**19th-Century American Women Writers: LITT 3311**

Stockton University

MW 3:35 - 5:25, B010

Fall 2015

Dr. Deborah Gussman

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Blackboard: 19th Century American Women Writers

**Course Description**

In 19th-century America, much fiction was written by and for women. We will trace the development of women’s fiction through various genres including the seduction, domestic, and realist novel, and examine the complex relationship of this literature to the dominant culture of the period. We will also look at some critical approaches to women’s literature, and work on developing a significant critical analysis of a literary text. This is a W2 class.

**Course Objectives**

\* To read closely selected works of 19th-century American women's literature.

\* To explore how race, class, and gender influence literary production and interpretation.

\* To become familiar with genres, conventions and other special uses of language in 19th c. literature.

\* To practice the skills of critical reading and analysis, intelligent discussion, literary research, and academic writing.

**Required Texts**

Susanna Rowson. *Charlotte Temple*.  Bedford/St. Martin’s (2010)

**ISBN:** 978-0312596804

Catharine Maria Sedgwick. *Married or Single?* Ed. Deborah Gussman.  University of Nebraska Press (2015)

**ISBN:** 978-0803271920

Harriet E. Wilson. *Our Nig*. Penguin (2009)

**ISBN**: 978- 0143105763

Louisa May Alcott. *Little Women*. Broadview Editions  (2001)

**ISBN**: 9781551111919

S. Alice Callahan. *Wynema: A Child of the Forest*. U of Nebraska P (1997)

**ISBN**: 978-0803263789

Pauline E. Hopkins. *Contending Forces*. Oxford UP (1991)

**ISBN**: 978- 0195067859

Edith Wharton. *The House of Mirth*. Oxford UP (2009)

**ISBN:** 978-0199538102

Please make every effort to purchase the editions of the texts listed here. Most of them can be found used in the bookstore or online. There are other publishers and knock-offs of these texts, but they will not have the same materials, page numbers, notes, etc. Additional assigned texts will be available on Blackboard.

**Course Requirements**

1. *Class participation and preparation*: You are expected to do the assigned reading, to attend class, and to make informed contributions to class discussions and presentations.

* Absences will be limited to 4. Each absence beyond the 4th will result in the lowering of your grade by ½. Use your absences wisely. Also please make every effort to arrive on time for class. Lateness disrupts the learning experience of other students and distracts me as well.
* Reading quizzes and in-class writing: There will be a quiz or writing assignment related to the reading at the beginning of nearly every class. These are designed to review reading materials and to initiate ideas for class discussion.

2. *Papers*: You will be writing three papers for this course.

Paper 1: Five pages, due **F 10/23** (on Blackboard). You will be using a work of literary criticism (Baym, Harris or Tompkins) to develop an analysis of one novel (Rowson, Sedgwick, or Wilson.)

Paper 2: Two pages, due **F 11/20** (on Blackboard). This is actually a proposal for your longer paper. It should include a one-paragraph summary of each of the three sources you plan to use, a research question (ie. a question about the novel that your paper will try to answer), a hypothesis (ie. a tentative thesis or argument), and a paragraph or two that suggests your preliminary ideas, speculations, and insights.

Paper 3: Eight pages, due **F 12/11** (on Blackboard). You will be developing a longer critical analysis of one of the novels you have read for this class (**excluding** the one on which you wrote your first paper) that develops an argument about the text and which incorporates at least three secondary critical sources. Two of these sources should be journal articles of no less than 20 pages; one may be a book or chapter from a book. At least two of the sources should be no more than 10 years old. I will work with you on identifying appropriate journals and evaluating sources.

