

LITERATURE & SOCIETY: Transgression and Identity

Coli 214B (Section 02)

Fall 2009

Tues/Thurs 8:30-9:55 am

Tuscarora Office Bldg., Rm #309

Instructor: heidi shapiro

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Office hours: Thursdays 10:15 – 12:15, or by appointment

We will be broadly surveying social change through literature and art, with an emphasis on transgressive written works. Our aim is to explore texts which have either caused certain social uproar and shifts, or are about such issues - texts which have questioned the norms of the society in which they were written. Topical threads will include the role and meaning of art, the effects of war on individuals, society and policy, environmentalism, issues of immigration and racism, feminism, sexuality, freethought, and revolution. We will see identity explored through gender roles and sexuality, religion, social status, migration, and cultural context.

Class Expectations:

I will expect you to have completed each reading assignment before our class meeting. I recommend that you come to class with notes and questions about the readings, and of course you should always bring your texts and writing materials. Class sessions are a crucial part of this course, so regular attendance is important (and will affect your final grade), and active participation is strongly encouraged.

Throughout the semester, you will need to keep up with the online blog for the course. Before class has begun, you will need to have written and submitted a response to the readings online (minimum 100 words). Use this space to explore issues that interested you in what we have read for that class period and questions that the text raised. I expect your responses to be thoughtful and engaged; summaries and plot recaps are not valid commentaries. You will use this blog to work through issues in the texts and to jump-start your thinking about potential paper topics. In order to receive full credit, you must write at least 17 commentaries. If you fail to do so, you will receive **no** credit.

You will sign up for one class presentation during the semester. Using the reading for that day, you will make a short (2-3 page) presentation, which will serve as the ground for discussion on that day.

There will be two 7-8 page papers due for this course. Both papers will be subject to revision after consultation with the instructor. You will be graded on the final, revised submission (not on the draft).

As a composition course, I expect your written work to exhibit a command of basic writing skills (coherence, organization, paragraphing, grammar and mechanics, etc.), and the quality of your writing will be a factor in your final paper grade. If you need help with your writing, see me during my office hours or take advantage of the university's writing center. In all your written work, if you consult outside sources, you must document such uses. Use MLA format for purposes of documentation.

While I recognize that our class meets early, try to be on time. And if your mind tends to work more slowly in the morning, might I suggest jump-starting it with caffeine...? (Or sugar, or exercise, etc.)

If you have more than 3 absences during the semester, it will result in the lowering of your final letter grade.

Finally, please turn your cell phones off during class, or at minimum, put them on vibrate. If your phone rings during class, I reserve the right to answer it. ☺
Texting during class will not be tolerated.

If you would like to bring your laptop to class, that is fine. However, I ask that you use this only to take notes and not to get online. Browsing websites, checking Facebook, and playing computer games is not acceptable in-class use of your computer.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the representation of another's work or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism will be pursued in accordance with university policies.

Grading:

Class Participation	10%
Presentation	10%
Blog	20%
Paper #1	30%
Paper #2	30%

Required Texts:

Neil Labute – The Shape of Things
Tomas Rivera – And the Earth Did Not Devour Him
Tom Robbins – Skinny Legs and All

Readings provided online via Blackboard:

Sarah Kane – Blasted
Charlotte Perkins Gilman – The Yellow Wallpaper
Amelia Lanyer – Eve's Defense (excerpt from *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*)
Ayaan Hirsi Ali – excerpt from "Caged Virgin"

Nawal El Saadawi – In Camera
Nancy Bauer – Pornutopia
Doris Lessing – The Old Chief Mshlanga
Dr. Seuss – The Lorax
Stephen Crane – The Open Boat
Rachel Carson – excerpt from Silent Spring
Leslie Marmon Silko – Yellow Woman
Alice Walker – Everyday Use
Toni Morrison – Recitatif
Henry David Thoreau – Resistance to Civil Government
Howard Zinn – excerpt from People’s History of the United States

Poetry provided online via Blackboard:

Allen Ginsberg – Howl
Wesley Bidy – Scowl
Brian Turner – Here Bullet, Eulogy, AB Negative
Elizabeth Tshele – Darfur
Danny Martin – Acknowledgments, Haddock of Mass Destruction
Tony Beyer – In the Wake of America
Rupert Brooke – The Soldier
Ralph Waldo Emerson – Concord Hymn
Wilfred Owen – Dulce et Decorum Est, Disabled
Siegfried Sassoon – Glory of Women, Repression of War Experience, Suicide in the Trenches

CALENDAR

WEEK ONE

Tues Sept 1 Introduction
Thurs Sept 3 Discussion of theory & writing
examples of transgressive art to start us off for next class

WEEK TWO

Tues Sept 8 LaBute’s “The Shape of Things”
Thurs Sept 10 Robbins’ “Skinny Legs and All” - pg 1-46 (the first veil)

WEEK THREE

Tues Sept 15 Skinny Legs and All – pg 49-77 (the second veil)
Thurs Sept 17 Skinny Legs and All – pg 81 - 119 (the third veil)

WEEK FOUR

Tues Sept 22 Skinny Legs and All – pg 123 – 169 (the fourth veil)

Thurs Sept 24 Skinny Legs and All – pg 173- 233 (the fifth veil)

WEEK FIVE

Tues Sept 29 Skinny Legs and All – pg 237 – 307 (the sixth veil)

Thurs Oct 1 Skinny Legs and All – pg 310 – 422 (the seventh veil)

WEEK SIX

Tues Oct 6 Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper"

Thurs Oct 8 Ayaan Hirsi Ali excerpt, video of "Submission", El Sadaawi's "In Camera"

WEEK SEVEN

Tues Oct 13 Amelia Lanyer's 'Eve's Defense'

FIRST PAPER DRAFT DUE

Thurs Oct 15 Pornutopia (accompanying articles TBA)

WEEK EIGHT

Tues Oct 20 Blasted

(papers returned for revision)

Thurs Oct 22 Blasted

WEEK NINE

Tues Oct 27 war poetry:

REVISED PAPER DUE

Thurs Oct 29 war poetry con't

WEEK TEN

Tues Nov 3 Howl, Scowl

Thurs Nov 5 Old Chief Mshlanga

WEEK ELEVEN

Tues Nov 10 And the Earth Did Not Devour Him

Thurs Nov 12 And the Earth Did Not Devour Him

WEEK TWELVE

Tues Nov 17 The Lorax, Open Boat

Thurs Nov 19 Silent Spring excerpt, Yellow Woman

WEEK THIRTEEN

Tues Nov 24 (catch up)

Thurs Nov 26 **No class, Thanksgiving!**

WEEK FOURTEEN

Tues Dec 1 Morrison's "Recitatif", Walker's "Everyday Use"

Thurs Dec 3 Henry David Thoreau "Resistance to Civil Government"

DRAFT OF PAPER #2 DUE

WEEK FIFTEEN

Tues Dec 8 Howard Zinn excerpt from People's History... (Or Does it Explode? & Surprises)
(papers returned for revision)

Thurs Dec 10 on censorship and transgression, a discussion

Monday Dec 14 – FINAL REVISED PAPER DUE by 4:00 pm