

I imagine that I speak for a constituency, living and dead, giving utterance to energy, insight, words flowing from many lives. I have always desired that my poems work for others, be useful.

What I mean by useful is simply that readers will find poems that speak to and for them, will take those poems into their lives and say them to each other and put them up on the bathroom wall and remember bits and pieces in stressful or quiet moments. That the poems may give voice to something in the experience of a life has been my intention. To find ourselves spoken for in art gives dignity to our pain, our anger, our lust, our losses. We can hear what we hope for and what we most fear, in the small release of cadenced utterance. We have few rituals that function for us in the ordinary chaos of our lives.

--Marge Piercy (1936-)

For women . . . poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest external horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives.

--Audre Lorde (1934-1992)

School of Arts & Science

English Department
The Female Literary Imagination
English 262-02
Winter 2004

Course Outline

1. Instructor Information

- (a) Instructor: Moira Walker
- (b) Office hours: M/W 1:30-2:30 p.m.; T/Th 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- (c) Location & telephone: Paul 235
- (d) Telephone 370-3330

2. Required Materials

(a) Texts

Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*
Readings for 262-02
Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*.

(b) Other

A good dictionary, for example, the *Canadian Gage Dictionary*.

3. Course Content

During this course, we will read selected pieces of literature by writers of varying nationality, ethnicity, language group, economic class, sexual preference, and religious creed. We will discuss the material in class, and you will write about it informally in a journal and formally in two essays and one test. In addition, you will recite a sonnet or part of a poem of your choosing from our anthology, and you will keep a free-writing journal.

The purposes of the course are to increase your appreciation of literature as a valuable and crucial form of human expression, and to extend your understanding of yourself, others, and our society through the study of a novel, a play, short stories, and poems. In extending your understanding of yourself by finding pieces of literature that “speak to and for” you, I trust that you will also enhance your voice or sense of self.

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

(a) Assignments		
In-class exercise		7
Two essays	25 + 30	
Journal		10
Free writing journal		3
(b) Exams: Final test during the examination period		
		25

Journal: Your class journal is a place to meditate and generate ideas about a particular piece of literature, including the ways in which it calls into question, parallels, or celebrates aspects of your own life, that of others, or of our society. Please complete a full-page entry as a preparation for class; please date the entries and name the work you are discussing.

Class Participation: The act of speaking and the act of listening are both important skills that I hope you will develop, strengthen, and regularly exercise in this class. Keep in mind that silence can be a form of oppression; encourage one another to speak.

6. Grading System

The following percentage conversion to letter grade will be used:

A+ =95-100	B- =70-74	I =See Calendar
A =90-94	C+ =65-69	AUD =Audit
A- =85-98	C =60-64	W =Official withdrawal
B+ =80-84	D =50-59	
B =75-79	F =0-49	

7. Intended Learning Outcomes

When reading works written by such important authors as Woolf, Chopin, Rich, Atwood, and A. Walker, as well as works by many lesser known authors, students will consider meaning, make and support inferences, and evaluate the works. Students will

- *evaluate works from a variety of genres (including poetry, short fiction, essay and novel) to determine the relevance of the conventions of that genre;

- *analyze works from different periods of history to determine the effect of social context on women's writing;

- *identify the various nationalities, ethnicities, socio-economic groups and sexual orientations from which women write in order to determine personal influences on a work.

When discussing literature, students will be develop and communicate responses and interpretations using a variety of critical methods and resources. Students will

- *identify the relevance of the authors' socio-historical context to their works;

- *discuss themes in order to determine and account for dominant or recurring ideas;

- *describe works according to the concepts provided by feminist theorists;

- *compare and contrast works and authors according to style, theme and use of literary devices.

When writing about literature, students will be expected to explain, support, and illustrate their interpretations of the works in essays and a final exam. Students will

- *support claims with relevant textual evidence;

- *document sources using current MLA conventions.

7. To review literary terms and the MLA style of documentation, please consult these sites:

http://www.galegroup.com/free_resources/glossary/glossary/index.htm#a

http://www.landmark-project.com/citation_machine/cm.php

To assist your studies at Camosun, the college offers a number of services, workshops, and centres. Do make use of them!

Computer Labs – Ewing, 1st floor (See Rm. 102 & 110 for time tables)

Counselling – Dawson 202
 Learning Skills Centre – Dawson 202
 Library (Please acquire a library card as soon as possible.)
 Writing Centre – Dawson 207
 See the College Calendar, the Registrar’s Office, or the College web site at
<http://www.camosun.bc.ca> for further details.

Academic Conduct Policy

It is your responsibility to become familiar with the content of the Academic Conduct Policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, Registration, and on the College web site in the Policy Section.

Readings

Week One **Introduction**

“Clowns” (HO)
 “Unlearning to Not Speak” (1); “On Self Respect” (98)

Week Two **Recollecting Childhood**

“The Centaur”(60); “The One Girl” (HO); “For a Five-Year-Old”(HO); “Young” (80); “Lisa” (81)

The Productions of Time

“Combing” (66); “For My Father” (96); “Birthplace”(80); “Breaking Tradition” (71); “Girl” (55)

Week Three *Company of Strangers* (film)

Accepting our Legs

“Poem in which My Legs are Accepted” (62); “Recipe” (23); “Homage to My Hips” (59); “These Hips” (59); “The Woman in the Ordinary” (79)

Claiming Our Lives

“Somebody” (44); “I’ve Ceded” (63); “Witch” (59); “The Soul Selects” (59); “They did Not” (41); “Barbie Doll” (45); “Journey” (77)

Week Four **Knowing our Voices**

“When We Dead Awaken” by Rich & “The Transformation of Silence” by Lorde (library)

Institutionalized Violence

“Uncle Tom” (46); “Incidents”(51); “Blues” (54); “Peckerwood Dentist” (12); “A Poem about” (61)

Week Five **Coming to Life**

“Now that I am” (HO); “Annunciation” (14); “Blue Horses” (26); “Mother” (34); “Metaphors” (58); “Mother interrupted” (66); “Coming to Life” (36)

Week Six **Claiming all of our Stuff**

“In Search of” (27); from “A Room of One’s Own” (19); “Toilet” (31); “Blank Page” (37); “Somebody” (44); Pastan’s “Emily Dickinson” (63)

Week Seven **To be of Use**

“To Be of Use” (HO); “Ella” (90); “Typists” (90); “Professions” (86); Freud (102); “The Author” (61)

Week Eight **Considering Sundays**

“Alone” (31); “When you have” (43); “Love is Not” (43); “Waiting for Icarus” (44); “In the Counselor’s Waiting Room” (1); “The Two” (24); “Happy Endings” (35); “Diving into the Wreck” (64); “She Proves” (70); “A Garden” (1)

Week Nine, Ten, and Eleven **The Arc of a Life**

Jane Eyre and The Color Purple

Week Twelve Are We Are Sisters’ Keepers?

“Hug” (102); “Mistaken Charity” (91); “Trifles” (72); “Cinderella” (95); “Apostrophe” (19);
“Conscientious Objector” (81); “Love” (102); “Grandmother” (79)

Week Thirteen **Finding Courage**

“Conjuring” (55); “The Woman” (78); “Diary” (5), “Phantasia” (96); “Still I Rise” (65);
“Yellow Woman” (82)

Week Fourteen Test preparation and review
Presentation of Journals

Due dates: In-class exercise