

ENGL 401-01: Seminar, Feminist Rhetorical Theory—Pr. Bizzell—Fall 2013, W 3-5:30

Office hours: M 1-3:30, T 11-3:30, W 1-3 and by appointment (I am often available later on M and T). My office is Fenwick 210, office phone x 2524, email pbizzell@holycross.edu.

Required texts:

Child, Lydia Maria. *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*. Carolyn L. Karcher, editor. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

Royster, Jacqueline Jones, and Gesa Kirsch. *Feminist Rhetorical Practices*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2012

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. 1852; rpt. Elizabeth Ammons, editor, 2nd edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 2010. ISBN 978-0-393-93399-4. NOTE: please get this specific edition of the novel, as it includes literary criticism and other materials we will use in our course.

Course plan:

Our course has multiple goals:

- You will learn about the social activist writing of nineteenth-century American women, both White and Black, studying their fiction, poetry, essays and speeches (fulfilling the nineteenth-century American literature period requirement for the English major).
- You will learn how to apply theory to literature, by using the substantial rhetorical theory presented in Royster and Kirsch's book to study our activists' writings (fulfilling the English Honors requirement to take one theory course).
- You will get to know one woman activist and her work in depth, in order to prepare a final seminar paper on her (fulfilling the English Honors requirement to take one seminar, and producing a paper which may also be suitable for a Women's and Gender Studies capstone or the first stage of work on an Honors thesis).
- You will learn how to make oral presentations in class on the work of your chosen activist and the scholarship you discover about her.

We will study Stowe and Child together in order to get comfortable working with the feminist rhetorical theory in Royster and Kirsch. Meanwhile, you will be working on your chosen research subject. You will get a starter sheet on your subject with suggestions for what literary work and scholarship to consult, some of which will be on reserve or on the course Moodle site.

You will also have the exciting opportunity to discover the extensive holdings at the American Antiquarian Society on nineteenth-century American women and their world. We'll get a guided tour early in the semester, and you will be able to set up an on-line account to access their collection.

You will have another exciting opportunity as well: to meet Gesa Kirsch in person and discuss her work and your project with her, when she visits campus in November. She's an old friend of mine and I know you will like her!

Grading

As you will see from the percentages assigned below, your seminar paper and your oral report on it will comprise the majority of your final grade. Other written and oral assignments will also be factored in.

You have the option to rewrite any of the three brief writing assignments due before the seminar paper. If you improve the paper with the rewrite, I will record for that grade the average of the original grade and the rewrite grade. Neither the seminar paper nor any of the oral reports can be redone.

You have the option to work on your research subject with a partner. If so, each of you will write the three brief assignments separately, choosing different texts for the second and third assignments and presenting separate oral reports on them. More information on how to collaborate on the seminar paper and oral report can be found on the assignment sheet for that paper/report.

Grading percentages:

5%: Regular attendance and participation (speak at least once in each class meeting—I don't think this will be a problem for anyone!)

5%: activist selection/explanation (1-2 pp.)

5%: book review (2-3 pp.)

5%: oral report on book review

10%: feminist text analysis (3-4 pp.)

10%: oral report on feminist text analysis

40%: seminar paper (30 pp.)

20%: oral report on seminar paper research

You will receive instructions on all writing assignments and oral reports. I URGE you to see me about any of these assignments. I am happy to read a paper draft, rehearse an oral report, and help you in any other way that I can, but you have to ask me! I love to have office hours visitors and will make every effort to schedule a meeting at any other time that's mutually convenient.

Syllabus

28 Aug:

Bring Ammons edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to class; introductions to each other, our activists and their time period, and literary-critical work.

4 Sept:

Read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* Chapters I-XVIII (at least—read more if you can), and Royster/Kirsch Chapters 3-4.

11 Sept:

Read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* Chapters XIX-XLV, and essays in Ammons edition by Baldwin, Levine, and Tompkins.

Writing due in class: 1-2 pages explaining your choice of activist to research—relate to your personal experiences and academic goals (Chapter 1 in Royster/Kirsch may provide a model).

