, LIT285W. This Syllabus is your guide to the rules and regulations we will be following this term. This course is designed to introduce you to a range of women authors and relevant issues. We will also come together on-line to exchange ideas, interpretations, and reactions to these literary works, to think, argue, laugh, to entertain and be entertained, to commiserate, question, to puzzle out meaning, and connect the readings to our lives, observations, and experiences.

These are the expectations of all members of this literary community:

- Read all required material by the posted deadlines.
- Share reactions and responses to the readings on time as assigned. This is a very critical component of the course. Don't blow this part off!
- Participate enthusiastically and within the boundaries of polite computer usage.
- Keep an open mind to other members of our group.
- Pull your weight on discussions. It's not a "discussion" if everyone posts on the last possible date. If you want maximum credit on a discussion board, you need to post an initial in-depth entry onto the discussion board by day 4 or 5 of that week and spend some time responding to others for the remainder of the week at least. No one will be given full credit if all your postings for the week are crammed into one day.

We have one semester to read a selection of literature that could possibly range throughout history and around the world. We are, for the sake of cohesive thought and pragmatic purposes, limiting ourselves to Anglo-American authors from the Victorian age up to our own time. Furthermore, we are generally reading writing by women, not because men aren't great writers but because of the nature of this course. We are leaving out many valuable authors, but I hope that you will be enticed to keep reading beyond the boundaries of this course. And I really hope that this course will help you read with a new consciousness.

Books

The books for this class are available at the Delta College Bookstore and, I'm sure, on-line or at your local book stores. There are only three and we will read them in this order:

- *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte
- *The Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys
- *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros

In addition, you will have readings of some short stories and poems and one long essay that we will begin with that you will have on-line links to. Those readings are short enough that we don't need to buy them.

Grades

Grades will be on a total point system and will be kept on the Educator site where you can have access to all your grades anytime you wish to see them. All points are equally weighted. Because I might have some variance in how many points are on this or that quiz, this point total is approximate but very close.

- Seven journal entries x 20 for 140 points
- Conversations on-line 10 x 10 for 100 points (this could vary a little)
- Five Did You Read It Quizzes for 50 points (this could also vary a little)
- One paper for 50 points
- Final Exam for 50 points
- Approximate Total Points for the Course: 390 (or so)

On-line Course Policies

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance and Participation are inseparable in an on-line course. I can't look to see if you are in your seat, have arrived on time, or appear to be engaged in the class activities even if quiet as I normally can do in a face to face class. Silence equals absence in an on-line course.

Much of the work in the course will take place as responses to discussion threads that will be posted on the course discussion board. The expectation is that you will respond to each thread and engage your fellow students in discussion about topics. You are not expected to respond to each and every posting as that would completely clutter the conversation. But you should be responsive to some postings each week. The following should help you understand explicitly the expectations:

- The **minimal** standard for credit on any assignment or unit of discussion is that you must sign on and respond twice per week to the class discussions or more if the assignment for that discussion specifically asks you to. I am completely underwhelmed by cramming it all in at the last minute and can tell that people who put in an appearance for a whopping 15 or 20 minutes at the end of the week just don't contribute much, most people end up not reading what they've posted, and it's not going to get you much credit. Remember, the twice per week standard is minimal – meaning at least this for a C.
- A posting that merely says “Me too” or “I agree” does not count in terms of substance although it's ok to give one another encouragement and acknowledgement.

- Postings should add substantive content to the discussion and, when appropriate, be responsive, informative, and helpful to others.
- Postings should also show a level of preparedness. By this I mean that you have read assignments, done necessary research, or otherwise prepared appropriately to add meaningfully to the class conversations – and I should be able to tell you’ve read. Refer specifically to the texts we are using.
- If you are missing – have not posted – for one full week, you need to get in touch with me.
- If you are missing for two weeks, I will drop you from the course.
- Your last date of class attendance will be the date of your last posting.

Late Work

I’ll be completely honest with you here. It really annoys me. I’m not trying to sound cranky, but I have a lot of stuff to keep track of and we move right along. Also, it’s just rare that late work is “just this once,” but more likely that people rely on being able to submit work late consistently. So, late assignments receive no credit. In an on-line course, especially, the pace of the course is important to the learning that takes place and, therefore, late work is inappropriate. If the Delta server is down, you can still post to Educator by accessing it through any web browser or in such a case I might extend a deadline. Have back up plans in the event you have personal computer equipment failure. And don’t leave deadlines until the last half hour just in case you do have technical problems. Plan ahead. The technical issues involved in taking an on-line course, unfortunately, really are on you. We have computers you can use at the LLIC (library) at Delta, most public libraries have free internet access at your disposal, so you just have to work with it if you have personal equipment failure. I myself had a computer problem last semester and had to head off to libraries, the office, and so on, so I know it’s possible. If you are uncomfortable working on-line, then on-line learning is likely not your most effective choice for a course.

