

Madwomen, Mothers, Witches, and Whores: Femininity in British Literature 1750-Present

ENL2022-8049

MWF Period 8, CBD212

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Course Description:

Hollywood's recent capitalization on Austen-mania provides us with a very skewed idea of nineteenth century British femininity, or British femininity in general. Yet women's roles, and their depictions in literature, are much more complex than the Bennet sisters. This course surveys British literature, exploring how authors used categories like "madwoman" and "mother" to simultaneously restrict and subvert social norms regarding femininity.

What roles were women frequently assigned to in British literature? What cultural anxieties were these roles reflecting or challenging? Do these roles remain stagnant or change overtime? In this course, we will identify and then chronologically trace some of the major representations of femininity in British literature. We will consider how these representations interact with their historical context and how genre and style allow for experimentation and adaptation. Of course, we will not examine femininity in isolation; we will also explore how masculinity was imagined and evaluate how other major issues, like class and race, affected how female characters were depicted.

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities, and it also contributes 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing.

Required Texts to Purchase/Rent:

(in reading order)

- Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Penguin Classics (978-0141441146)
- Wilde, Oscar. *Lady Windermere's Fan*. Players Press (978-0887342783)
- Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. Mariner Books (978-0156628709)
- *The Bletchley Circle*. Netflix or Amazon Instant Video
- Dahl, Roald. *The Witches*. Puffin Books (978-0142410110)
- *Downton Abbey*. Amazon Instant Video

Required Texts Available on Canvas:

(in reading order)

- Keats, John. "Belle Dame Sans Merci."
- Tennyson, Lord Alfred. "The Lady of Shalott."
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. (excerpts)
- Rossetti, Christina. "Goblin Market."
- Watson, Rosamund Marriott. "A Ballad of the Were Wolf."
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. "A Scandal in Bohemia."
- Egerton, George. "A Cross Line."
- Wolfe, Jesse. "The Sane Woman in the Attic."
- Berridge, Elizabeth. "Snowstorm."
- Berridge, Elizabeth. "First Born."

- Berridge, Elizabeth. "Lullaby."
- Carter, Angela. "The Bloody Chamber."
- Carter, Angela. "The Lady of the House of Love."
- Gaiman, Neil. "The Facts in the Case of the Departure of Miss Finch."
- Gaiman, Neil. "The Problem of Susan."

Additional scholarly criticism or critical theory may be added throughout the course of the semester.

Goals:

By the end of the semester, you should...

- Gain an understanding of the content and history of British literature from 1750-present
- Be able to engage in scholarly conversations about British literature, British culture, and feminism by making and supporting arguments
- Be able to construct both textual and contextual analyses of texts and understand the differences between the two
- Be able to navigate research databases used frequently in the Humanities
- Refine basic writing skills, including drafting, proofreading, editing, and composing a polished final product
- Employ proper MLA documentation requirements

Grading Scale:

UF has recently instituted minus grades. As a result, letter grades now have different grade point equivalencies. For more information, see: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.htmls>

A =	93-100 =	4.0	C =	73-76 =	2.0
A- =	90-92 =	3.67	C- =	70-72 =	1.67
B+ =	87-89 =	3.33	D+ =	67-69 =	1.33
B =	83-86 =	3.0	D =	63-66 =	1.0
B- =	80-82 =	2.67	D- =	60-62 =	.67
C+ =	77-79 =	2.33	E =	0-59 =	0.0

You must pass this course with a "C" or better to satisfy the CLAS requirement for Composition (C) and to receive the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit (E6). You must turn in all papers totaling 6,000 words to receive credit for writing 6,000 words.

PLEASE NOTE: a grade of "C-" will not confer credit for the University Writing Requirement or the CLAS Composition (C) requirement.

Assignments

Textual Analysis Paper and Presentation: 500 words, 20% of final grade

You will construct a formal textual analysis of a text. During the second week of class, you will select which reading you would like to work with. The paper and assignment are due the same day your selected reading is due. (For example, if you chose "Belle Dame Sans Merci," you would submit your paper and be prepared to present on 8/28.) For this assignment, you will engage critically with your chosen text, but you will not cite outside research; instead, you should write a detailed close reading of *one* text.

Textual analyses (close readings) require the reader/writer to identify the various parts of a text and then to consider how these pieces work together to create a whole text. Your textual analysis will focus on a specific element (character, setting, motif, or conflict) and will use *a few* (2-3) examples of that element to support your argument. Your argument should consider the major themes or overall effect of the text. As for your presentation, I simply want you to present your analysis to the class; turn your paper into a presentation. You

should have 5 PowerPoint slides (title page included) to help your classmates follow your argument. If you are uncertain about how to construct a textual analysis argument or if you would like some assistance selecting an element to focus on, come see me. I am happy to discuss these assignments with you in advance.