3. *Presentations*: Each of you will prepare a **brief** Powerpoint or Prezi presentation (5 minutes) focusing on a critical response to the works we are reading. While I can make suggestions about appropriate critical materials, you’ll be relying primarily on what’s available in the library (especially the many full-text journal articles that can be found on-line via the library homepage) or through inter-library loan. Your presentation can focus on either a contemporary (ie. 19th c.) review (many such reviews can be found on the *Making of America* website:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpcoop/moahtml/ncphome.html>,

**or** a more recent assessment. These presentations should serve to broaden our discussions for that class by a) **summarizing** the article, b) **explaining** its central points, and c) **evaluating** its approach for making sense of the text. You should conclude by providing the class with a few discussion questions the article raises about the text. You will also post a summary of your presentation with a full bibliographic citation (most recent MLA style) on Blackboard, so that others might use it as a resource for developing a final paper (this summary **is due on the same day** as the presentation).

*Other policies*:

* All writing should be error-free. You are expected to proofread for typographical, spelling, mechanical, and grammatical errors. I will mark down for mechanical and grammatical errors.
* Papers posted on Blackboard must be a file type Blackboard can use (ie. .RTF or .DOC or .PDF files). Almost all word processing programs allow you to save your file in another format. After you have finished composing your document in a program other than Microsoft Word choose ‘Save As’ or a similar phrase, which is usually found under an option called ‘File’. Select either rich text format (.rtf) or Word format (.doc or .docx) or PDF (.pdf). A tutorial on submitting assignments to Blackboard can be found here: <https://elearning.stockton.edu/student-support/assignments/>
* I will not give incompletes at the end of the semester unless you have warned me well in advance and have appropriate reasons.
* It is not my responsibility to make sure that you have turned in all assignments; it is yours.
* All assignments for the class must be completed in order to receive a passing grade.
* For obvious reasons, please silence cell phones and do not text message, check email, listen to music, or surf the web during class.

***Grades will be calculated as follows***:

Quizzes and in-class writing **200**

Paper 1 **200**

Paper 2 **100**

Paper 3 **300**

Presentation **200**

**Extra Credit:**  You may earn up to 100 points of extra credit for attending and reviewing one Stockton-sponsored literary event selected from the list I will provide. The review must be completed and posted on Blackboard within one week of attendance to receive credit. Specific guidelines for completing an event review and a list of events will be posted on Blackboard.

**Grading Scale:**

100-93: A 82.9-80: B- 69.9-67: D+

92.9-90: A- 79.9-77: C+ 66.9-63: D

89.9-87: B+ 76.9-73: C 62.9-60: D-

86.9-83: B 72.9-70: C- 59.9 & below: F

*Special Needs*:

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations should contact the **Learning Access Program** located in J204 (609/652-4988). More information can be found at: http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=286&pageID=5

**Academic Honesty**

The Literature program expects all the work you turn in to be your own. If you are found to have represented the work or ideas of others as your own, intentionally, or unintentionally, you will face serious consequences, as follows:

**1. Any student who is found to have plagiarized a paper or assignment, in full or in part, must meet with the professor of the class for which the paper is written.**

2. The professor will review the suspect work with the student.

3. If this is the first time the student has been found to have plagiarized, he/she will receive an "F" for that paper or assignment and/or the course.

**4. For second offenses of plagiarism, the student will receive an F for the course.**

Additionally, and in accordance with Stockton University policy, the Literature Program faculty will report all instances of plagiarism to the Provost of Academic Affairs. Students may be subject to discipline by the college, such as being placed on academic probation or expelled. The university’s policy can be found here: http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=209&pageID=17

NOTE: If the final assignment is plagiarized, although I will not necessarily meet with the student, I *will* report the incident to the Provost of Academic Affairs. If you have any questions about plagiarism, I will be glad to discuss them with you.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

Note: This syllabus is a work-in-progress and subject to change. If you are late or miss class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and/or what changes were made to the syllabus or schedule. All changes will be posted to Blackboard.

Readings from the assigned novels are listed by author’s last name. You should calculate the reading for each novel by dividing the chapters by the number of classes for that text (ie. 2 classes ÷ 16 chapters = 8 chapters/class. “Hey, does that make this class a Q2?” ‘Fraid not.). Other readings will be posted on Blackboard and listed as (BB).

Week 1

W 9/2 Introduction to the course.

