

Skyline College

Official Course Outline

Date: April 2007

1. TITLE:

Literature 166/English 166: Women on Writing

0.5 units: 8 total lecture and workshop hours

Prerequisites: None

Co-requisites: Attendance at the WOW! Women on Writing Conference

Recommendations: Students who have not completed English 100 or above with a passing grade are encouraged to take Literature 166 or English 166 CR/NC.

2. COURSE CLASSIFICATION:

Credit course applicable to the Associate Degree.

3. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Catalog Description:

Exploration of diverse women's experience as portrayed in a variety of genres. Students will read, hear from and discuss women authors who write in such modes as the novel, short story, poetry, drama, film, news reporting and personal comment, memoir, biography, science fiction, and historical fiction. Course participants will examine and celebrate women's voices in contemporary writing. May be repeated for credit up to a maximum of 3 units. Transfer credit: UC; CSU.

Schedule of Classes Description:

Reading and writing about women's experience in a variety of genres. May be taken for a letter grade or on a Credit/No Credit basis. May be repeated for credit up to a maximum of 3 units. Transfer credit: UC; CSU.

4. COURSE JUSTIFICATION:

This course is for students seeking an Associate's Degree, planning on transferring, or desiring to explore the work of contemporary women writers. The course partially fulfills the Lifelong Understanding and Self-Development requirement for CSU, the Humanities general education requirement for CSU, the IGETCA, and the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity requirement for the Associate Degree. The course requires attendance at the WOW! Women on Writing Conference and provides students with an opportunity to extend their conference experience, integrating that experience within an academic context. The course provides students with an opportunity to read and discuss fiction and nonfiction works by women and fosters a greater understanding of the role of women writers and women's writing in our society. The course promotes independent learning and provides additional opportunities for students to develop their critical reading, thinking, and writing skills, as well as explore and examine the generative and explorative processes of writers (including themselves). This course serves the entire student body.

Transfer: UC; CSU (C2).

5. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Compose a focused, well-developed and well-organized college-level essay which utilizes critical-thinking skills, adheres to standard academic conventions, and uses competent American Standard English.
- Analyze and evaluate a text critically for rhetorical purpose and structure, literary elements (plot, theme, setting, character analysis, use of figurative language) and/or expository essay conventions and socio-cultural assumptions and values.
- Make connections (in writing and discussion) between their personal experiences and/or observations and the role of women's writing (fiction and nonfiction), in our society.
- Perceive themselves as improved writers and readers.
- Perceive themselves as both independent learners and as members of a larger community of writers and readers.

6. **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**

During the course, students will

- Read and appreciate literature by and about women.
- Explore the writing and limitations of various writing genres that focus on women's individual or collective experiences (the role of women's writing in our society).
- Strengthen their confidence in exploring, reading, and writing about the ideas and values of women's experience.
- Develop and further an ongoing interest in the literary life of women and the role of women writers in our society.
- Discover personal styles and preferences within the context of contemporary writing about women.
- Critically analyze the work of a woman writer from either a literary, craft, or socio-cultural context.

7. **COURSE CONTENT:**

Although the course allows students to explore a variety of genres and participate in various hands-on writing and creative process workshops at the conference, students will focus their course work on two strands: a journal in which they reflect on their experience at the conference and in which they respond to the reading of a text selected from the conference offerings, and the composition of an essay based on a critical reading of the selected text.

Additional course content includes:

- Readings and presentations by published authors of contemporary poetry, fiction, drama, memoir.
- Reading and discussion on the craft of writing.
- Writing original creative works of fiction, poetry, memoir (including journal writing).
- Spontaneous writing exercises.
- Discussion of writing for and about women.

8. **REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

A variety of methods will be used, including lectures and demonstrations, discussions and question/answer sessions, workshops, individual and group activities, and participation (as either a reader or listener or both) at public readings. Students will participate in low and high stakes writing and spontaneous reading of their work.

9. **ASSIGNMENTS:** Reading assignments include at least one, full-length text or collection of poetry. Writing assignments include a journal (including responses to reading questions) and a critical paper. Typical writing prompts may include:

A. **Journal Questions for the Conference**

In what ways did the conference add to your understanding of the role of women's writing and women writers in our society?

What different perspectives did you uncover as a result of attending the conference?

What workshops did you participate in and why? How did these workshops affect your view of yourself as a reader and writer? In what ways did these workshops impact your own creative and generative processes?

B. Reading Response Questions

What themes does the writer express in the text? How is that theme explored through plot, setting, character, imagery?

What societal issues does the writer address in the text? How do these issues relate to you personally? To women in general? To the larger society which includes women, men, and children?

In what ways does the crafting of this text help you develop your own writing?

