

Women Prose Writers: Fall 2014, Dickson 279

Instructor: Prof Fawzia Afzal-Khan, Director, Women and Gender Studies Program

Office Hours: D-120, TR 2-3 pm and by appointment

Email: khanf@mail.montclair.edu

Tel: x 7309

You can google my publications and performance work and music; I also have a Wikipedia entry; and you can make me your facebook friend esp if you want to read articles on current affairs I post there regularly.

English Dept website: : <http://chss.montclair.edu/english>

Texts:

At Bookstore (or via amazon):

Cisneros, Sandra. Woman Hollering Creek (short stories)

Shamsie, Kamila. Burnt Shadows. (novel)

Nin, Anais. Spy in the House of Love (novel)

Liebrecht, Savyon. Apples from the Desert (short stories)

Fraguso, Margaux. Tiger, Tiger (memoir)

Otsuka, Julie. The Buddha in the Attic (novel)

Jewett, Sarah Orne. Country of the Pointed Firs (novel)

Morrison, Toni. Sula. (novel)

Films

Avnet, Jon, dir. Fried Green Tomatoes (based on novel by Fannie Flag)

Kurys, Diane, dir. Entre Nous (Between Us)

Jacir, Anne Marie, dir. Salt of this Sea OR Riklis, Eran, dir. The Lemon Tree

Kaufman, Philip, dir. Henry and June

Essays (posted in BB):

Christian, Barbara. "The Race for Theory."

Roy, Arundhati. "When the Saints Go Marching Out."

Hooks, bell. "Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics."

Coward, Rosalind. "Towards Definitions of Feminist Writing."

French, Marilyn " Is There a Feminist Aesthetic?"

Minh-ha, Trinh T. From *Woman, Native, Other*

Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality."

Wittig, Monique. "I Was Not Born a Woman."

Halberstam, Judith (Jack). "Female Masculinities."

Course Requirements:

- FIVE 2-3 pp responses to texts as indicated below. These responses should indicate your thoughts about these texts, focusing on questions about gender, sexuality, race, class, religion etc as these come for you in the reading and what is puzzling and particularly challenging to you as you read. The responses/questions are on the novels or stories, but we are also reading "theoretical" essays throughout the term side by side, so I DO expect your questions in the responses to be shaped by some of these theoretical essays as well. 40%

- Group-led discussions and in-class participation; if your group is scheduled to lead class discussion, you **MUST** be present (no excuses)—AND be respectful to your group members. You must listen to each other, everyone in the group must have a point s/he wishes to discuss or raise, and each group member must respond or have something useful to say to push the discussion along at least once during the session. Groups who are leading discussion will spend approx. 15 minutes discussing amongst themselves, then ask for others in the room to join in. I will intervene as necessary. The success (and grade) of each group member will be based on my judgment of how lively and involved the discussion is amongst the group and how well others' respond to it by joining in later. Some background info on author/time/place/work may be referred to as appropriate during course of discussion and to help frame questions. But remember—this is **NOT** a “presentation”—it is discussion meant to “provoke” thoughts, ideas, arguments between and amongst the group and class members.
- I final 8-10 pp paper (described at end of syllabus) 20%
 PLAGIARISM IS A SERIOUS OFFENSE; IF CAUGHT, YOUR WORK WILL RECEIVE A FAILING GRADE AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION TAKEN AGAINST YOU THAT COULD LEAD TO EXPULSION FROM THE UNIVERSITY. DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT PASSING OFF OTHERS' WRITING AS YOUR OWN!!!!
 30%
 *
 Class participation 10%

Rules:

3 unexcused absences are allowed during the term. After you have used these up, you automatically fail the course.

Being continually late will not be tolerated, nor popping in and out of class. If this becomes a pattern, you will be marked down or even asked to drop the class.

NO looking at cell phones in class-EVER!