Contextual Analysis: 4 parts, 60% of final grade

You will choose an outside text (one we have not discussed in this course) and write a contextual analysis. You need to select a text that interacts, in some way, with the themes, characters, or periods we have been studying. I will provide a list of suggested outside texts, but I am happy to consider others. *I must approve texts not on the suggested list before you submit your Proposal.* I encourage you to select a text that is interesting to you because you will be working with it for a significant portion of the semester. This paper *must* cite outside research.

Contextual analyses work to fully understand a literary text by considering the work's social, cultural, and/or political contexts. You will create an argument about the relationship between your selected text and its contexts. Some productive questions to initiate your contextual analysis are: How is this text a *product or reflection* of its historical or cultural context? How does the text *comment* upon recent history or *influence* future historical events/inspire social change? Ultimately, you will want to think about whether this text is conservative and confirming the status quo *or* progressive and challenging the status quo. *Avoid basing your argument on the author's biography.*

1. Proposal: 500 words, 10%

To begin this assignment, you will write a Proposal in which you explain your project to me. Although this needs to be written in paragraph form and with correct grammar, the Proposal can be more informal—you can use first person and you can weave in/list your research questions. You must include a working thesis statement.

2. Annotated Bibliography: 1,000 words, 20%

Your Annotated Bibliography will include 5 sources. (You will have read or at least perused additional sources, but these 5 should be sources that will most likely end up in your contextual analysis.) The Annotated Bibliography will help you corral the contextualization part of your contextual analysis by helping you to evaluate the credibility and accuracy of your sources, the connections between and among sources, and their usefulness for your topic. Your goal is to establish ethos and logos through a familiarity with your topic and a variety of viewpoints on the issue.

3. Contextual Analysis: 2,000 words, 20%

This is your Contextual Analysis paper. It should contain an argument, supporting points, evidence (incorporate those sources from your Annotated Bibliography), and a conclusion. Although you will receive feedback and do additional work on this essay, this is a *polished* version of your Contextual Analysis.

4. Revision/Expansion: 2,500 words, 10%

For this part of the assignment, you are revising your Contextual Analysis based on my feedback. You should work to improve both the content and mechanics of your analysis for this final version. Additionally, I expect you to productively expand your paper by 500 words.

Participation: 500 words of in-class writing, 20% of final grade

Participation includes completing assigned readings, conferences, homework, in-class writing activities, presentations, and discussions. I expect you to come to class prepared to actively participate in class discussions and other in-class activities. This means having completed any reading or homework assigned for that day. Our classroom acts as a safe environment where you can air your opinions and consider those presented by your classmates, so take advantage of this and see how something you are thinking of writing a paper on, for instance, flies in general discussion.

If something prevents you from actively participating in class, please schedule a conference with me early in the semester to make other arrangements.

General Assessment Rubric

Here is the meaning behind the grades I assign to your papers (all papers are graded on a letter scale, not points); you can use these statements to determine how you might work toward a higher grade:

A-range papers—Insightful: Your paper is thoughtful, carefully developed, and clearly presented. You demonstrate strong comprehension of the materials under discussion, clear engagement with course themes and contexts, and offer a sustained reading that successfully illuminates the text or texts under discussion. A-range papers are well-organized, well-supported, and well-developed. They are written in an engaging, polished, and clear prose style.

B-range papers—Proficient: Your paper is solid, competent, and capable; it would clearly benefit from **either** more complex development, fuller explanation or examples, stronger organization, increased risk-taking (including subtler or more original examples), **or** clearer presentation (structure, prose style, grammar/mechanics).

C-range papers—Satisfactory: Your paper is passable, even promising, but has **multiple** key areas that require **considerable** improvement: a more rigorous topic, a stronger thesis, stronger development of ideas, improved focus (in identifying the issue or guiding the reader through your analysis), fuller explanation of examples, increased risk-taking (including subtler or more original examples), **and/or** clearer presentation (structure, prose style, grammar/mechanics).

D papers—Poor: Your paper is not yet adequate. D papers are often off track, superficial, have a non-viable thesis (or struggle to narrow down a viable topic), or they struggle to organize and sustain a persuasive reading in readable prose.

E papers—Fail: F papers fail to meet the basic criteria of argument, organization, and mechanics, or they fail to respond in a meaningful way to the assignment, or they contain passages that are plagiarized.