Communications

E-mail me through the Educator site or at rzweedma@delta.edu. You can leave me a voice mail at (989) 686-9534. Be sure to leave your number and a preferred call back time if you need to speak to me. I have some office hours, of course, but I find on-line students rarely if ever use them. So set up an appointment if you need to see me. I’m still determining my office hours for the semester but will post those for you in the Announcements part of our Educator site. And you can always schedule an appointment with me.

Academic Integrity

Delta College has strict policies against cheating of any sort including plagiarism (taking another person's thoughts or words or ideas and using them as though they were yours). In the event this occurs, I can and probably will do anything from failing you in this course to some lesser consequence depending on the situation. In addition, a letter must go to the Academic Dean (Delta policy) and, yes, it actually does go on your permanent record. In this particular course, when I have seen cheating, it normally takes the form of copying information from websites and passing that off as your own on either a journal, a discussion posting, or your paper. I really want to know what you think and what you have to say – that's the idea. Research that you acknowledge and are doing to satisfy your own curiosity, answer questions, or inform you in some way – that kind of research is just great and you are welcome to chime in with it at any time. The key here is acknowledging your sources always.

Netiquette

Communicating through computers has become so common place that I think proper netiquette is almost part of the culture. But it doesn't hurt to think about some things. In face to face classrooms, most of us well understand acceptable and unacceptable types of behavior. Do not be disrespectful of your fellow students, for example. Same for on-line. It's sometimes easier to be nasty when you aren't looking someone in the eye – don't fall into that mode of behavior. Do not SHOUT at people by using all caps. There are other ways to emphasize what you are saying and it's good writing practice of rely on your choice of words. Anything that seems beyond acceptable levels, I will bring to your attention privately on the assumption that you didn't mean this to happen really. We will all learn as we go. But continuing abusive or disrespectful behavior on-line can result in your removal from the class under the Delta College Disruptive Student Policy. By the way, it is not "disrespectful" to disagree with people – I would hope that's obvious. You'll often disagree with someone's interpretation. But don't get nasty or personal about it.

Also, make things easier by checking your spelling, please. I'm not a terrible stickler for this because we all make typos and we're going to spend a lot of time on-line. But do the best you can so your work isn't hard to read. You should all be able to post to the discussion board or create a journal with a minimum of errors. Take the time to proofread your work.

Final Note

The nature of a Syllabus – because the college essentially considers it a contract between student and instructor – tends to have a somewhat snarky tone, I have to admit, anticipating all sort of problems and issuing all kinds of warnings. But I really want you to enjoy this course! Truly! Literature was meant to be read and enjoyed and talked about primarily as entertainment. There's so much more we can see there

that adds to the richness of this kind of entertainment. Good literature opens our minds to many perceptions about the world and many ideas. I always enjoy these books and readings and this whole experience, and I hope you do too!

Calendar Overview of Readings and Major Assignments

Week One: Jan. 8 - 14: Packet One – Get on-line. Participate in introductory discussion. Begin reading Virginia Woolf’s essay (link on-line).

Week Two: Jan. 15 - 21: Continue reading and begin discussing Woolf’s essay (and life for that matter). Participate in Discussion on first half of Woolf’s essay.

Week Three: Jan. 22 - 28: Finish with Woolf discussion board. Take Quiz on Woolf.

Week Four: Jan. 29 – Feb. 4: Read Rossetti and Patmore’s two poems assigned in Packet Two and complete other tasks and assignments in Packet Two.

Week Five: Feb 5 - 11: Read first half Jane Eyre and complete other items in the Packet.

Week Six: Feb. 12 - 18: Last half of Jane Eyre and other items in Packet.

Week Seven: Feb. 19 - 25: Two weeks on The Wide Sargasso Sea.

Week Eight: Feb. 26 – Mar. 4: Finish Packet on The Wide Sargasso Sea.

Spring Break: Mar. 5 - 11

Week Nine: Mar. 12 - 18: Short stories found in External Links.

Week Ten: Mar. 19 - 25: Poetry found in External Links.

Week Eleven: Mar. 26 – Ap. 1: Another group of short stories found in External Links.

Week Twelve: Ap. 2 - 8: Paper Topic Due. Time given to work on it.

Week Thirteen: Ap. 9 - 15: Paper due Ap. 15. Next Packet: The House on Mango Street.

Week Fourteen: Ap. 16 - 22 : Last Packet: Final Exam

Week Fifteen: Ap. 23 - 26: Final reflections.