Schedule: (Subject to change—its up to YOU to keep up with any changes which I will post on Canvas)

Week 1: W (Sep 3): Introductions; Groups, Watch Film in class: Henry and June

Week 2: W (Sep 10):

Discussion: Nin, Spy in the House of Love, and comparison with the Film version (Henry and June; also essay from Canvas: Judith (Jack) Halberstam, “Female Masculinities” (**Group #1 leads discussion**, provides background info on Nin/her life and times as pertinent to the novel; remember: Stay focused on questions/confusions/moments of discomfort!!).

Week 3: W (Sep 17): ASSIGN #1 (*response sheet should be sent to me by 5 pm WED, using Canvas; it should reference your questions/confusions/concerns re Nin's novel, the film as well as the essays for today's class; ALL OTHER SUBSEQUENT ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD FOLLOW THE SAME PATTERN AND BE SUBMITTED VIA CANVAS by 5 pm--BEFORE OUR CLASS MEETING. I expect you to use your response sheets in class to start discussions*)

Discussion of Theoretical Prose Readings posted on Canvas:
 Marilyn French, Rosalind Coward, and Trinh. T.Minh-ha (authors)
 (**Group#1 continues leading**)

Week 4: W (Sep 24): ASSIGN #2 (combine the readings from last week with this week's in your response)
Discussion of Country of the Pointed Firs: **Group 2 Leads**. Last hour of class time we will watch of Fried Green Tomatoes-what we don't get to in class, you must catch on your own time prior to next week's class.

Week 5: W (Oct 1) : Theoretical Prose From Canvas: "Compulsory Heterosexuality" (Adrienne Rich) and "I Was Not Born a Woman." (Monique Wittig)—**Group 2 continues to lead**; weave in discussion of FGT.

Week 6: W (Oct 8) Watch Entre Nous in class; Discussion.

Week 7: W (Oct 15): ASSIGN #3; should include your response to the two films, the essays, plus how these connect in any way to issues raised in the memoir Tiger Tiger
Discussion of Tiger, Tiger (**Group 3 Leads**)

Week 8: W (Oct 22): short story selections from Woman Hollering Creek and film scenes, Babel.
(**Group 3 continues; group should select scenes to show for discussion purposes**)

Week 9: W (Oct 29) Sula, plus bell hooks and Barbara Christian(from Canvas) **Group 4 leads**

Week 10: W (Nov 5): Buddha in the Attic (**Group 4 continues**) ASSIGN #4: reference readings from weeks 8,9 and 10. Watch in class, a panel with three women writers including Julie Otsaka, on feminism and writing at:
<http://www.booktv.org/Watch/12520/Book+Expo+America+Panel+on+Feminism+in+Writing+Today.asp>
[x](#)

Week 11: W (Nov 12): Watch Salt of This Sea OR The Lemon Tree in class—FAWZIA at NWSA (National Women's Studies Association annual convention).

Week 12: W (Nov 19): Discuss SOS/Lemon Tree; plus First two stories plus "A Married Woman" and "Road to Cedar city" from Apples in the Desert (**Group 5 leads**)—bring in videos and online postings re latest War on Gaza. (from previous Operation Cast Lead: Gaza Flotilla, Intifada etc (Amnesty Int'l video) and doc on Gaza perhaps)

Week 13: W (Nov 26): NO CLASS : Thanksgiving

Week 14: W (Dec 3): Burnt Shadows (**Group 5 continues to lead**)Plus Arundhati Roy article on Canvas ;
LAST ASSIGN #5—(Combine Weeks 11, 12 and 13 reading/films in response)

Week 15 (Dec 10): Wrap-Up AND FINAL PAPERS DUE!!

Topic: Using several of the essays posted on Canvas (as your secondary sources), develop a critical framework for analyzing/discussing what you consider to be an important theme or themes in 2 of the primary texts we've studied this term, PLUS Burnt Shadows. (You can use one novel and one memoir, or a collection of stories and a novel, or a novel and a film as your primary texts, and put these into conversation with Burnt Shadows). No additional secondary sources are required, though you may

reference some if you like. **Total length of paper NOT to exceed 10 pp.** Works Cited page required. Please use the MLA format for citations and Works Cited. You can get details of this format at: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>