ENGL 2550 M01 Gender, Identity, and Literature  
Spring 2019

Class Days and Time: TR 5:30- 6:45 pm  
Classroom: San Ignacio Hall A  
Prerequisite(s): English 1900 or equivalent  
Credit(s): 3  
Instructor: Roswitha Casmier, Ph.D.  
Email: roswitha.casmier@slu.edu  
Office: Padre Rubio Modern Languages and ESL Office (1st floor)  
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 3:30 – 5:30. Also by email appointment.

“When other people tell your story, it always comes out crooked.”  
Chippewa Elder

“Literature is the one place in any society where, within the  
secrecy of our own heads, we can hear voices talking about  
everything in every possible way.” Salman Rushdie

Course Description:

According to Judith Lorber, for people to talk or seriously think about gender is the  
equivalent to fish talking about water. Yet, for over 2500 years, gender has remained a  
significant topic in literature. Both gender and identity have moved from occasionally  
very fixed constructs to becoming increasingly fluid in contemporary society. The literary  
works we are going to read are going to address the following questions: To what extent  
is gender a biological given or a cultural construct, fixed or fluid, becoming obsolete?  
How do people use writing to express and construct their gender and cultural identity?  
How do different historical and socio-political contexts (e.g., class, religious beliefs,  
ethnicity), family, and love relationships shape conceptions of self and gender?
This course introduces you to literary study within the context and theme of Gender and Identity. Through the reading of a wide variety of texts - including drama, autobiography and novels, from science fiction to dystopia, from the ancient Greeks to postcolonial Africa - the course will engage you in literary ways of knowing. Methods include close reading, comparative textual analysis, and argumentative writing using secondary sources.

By the end of this course, you will have critically read a significant and diverse body of literature while focusing on issues of gender and identity. You will be able use skills in literary interpretation both to determine how literature from different historical periods and cultures provokes us to think more deeply about gender and identity, and to understand and appreciate literature more fully.

**Required Texts (here chronologically ordered)**

Sophocles. *Antigone*. 442 BC. Hackett, Intro by Woodruff. **MUST use the bookstore edition as other translations may be radically different.**


**Access to Blackboard and the library website for all other resources.**

**Course Goals and Student Learning Outcomes:**

You will develop the following skills and knowledge, and be able to use them to interpret literature:

- Generate engaged and responsive close readings of texts
- Describe and analyze the various ways in which texts reflect and help shape wider cultural conditions
- Construct clear spoken and written arguments that demonstrate awareness of purpose and audience

**Collection of Student Work for Assessment:** Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to relevant accreditation requirements, the
Campus regularly assesses its teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose anonymized representative examples of student work from all courses and programs are kept on file, such as assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. Thus, copies of student work for this course, including written assignments, in-class exercises, and exams may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes. If students prefer that Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus not keep their work on file, they need to communicate their decision in writing to the professor.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance Policy: Unexcused absences and lateness will lower a student’s grade as follows:

- More than 3 unexcused absences or persistent lateness (even 5 minutes) will result in your grade being lowered one +/- grade for every additional two absences.
- More than 6 unexcused absences will result in automatic failure of the class (3 weeks worth of classes).
- Arriving more than 15 minutes late counts as an absence.

“Excused” absences are documented illness and documented residency appointments. For both excused and unexcused absences, you are responsible for the material covered and for making up work missed. Please do not ask for permission to miss class. It is always your decision and your duty to address the consequences.

Class assignments: Read the assigned texts carefully and critically before class. Bring questions, observations, and ideas to share. Hastily trying to skim the text during class discussion is unacceptable as it will significantly impair the quality of the latter and affect everyone present. All papers must be word processed and made fully accessible to me. Thoughtful listening and engagement of ideas discussed in class is essential to our learning community.