18 Sept:

Our field trip to the American Antiquarian Society, 185 Salisbury Street (corner of Park Avenue), Worcester. You **MUST** be at the departure point at 3:00 and we will stay at the AAS until 5:30; you will be able to stay later, if you wish, to do individual research.

25 Sept:

Read in the Ammons edition Stowe's "Letter to Eliza Cabot Follen" and "Appeal to the Women of the Free States."

Writing due in class: 2-3 pp. book review (see assignment sheet attached here; a film or on-line source may be chosen).

Oral report due in class: present your book review (should include hand-out with complete bibliographic information, key quotes, etc., and/or take us to the on-line source).

2 Oct:

Read Royster/Kirsch Chapters 2, 5, 6, and 7 (you may skip the "Pedagogical Connections" at chapter's end).

Please also bring *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to this class.

9 Oct:

Read in *Lydia Maria Child Reader* Karcher's "Introduction" and Child's story "Willie Wharton" and her polemical essay "An Appeal for the Indians."

Fall Break**23 Oct:**

Read in *Lydia Maria Child Reader* her story "Slavery's Pleasant Homes," polemical essay "Prejudices Against People of Color, and Our Duties," letter "Reply of Mrs. Child [to Mrs. Mason]," and newspaper piece "Letters from New York #12."

Writing due in class: 3-4 pp. analysis of some text by your research subject, analyzed according to Royster/Kirsch theory.

Oral report due in class: present your text analysis (should include hand-out with some sample passages and/or take us to the text on line).

30 Oct:

Read in *Lydia Maria Child Reader* her newspaper pieces “Speaking in the Church,” “Letters from New York #34,” “Woman and Suffrage,” and “Women and the Freedmen.”

6 Nov:

Gesa Kirsch class visit and campus lecture; location(s) TBA but come to our regular classroom at 3:00.

Read in Royster/Kirsch Chapter 9.

13 Nov, 20 Nov:

Oral reports due in class on your seminar paper research (see separate assignment sheet).

Thanksgiving Break**4 Dec:**

Course recap and in-class workshop on seminar paper.

No final exam; seminar paper due Monday 9 December

Reserve Reading: Feminist Rhetorical Theory (ENGL 401-01), Pr. Bizzell, Fall 2013**On course Moodle site:**

Sources on 19th-century gender ideologies (some titles are abbreviated):

Johnson, Nan. Excerpts from *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life*.

Kraditor, Aileen. Excerpt from *Up from the Pedestal*.

Logan, Shirley Wilson. “Black Women on the Speaker’s Platform” from “*We Are Coming*.”

Massachusetts Congregational Clergy. “Pastoral Letter” (against the Grimké sisters)

Mattingly, Carol. Excerpts from *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women’s Rhetorical Style*.

Stearns, Reverend Jonathan F. “Female Influence, and the True Christian Mode of its Exercise.”

Welter, Barbara. “The Cult of True Womanhood.”

Sources on individual women:

Alcott, Louisa May; Sicherman, Barbara, “Reading *Little Women*: The Many Lives of a Text”; Keyser, Elizabeth Lennox, “The Second Sex: ‘Behind a Mask’” and “Portrait(s) of the Artist: *Little Women*” (two files) from *Whispers in the Dark*.

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady; Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs, from *Man Cannot Speak for Her, Volume II: Key Texts of the Early Feminists*: “Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments,” “A Slave’s Appeal,” “The Solitude of Self.”

Stewart, Maria Miller: “Address Delivered at the Franklin Hall.”

Truth, Sojourner; Painter, Nell Irvin, Excerpts from *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol*; Gage, Frances, “Ar’nt I a Woman?”; Stowe, Harriet Beecher, “Sojourner Truth, the Libyan Sybil.”

Willard, Frances: “A White Life for Two.”

Books on reserve at Dinand Circulation Desk:

Bizzell, Patricia and Bruce Herzberg. *The Rhetorical Tradition*. 2nd edition.

Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs. *Man Cannot Speak for Her: Volume I, A Critical Study of Early Feminist Rhetoric*, and *Volume II: Key Texts of the Early Feminists*.

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life*. David W. Blight, editor.

Ebert, Sarah, editor. *Louisa May Alcott on Race, Sex, and Slavery*.

Gornick, Vivian. *The Solitude of Self: Talking about Elizabeth Cady Stanton*.

Logan, Shirley Wilson. "We Are Coming": [. . .] *Nineteenth-Century Black Women*.

Mattingly, Carol. *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women's Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America*.

Wells, Ida B. *Southern Horrors and Other Writings*. Jacqueline Jones Royster, editor.

Richardson, Marilyn, editor. *Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer*.

Voss, Frederick. *Majestic in his Wrath: A Pictorial Life of Frederick Douglass*.

How to Read a 300-Page Scholarly Book in One Hour

Well, maybe not quite one hour: but realize that you do not necessarily have to read every word to figure out what's going on. Do not simply open to the first page and start reading; instead, do these things:

- On the original dust jacket, or possibly printed on the back cover, you may read a brief summary of what the book is about, to orient you as you read further.
- Look at the Table of Contents. The chapter titles may give you an outline of the book's whole argument. Note: within chapters, or in a scholarly essay, section titles or subheads may provide the same service.
- In the Preface or the Introduction (if short), you will probably find a chapter-by-chapter outline of the book's contents, summarized by the author.
- Look in the Index for the name of your research subject and other topics relevant to your project. Where you find them may indicate which portions of this book you need to read.
- Read the Introduction, even if long, as it should give you the book's argument in more detail.
- Read the Conclusion, if there is one, as the book's argument will probably be summarized there. The last chapter, even if not called "conclusion," may also have this.
- Read those portions of the book that your examination has indicated are most relevant to our course work. Most likely, you will not need to read more than 100 pages in all, but don't take this as a hard and fast number—be guided by what you find in each book.

The 2-3-page Book Review

Your written book review should be headed by complete bibliographic information on the book (or other work) you are reviewing, cited according to proper MLA citation style (which is easily found on line or in grammar handbooks).

Both in writing and orally, you should provide a detailed summary of a book's argument. Most scholarly books present this argument in conceptual form in the Introduction, and possibly also the Conclusion. You should be sure that you explain this argument in terms of all its major premises, which will likely require a couple of paragraphs at least. "This book is about White women's participation in the abolition movement" won't do.

The intervening chapters usually comprise the examples or evidence that supports this argument; these chapters may not need to be recounted in detail (you may simply list the kinds of examples that are presented), unless someone we are studying appears. For example, most of The Gendered Pulpit is devoted to case studies of women who are leading Protestant congregations today. We need only the sketchiest account of them; but we need to know much more about Mountford's opening analysis of how gender plays into pulpit authority, particularly in our period, the nineteenth century. For another example, To Set This World Right is interested primarily in how Thoreau evolved his views on slavery; but inspection of the index reveals that the Alcotts come into the story primarily in the last chapter, so you should concentrate on that.

Special Cases: Biography. Though usually organized chronologically, a biography often begins with some incident out of chronological order because the author considers it especially important to or representative of the subject's life. Take note of this. Also use the index to find those portions of the subject's life most relevant to our study. Painter, for example, tells us a lot about Sojourner Truth's early life before she became an activist for women's and Black civil rights, but we need to know about this period only in broadest outline.

Special Cases: Voices of Democracy units, other on-line sources. Each VOD unit will have a lengthy essay on the person and speech being covered, which you should summarize as you would the argument of a book. For VOD units and other on-line sources, tell us what else you find on the site.

Special Cases: Films. Give us an idea of what the film covers and what is its orientation toward its subjects.

Conclude your review with specific advice to our seminar group about how this book, website or film might be useful to our work—imagine that you are helping your classmates build bibliography for their seminar papers. Enliven your oral report with a hand-out, PowerPoint and/or other visuals (optional, but effective).