John W. DeForest, “The Great American Novel” (1868)

<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/articles/n2ar39at.html>

Nathaniel Hawthorne, Letters to William D. Ticknor (1854-57)

A.W. Abbott, “Female Authors” (1851) (handouts in class)

Week 2

M 9/7 Labor Day – no class

W 9/9

Nina Baym, “The Form and Ideology of Woman’s Fiction” (BB); and Myra Jehlen, “Archimedes and the Paradox of Feminist Criticism” (BB)

Week 3

M 9/14 Rowson, *Charlotte Temple*

W 9/16 Rowson, *Charlotte Temple*

[TH 9/17 LITT Meet and Greet, 4:30 pm F-111]

Week 4

M 9/21 Jane Tompkins, “Sentimental Power: Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Politics of Literary History” (BB); and Susan K. Harris, “’But is it any good?’: Evaluating 19th Century Women’s Fiction” (BB)

W 9/23 Sedgwick, *Married or Single?* (2 presentations)

[TH 9/24 Ravenswood Reading: Timothy Liu, 8 pm in L-1112]

Week 5

M 9/28 Sedgwick, *Married or Single?* (2 presentations)

W 9/30 Sedgwick*, Married or Single?* (2 presentations)

Week 6

M 10/5 Sedgwick, *Married or Single?* (2 presentations)

W 10/7 Wilson, *Our Nig* (2 presentations)

Week 7

M 10/12 Wilson, *Our Nig* (2 presentations)

[T 10/13 Cameron Glover, “What You Can Really Do with a Literature Degree: How to Navigate Conferences, Funding, and Everything In Between,” 4:30 pm, WQ-103]

W 10/14 Wilson, *Our Nig* (2 presentations)

Week 8

M 10/19 Alcott, *Little Women* (2 presentations)

W 10/21 Alcott, *Little Women* (2 presentations)

**F 10/23 Paper #1 due on Blackboard by midnight**. Choice of topics:

1. use Baym’s definition of “woman’s fiction” to discuss Charlotte Temple; or
2. use Harris’s criteria for evaluating *Married or Single?* or
3. use Tompkins’ discussion of the sentimental novel to discuss Our Nig.

Week 9

M 10/26 Class cancelled. Keep reading *Little Women.*

[Tues, Oct 27    No class: preceptorial advising day]

W 10/28 Alcott, *Little Women* (2 presentations)

[TH 10/29 Jaclyn Stewart, Tuckerton Seaport Museum, “Colloquium on Careers in Museum Education,” sponsored by the Master’s in American Studies Program, F-119]

Week 10

M 11/2 Callahan, *Wynema: A Child of the Forest* (Ch. 1-12*)* (2 presentations)

W 11/4 Callahan, *Wynema: A Child of the Forest* (Ch. 13-24*)* (2 presentations)

Sherman Alexie,”How to Write the Great American Indian Novel”

http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/237270

[preceptorial advising until 3:35]

Week 11

M 11/9 Hopkins, *Contending Forces* (2 presentations)

W 11/11 Hopkins, *Contending Forces* (2 presentations)

[TH 11/12 Zora Neale Hurston Symposium 2:30-4:30 Campus Center Theater]

Week 12

M 11/16 Hopkins, *Contending Forces* (2 presentations)

[T 11/17 Visiting Writer Series: International Resident Artist Michael Mendis 6 pm, F-111]

W 11/18 Hopkins, *Contending Forces*. Discussion of final paper.

**F 11/20 Paper #2: proposal for final paper due on Blackboard by midnight**

Week 13

M 11/23 Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (2 presentations)

W 11/25 No class after 3:25 (day before Thanksgiving)

Week 14

M 11/30 Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (2 presentations)

W 12/2 Wharton, *The House of Mirth*

Final in-class session.

Week 14

M 12/7 No class: working on final papers. Prof. Gussman available for individual conferences in F 131.

W 12/9 No class: working on final papers. Prof. Gussman available for individual conferences in F 131.

**F 12/11** **Final paper due on BB by midnight**.

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Fri, Dec 18                           Graduating senior grades due 12 noon

Sun, Dec 20                         Summer/Fall Commencement Ceremony

Tues, Dec 22                       Grades due for non-graduating students