Writing Help: The English Writing Assistance Center provides students with help in writing. They will review typed draft material to help you improve any aspect of a paper you wish to work on or successfully implement the instructor’s comments. You can sign up for an appointment online on the English Department webpage or drop in and wait your turn. Be sure to take a copy of the paper assignment to your tutorial if you have one. The English Department webpage posts the hours of EWAC and a series of links to online writing resources, including research resources and style and documentation guides.

For rewrites, please consult the Writing Center in order to avoid only making cosmetic changes in your revised essay, which may not raise your grade.

Late Paper Policy: The assignment schedule states when papers are due. Late papers will drop one half letter grade (for example, from a B+ to a B) per class late. Always
contact me before an assignment is due if you anticipate a problem. All written assignments must be completed in order for you to pass the course.

**E-mail:** Campus and course announcements will often be handled by e-mail or Blackboard. Check your “@slu.edu” e-mail regularly.

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policy:** Because cheating, falsification, and plagiarism are serious academic offenses, because you cheat yourself of the education and self-development you deserve, and because my experience has taught me that offenders who are not punished often repeat, I am merciless in pursuing plagiarism. Sanctions for violations of academic integrity include an F (grade of 0) on the assignment for a first occurrence and an F for the course in the case of further occurrences, with the possibility of further disciplinary action taken by the University. We will discuss plagiarism and review Saint Louis University’s policies on academic integrity further during our first class meeting and in the class about writing about literature. *Always* cite your sources, and do not hesitate to ask me if you are in doubt about *how* to cite your sources properly.

**University Statement on Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at: https://www.slu.edu/the-office-of-the-provost/academic-affairs-policies. Additionally, SLU-Madrid has posted its academic integrity policy online: http://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics. As a member of the University community, you are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions and appeals.

I will review these matters during the first weeks of the term. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program or the Academic Dean of the Madrid Campus.

**English Department Plagiarism Statement:** In the instance of a suspicion of plagiarism or other form of academic dishonesty it should be remembered that the instructor has the right to require the student to prove (by quiz, interview, or other means) that they are the author of submitted work. Inability to do so will result in a report to the committee for academic dishonesty.

**University Title IX Statement:** Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to
report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU’s Title IX deputy coordinator, Marta Maruri, whose office is located on the ground floor of Padre Rubio Hall, Avenida del Valle, 28 (mmaruri@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 213) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX deputy coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the SLU-Madrid’s Counseling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall (counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 230) or Sinews Multipletherapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counseling services for SLU-Madrid (www.sinews.es; 917-00-1979). To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address: http://www.slu.edu/Documents/Madrid/campus-life/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf.

Students with Special Needs: In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to http://www.slu.edu/madrid/learning-resources.

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also must notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course. For exam accommodations, please consult the instructor at least a week prior to the exam. Please contact Disability Services at disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu or +915 54 58 58, ext. 230 for an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services. For more information about academic accommodations, see "Student Resources" on the SLU-Madrid webpage.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

Course Requirements and Grading Rationale: You will be evaluated based on your progress toward achieving the course objectives in both oral and written expression. While all items listed in the evaluation below provide the opportunity for you to achieve the course outcomes, specific assignments focus more on some outcomes than on others:
Class participation and group work help you to deepen critical understanding of your own idea of literary representations of gender and identity. Papers provide the opportunity to apply and integrate these theories to analyze how specific works of literature represent various aspects of gender and identity. More specifically, you will write a minimum of 14 pages of formal and informal graded prose (7500 words), each with at least one opportunity for revision.

I am especially interested in your ability to think creatively and responsibly, developing your own questions and paths of inquiry in research, constructing careful arguments that critique, synthesize, and build on the knowledge you are acquiring. Your work should show understanding and critical consciousness of the ideas discussed in the readings and in class and should develop from dialogue with classmates, benefitting from their diverse personal and cultural experiences of literature.

