English 4381: Women of Color in American Literature

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Office Hours: Mondays-Thursdays: 12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m., or by appointment
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Course Description
This course will focus on American women authors of color from the seventeenth to the twenty-first centuries and examine the social and political contexts that shaped the texts we will study throughout the semester. Although we will study major authors in American literary history, such as Alice Walker, Sandra Cisneros, and Maxine Hong Kingston, we will also evaluate works by lesser-known writers, such as Eliza Griswold, Laila Lalami, and Erica Sanchez. Also, we will consider how critical race theory and gender studies give us specific insight into how female authors of color depict underrepresented groups in American literature and culture.

Your Semester Grade

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<th>Component</th>
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<td>Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Assignments</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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Research Assignments
A seminar paper takes an entire semester to work on, so students need to begin work on the paper as soon as the class begins. Every-other week, students will complete work that will aid them in the research and writing of the paper.
- Annotated Bibliography – A list of ten sources with a complete bibliographic citation for a critical work followed by two sentences explaining the overall argument of the critical work.
- Tentative and Final Thesis - developing a clear, concise argument takes several attempts, so students will turn in a tentative thesis statement during the first week of class and a final thesis statement during the third week.
- Outline – a two page outline that clearly describes the major topics and subtopics that will be discussed in the paper. The outline must be organized and well-developed.

Quizzes
Quizzes will cover the assigned readings due for that day. Quizzes are unannounced and must be completed within the first five minutes of class. If students are more than five minutes late, they may not take the quiz for that day. Students may not make up any quizzes, but I will drop the lowest quiz grade at the end of the semester in case of illness, a family emergency, car trouble, etc.
Exams
There are two exams over the course of the semester:

- The **Midterm Exam** Students will answer their choice of 2 of 3 essay questions that cover the readings up to the point of the midterm. Each question is worth 50 points.
- The **Final Exam** Students will answer their choice of 2 of 3 essay questions that cover the readings after the midterm up to the point of the final exam. Each question is worth 50 points.

Seminar Paper
This paper is a longer, individual paper (5-7 pages) over one or more major text(s) we will be evaluating over the semester. Students will use the Research Assignments they work on over the course of the summer session and apply their research to this paper. Students are expected to read, evaluate, and respond to the text(s) critically and deepen their understanding of the text(s). Students must include at least five citations in their paper, and will preferably come from sources in the Annotated Bibliography, but they may be different sources. (see MLA Handbook for guidelines or the OWL at Purdue: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/))

Use of Technology
Assignments must be uploaded on Blackboard as WORD documents. **I will not accept excuses for any technical difficulties students may have with their assignments**, which include computers crashing, difficulty uploading papers, Blackboard shutting down, etc.

Departmental Policy on Academic Honesty
Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the Student Handbook [http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/documents/pdf/Student_Handbook.pdf](http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/documents/pdf/Student_Handbook.pdf). Failure to comply with the honor code will result in disciplinary action and a failing grade in this course.

**I will assign a grade of “F” for the following violations:**

I. Plagiarism “the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another’s work or idea into one’s own work offered for credit” (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Chapter VI, Section 5.32)
II. Cheating - this includes copying material from another member of the class, having someone in or outside of class complete an assignment or exam for you.

Students with Special Needs
Persons with disabilities which may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any accommodations being implemented.
Inclusion Statement
We will be addressing controversial topics related to underprivileged groups throughout the semester. I support a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honor all identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). Please let me if there is a particular name or pronouns by which you identify. Also, please let me know if anything I or your peers may say in class makes you feel excluded or marginalized. You may come see me in my office, leave me a note, and your concerns will remain anonymous.

Confidential Resources Available to Students:
Office of Title IX Compliance: 325-486-6357
University Health Clinic: 325-942-2171
University Counseling Center: 325-942-2173
ASU Crisis Helpline: 325-486-6345

Schedule of Readings and Assignments
(Tentative and Subject to Change)

Week One
June 3
Course Introduction
Course Policies
Feminist and Critical Race Theories: an overview

June 4
Navajo Creation Myth
Chippewa Mourning Songs
“Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child”

June 5
Phillis Wheatley: “On Being Brought from Africa to America”
Frances Harper: “Bible Defense of Slavery”
Louise Erdrich: "Captivity"

June 6
Harriet Jacobs: Selection from Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
Wendy Rose: "Truganinny"
Leslie Marmon Silko: "Yellow Woman"

June 7
Conferences
Tentative Thesis and Annotated Bibliography due by 11:45 a.m.

Week Two
June 10
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: “You Foolish Men”
“My Lady”
Audrey Lorde: “Black Unicorn”
“A Woman Speaks”
June 11  Carmen Tafolla "La Malinche"
       Excerpt from Kindred

June 12  Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni: Excerpt from Mistress of Spices
       Ann Plato: “The Natives of America”

June 13  Harriet Jacobs: Excerpt from Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
       Midterm Review

June 14  Midterm Exam due by 11:45 a.m.

Week Three
June 17  Gloria Anzaldua: “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”
       Ariana Brown: "Dear White Girl in My Spanish Class"
       Aimee Nezhukumatathil: “On Listening to Your Teacher Take Attendance”

June 18  Zora Neale Hurston: “How it Feels to be Colored Me”
       “Sweat”

June 19  Amy Tan: excerpt from The Joy Luck Club
       Eliza Griswold: “Landays”
       Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni: “The Intelligence of Wild Things”

June 20  Toni Morrison: excerpt from The Bluest Eye
       Maxine Hong Kingston: “No Name Woman”

June 21  Conferences
       Outline and Final Thesis Statement due by 11:45 a.m.

Week Four
June 24  Laila Lalami: Selections

June 25  Jamaica Kincaid: “Girl”
       Erica Sanchez: Excerpt from I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter

June 26  Sandra Cisneros: “A House of My Own”
       Excerpt from Woman Hollering Creek

June 27  Students’ Choice

June 28  Conferences
       Seminar Paper due by 11:45 a.m.
**Week Five**

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<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Students’ Choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2</td>
<td>Alysia Harris: “That Girl”</td>
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<td>Jennifer Falu: “10 Things I Want to Say to a Black Man”</td>
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<td><em>Review for Final Exam</em></td>
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<td>July 3</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam due by 11:45 a.m.</strong></td>
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