C. Possible Essay Topics

English 166 Focus

Discuss what you learned about the authors' writing processes from the events you attended at the WOW! Conference and from your reading of one of the conference texts. If you have a writing project in progress or are writing poetry, stories, or memoir, relate what you learned to the tasks that currently challenge, inspire, drive you (fill in the appropriate verb to describe your experience). Support your points with quotes and examples from the authors' works and your own.

If you read Tristine Rainer's *The New Diary*, discuss what you as a student of writing learned from the text and how it can be applied to your own writing. You may want to include excerpts from your own private writing – journal, travel, or memoir writing.

If you attend Tristine Rainer's workshop, *Your Life as Story* and read her text of the same title, critique the text and the workshop in light of other writings of its kind that you have read or simply on the basis of how useful it is to you. Try out an exercise or two in order to discuss how the process works for you. If you read Adair Lara's autobiographical work, *Hold Me Close, Let Me Go*, you may wish to use her subject material as examples or to draw parallels.

Literature 166 Focus

Analyze an author's use of imagery to develop a significant theme or themes in her work. Relate it to the cultural ideas of womanhood and manhood.

Analyze characters in the works of fiction or drama. Who are these characters? What insights do you gain into them? What is the author's attitude toward them? Discuss the realities they inhabit and the effects on them of culture, race, class or gender as appropriate (in other words, you need not cover all of the categories).

Compare and/or contrast characters in relation to a theme such as their sense of being outsiders, their confusion in relation to sexual mores, behavior, and identity, conflicts between cultural or gender values or between generations of women. You may also choose to compare and/or contrast your own experience with that of the author or characters.

Analyze an important theme in the work of one author, tracing how it develops through the work. What do you discover in its meaning related to current and past historical events? Explain the connections.

Typical assignments might include the following:

Student Learning Outcome	Typical Assignment	Method of Evaluation
Compose a focused, well-developed and well-organized college-level essay which utilizes critical-thinking skills, adheres to standard academic conventions, and uses competent American Standard English.	Students will write an analytical essay which critically interprets a text or which discusses and illustrates how the work of a selected author and conference workshop has influenced their writing.	Students will be evaluated on the coherence, organization, and sophistication of insight and analysis in their essays.
Student Learning Outcome	Typical Assignment	Method of Evaluation
Analyze and evaluate a text critically for rhetorical purpose and structure, literary elements (plot, theme, setting, character analysis, use of figurative language) and/or expository essay conventions and socio-cultural assumptions and values.	Students will keep a reading journal in which they explore the purpose and structure, literary elements, and the assumptions and values present the texts they read.	Students will be evaluated on their willingness to engage and question the texts and the depth of their thinking.
Student Learning Outcome	Typical Assignment	Method of Evaluation
Make connections (in writing and discussion) between their personal experiences and/or observations and the role of women's writing (fiction and nonfiction), in our society.	Students will keep a reading journal in which they identify and respond to any societal issues present in the texts they read, and explore and evaluate the ways in which in which women's writing perceives and frames those issues.	Students will be evaluated on their willingness to explore and question assumptions and reflect on their experiences, as well as the depth of the sophistication of their insights.
Student Learning Outcome	Typical Assignment	Method of Evaluation
Perceive themselves as improved writers and readers.	Students will assess in their journals the influence of the conference on their reading and writing.	Students will be evaluated on the willingness to make an honest assessment and the depth of their reflection.
Student Learning Outcome	Typical Assignment	Method of Evaluation
Perceive themselves as both independent learners and as members of a larger community of writers and readers.	Students will reflect on and evaluate their experience at the conference and how that experience affected their writing experience after the	Students will be evaluated on their willingness to explore the assigned journal questions and reflect on their experience, as well as on the depth of their insights.

10. EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE:

Students will be evaluated primarily on the level of critical thinking, willingness to engage with the material and explore it to some depth, writing skills, and participation.

Grades will typically be based on:

Essay—organized, coherent, and well-developed critical essay demonstrating an understanding of the material and presenting independent analytical responses supported by references to the text. The composition should adhere to the conventions of academic discourse and display a competency in standard American English.

Participation—active participation in large and small group discussion and activities.

Journal—written assessment of the conference, the student's participation in the conference and the impact of that participation and written responses to the reading of one text featured at the conference. The journal should demonstrate the student's willingness to examine and explore material critically and to some depth.

REQUIRED AUTHORS/TEXTS (vary with each conference):

De Azevedo, Kathleen. *Samba Dreamers*

Hackett-Shaughnessy, Olive. *Imagine Your Way Home with Olive* in tandem with various fairytales from the Brothers Grimm.

Hemmings, Kai Hart. *House of Thieves*

Lara, Adair. *Hold Me Close, Let Me Go.*

Rainer, Tristine. *Your Life as Story* or *The New Diary*

Tea, Michelle. *Rose of No Man's Land, Valencia, Rent Girl, or The Beautiful*

Waldman, Ayelet. *Love and Other Impossible Pursuits* or *Daughter's Keeper*