**Papers:** The papers focus on different aspects of advanced close reading, comparison between writers/literary forms, and interpretation in the light of research into context, criticism, and theory. I will provide a list of topic suggestions for each paper. You may pursue your own topic if you clear it with me at least one week before the paper is due.

**Rewrites:** You may rewrite each paper once if you wish. The rewrite must be *substantial* (making more than cosmetic, superficial changes) to improve your grade, and in the end you will receive the better of the two grades (although any grade reduction for lateness transfers from the original paper to the rewrite). I am happy to comment on rough drafts if I receive them at least 36 hours before the paper is due.

**Class presentations:** In pairs or individually, prepare *one of each* kind of presentation below. If you work with a partner, you need not keep the same partner for both presentations. I will provide a list of suggested topics for the presentations, but you may also pursue your own topics.

- **Passage presentation:** close reading of a passage, interpreting its literary qualities as richly as possible to establish its significance to the work we are reading.
  
  **Length:** 5 minutes, no outside research required (7 minutes if 2 presenters)
• **Context or critical presentation:** You can either research relevant information from historical and cultural context (some aspect of the historical, political, social, technological, ethical context, or literary theory relevant to our readings) or read 2 full-length scholarly articles from the course bibliography, summarize them, and discuss how they provide new insight into the text for which you signed up. For ideas, see the thematic suggestion list and course bibliography on Blackboard. This is an opportunity for you to pursue your own interests in the context of the works we read and introduce new angles of discussion! Please let me know beforehand what you will be focusing on to avoid repetition of topics.

**Length:** 6 minutes (8 minutes if there are two presenters).

Individual components of coursework are assigned a letter grade; the final grade is a weighted average of those grades. Those percentage weights are calculated as follows:

- **20%** Class participation and preparation, including quizzes, and presentations
  (10 % participation and preparation, 5% each of the presentations)
- **15%** First paper (close reading analysis, 2-3 p.)
- **15%** Second paper (comparative textual analysis, 3-4 p.)
- **15%** Midterm exam
- **20%** Research paper, 6-7 p., minimum 2 secondary sources incorporating historical, cultural, or theoretical context to supplement your interpretation
- **15%** Final exam

**CRITERIA FOR AN EXCELLENT LITERATURE PAPER**

1. **Strong, clear, precise, original thesis** (at this introductory level, original means going beyond related ideas discussed in class)

2. **Perceptive argumentation from textual evidence** demonstrating ability to understand literary language, applying the close reading skills with awareness of the literary forms, contexts, strategies, and devices discussed in class

3. **Skillful organization and integration of evidence** into a well-organized argument whose sections or steps are clearly related to the paper’s thesis

4. **Clear, varied, vivid style**

5. **Correct use of mechanics**—punctuation, spelling, MLA citation format

6. Where relevant, **skillful integration of historical and biographical material or secondary criticism** in support of one’s argument

Points 1-3 are crucial to passing this class. According to the rubrics for the individual papers, great strength in one area of the paper can compensate for weakness in
another, just as great weakness in one area prevents papers from receiving an A. Within this spectrum:

A papers must achieve Points 1-5 with great competence, and where relevant, Point 6. Sloppiness in Points 4-5 prevents papers from earning an A.

B papers are usually missing one of Points 1-3 (and Point 6 where relevant) or more than 1 but excel in the other areas (e.g., a paper with a strong, interesting thesis and good evidence that struggles with organization). Severe problems with Points 4-5 may prevent a paper from earning a B.

C papers usually lack two of Points 1-3 (and Point 6 where relevant) or achieve all 3 at a mediocre level.

D papers lack or are very weak in Points 1-3 (and Point 6 where relevant), struggle with Points 4-5, and lack flashes of insight or excellence to compensate.

F papers are devoid of ideas, partly or completely copied, or still unwritten. Points 4-5 play a significant role in borderline grades.

DO NOT PLAGIARIZE!*

PLAGIARISTS CHEAT THEMSELVES OF THE EDUCATION THEY DESERVE, BETRAY THEIR CLASSMATES, AND FAIL TO RESPECT THEIR PROFESSORS.