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is *required*. You are allowed **three absences** without any direct effect on your grade. Your final grade will drop by 5 points with each subsequent absence after your first three. If you reach six absences, you will automatically fail the course. If you are facing unusual circumstances that affect your ability to abide by these expectations, please schedule a conference with me. Similarly, tardiness will not be tolerated. **Three tardies will be considered as an absence.**

Absences for events and obligations recognized by UF as excused absences are not counted against your attendance record for this course. When possible, please discuss such absences with me *prior* to the date that will be missed. This course complies with [UF's official attendance policies](#).

If you are absent, it is your responsibility to be aware of all due dates/classwork. If absent due to a scheduled event, you are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the [Student Honor Code](#). The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

- a.) Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- b.) Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire [Student Honor Code](#).

All the work submitted on Canvas will be passed through Turnitin.com, a website that compares your paper to other papers on the Internet, any published work, and the Internet itself. If you plagiarize, you will be caught, which could result in an automatic E for the assignment, the course, or a disciplinary measure from the university, depending upon the gravity and frequency of the matter.

Phones, Computers, etc.

Out of courtesy for your fellow classmates, and myself, it is expected that you silence your cell phone/other gadgets off before class. If you are using a laptop in class, it should only be used for taking notes or accessing the reading.

Classroom Civility

Please keep in mind that you and your classmates come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

In-Class Work

You will be expected to work in small groups and participate in group discussions, writing workshops, and other in-class activities. You must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them. In-class work cannot be made up. In general, you are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

Paper Maintenance Responsibilities

You are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the your responsibility to have and to make available this material.

Mode of Submission

All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) documents to Canvas **by 2:30PM**. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. File names will be the student's last name_assignment name (like: Smith_Critical Definition.docx).

All papers must follow MLA format. They should be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered. Your last name should precede the page number (like: Smith 1). Your name, my name, the course number, the date, and the word count should appear in the upper left-hand corner of the document. Every paper should have a title centered at the top of the document, but after your name, etc. All of this information, like the body of your paper, will be double spaced with no additional extra spaces.

Papers are due at 2:30PM. Late papers will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Should you need any accommodation, contact the Students with Disabilities Office, Peabody 202. That office will provide you with documentation that you will then present to me when requesting accommodation.

Harassment

Students, faculty, and staff of the University of Florida are protected under [UF policies](#) that mandate an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

Grade Appeals

You may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, Department of English. Appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower grade.

Instructor Evaluations

You are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based. These evaluations are conducted online at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but you will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available at <http://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Reading is due the day it appears on the calendar.

	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Week One (8/24)	Syllabus and Intros	Course Overview	“Belle Dame Sans Merci” and “Lady of Shalott”
Week Two (8/31)	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Vol. 1, Ch. 1-5)	read <i>Jane Eyre</i>-No Class	read <i>Jane Eyre</i>-No Class
Week Three (9/7)	Labor Day-No Class	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Vol. 1, Ch. 6-Vol. 2, Ch. 8)	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Vol. 2, Ch. 9-11)
Week Four (9/14)	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Vol. 3, Ch. 1-6)	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Vol. 3, Ch. 7-10)	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (Vol. 3, Ch. 11-12)
Week Five (9/21)	<i>Madwoman in the Attic</i> excerpts	“Goblin Market”	“A Ballad of the Were Wolf”
Week Six (9/28)	<i>Lady Windermere’s Fan</i> (Act I-II)	<i>Lady Windermere’s Fan</i> (Act III-IV)	“A Scandal in Bohemia”
Week Seven (10/5)	“A Cross Line”	Writing Workshop	Proposal Due Research Workshop
Week Eight (10/12)	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>
Week Nine (10/19)	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	“The Sane Woman in the Attic”
Week Ten (10/26)	“First Born” and “Lullaby”	“Snowstorm”	Annotated Bibliography Due <i>The Bletchley Circle</i>
Week Eleven (11/2)	“The Bloody Chamber”	“The Lady of the House of Love”	Homecoming-No Class
Week Twelve (11/9)	Writing Workshop	Veteran’s Day-No Class	<i>The Witches</i>
Week Thirteen (11/16)	Peer Review of Contextual Analysis	<i>The Witches</i>	<i>The Witches</i>
Week Fourteen (11/23)	Contextual Analysis Due <i>The Witches</i>	Thanksgiving-No Class	Thanksgiving-No Class
Week Fifteen (11/30)	Mandatory Conferences-No Class	“The Facts in the Case of the Departure...”	“The Problem of Susan”
Week Sixteen (12/7)	<i>Downton Abbey</i>	Course Wrap-up	Revision Due Reading Day-No Class