*If you feel tempted to plagiarize due to time pressure or lack of confidence in your own ability, DO NOT. Come talk to me. We will work something out!

Undergraduate Grading Scale (Office of the University Registrar)
https://sites.google.com/a/slu.edu/registrar_resources/grades-scale

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Criteria for Excellent Participation:

Student…

- makes frequent and substantive comments during discussion demonstrating that she has solid command of the reading.
- actively promotes the flow of conversation through affirmation and questioning of peers. Differences in opinion are expressed respectfully.
- refers to the text and cites specific passages to support fully developed points.
- directs comments to other students, referring to them by name, and looks to them for answers, clarification, summarization, and so forth, not to the instructor.
- remains focused throughout the discussion, actively listening to her peers, looking at them, making eye contact, and not focusing on the instructor.
SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1

Thursday, Jan. 10th: First class.
Introduction: Literary concepts. Course system and assignments.

Week 2


Sunday, Jan. 20: Last Day to Drop/Add a Class; Last Day to choose Audit (AU) or Pass/No Pass (P/NP) Options

Week 3

Tuesday, Jan. 22: Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Ch. 6-10.

Hurston, *Watching God*, Ch. 11-16.

Friday, Jan. 25: Academic holiday.
Sunday, Jan. 27: Application deadline for fall semester degree candidates

Week 4

*First paper (close reading) due, 2-3 pp.*


Week 5


Week 6


**Week 7**

Tuesday, Feb. 19: Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, p. 221-353.  
*Last day to submit transfer application for spring semester.*

*Thursday, Feb. 21 and Friday, Feb. 22: No classes, Winter Break.*

**Week 8**


Thursday, Feb. 28: **Midterm exam**

*Sunday, March 3:* Professors’ deadline to submit midterm grades.

**Week 9**

Tuesday, March 5: Intro to Spanish Reconquista. De Rojas, *Celestina*, Intro to Act 3.


**Week 10**

*Summer Registration Opens.*


*Friday, March 15: Mandatory Field Trip to Salamanca.*

**Week 11**

Tuesday, March 19: *Celestina*. Conclusions and Interpretation.

**Second (comparative) paper due, 4-5 p.**

*Sunday, March 17:* Last day to withdraw with a W.
Week 12

Tuesday, March 26:  Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass*. Chapters 1-5.

Thursday, March 28:  Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass*. Chapters 6-12.

*ATLAS WEEK: MIGRANTS AND MIGRATIONS. MARCH 28-APRIL 5TH.*

Week 13

Tuesday, April 2:  Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass*. Chapters 13-17.  
*Atlas Week International Party*

Tuesday, April 4:  Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass*. Chapters 18-22.

Week 14

Tuesday, April 9:  Woolf, *Orlando*. Intro and chronology of Woolf.

Thursday, Apr. 11:  Woolf, *Orlando*. Chapters 1 and 2.

*Saturday April 13-Sunday April 21; Semana Santa (Spring Break), University Closed. Please pre-read *Orlando* over spring break as much as possible!*

Week 15

Tuesday, Apr. 23:  Woolf, *Orlando*. Ch. 3 and 4.

*Proposal for research paper due, 2-3 p. + 2-3-source annotated bibliography. Please email.*

Week 16

Tuesday, Apr. 30:  Final review and discussion of conclusions on gender and identity in literature in the works we discussed.  
*Last day of classes.*

*Wednesday, May 1st + May 2: International Workers’ Day, Madrid holiday.*

Friday, May 3rd:  *Research paper due (email word copy)*  
*Review Day. No classes.*

**Final exams:**  Monday, May 6 to Friday, May 10.

| Wednesday, May 8th: 3:30 to 6:30 | Final Exam | SIH A |

*Sunday, May 13:*  Professors’ deadline to submit final grades.