

FROM: June Jordan
RE: Course IA, Women's Studies, ^{SP '91} Fall 1990

THE POLITICS OF CHILDHOOD: First, we will examine the relationship between power and language. Then, we will explore the political experience of female childhood through the prism of cross-cultural and multi-ethnic readings. Weekly written assignments, and re-writes that reflect analytical and imaginative student response to these materials, will occupy centerstage and will receive a workshop mode of sharing and evaluation.

Written requirements: Weekly essays and/or letters of varying length, and their re-writes. A mid-term essay of 8-10 pages. A final essay of 10-12 pages.

Reading requirements: All of the required titles, plus ancillary texts from current periodicals, anthologies and the like.

Provisional Reading List:

Essay, "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell

Essay, "Such, Such Were the Joys," George Orwell

Novels: My Childhood, Maxim Gorky

Brown Girl, Brownstones, Paule Marshall

Obasan, Joy Kogawa

Beans of Egypt Maine, Carolyn Chute

Bread Givers, Anzia Yezierska

Cat's Eye, Margaret Atwood

Desert Run, Mitsue Yamada

Borderland, Gloria Anzaldua

(N.B. I recognize that the reading list above may need some adjustment, and will determine that, later.)

Writing Gender and Sexuality: Course Description and Syllabus

Instructor: Melinda Chen

Course Description:

Writing of any kind can be a great imaginative challenge. The course aims to focus and contextualize that challenge by providing concrete tools for composition and rhetoric, along with critical awareness of how conventional writing lies flush with certain normative expectations along the lines of gender, race, class, and sexuality. This combination encourages a situated critical capacity towards language itself, as well as a connection to the text via an awareness of our own relation as writers to conventional modes of writing. Writing is staged here as a communicative act, and as one which, just like spoken language, is likely to meet with certain expectations.

As this is a Women's Studies course, we will be concerned mainly with exploring both cultural meanings of gender and gendered meanings, centered on but not limited to the U.S. context. Readings will explore topics such as 1) where and how the existence of women can be understood as "silenced" or "erased", from theoretical perspectives as well as literary expressions of such silencing or erasure; 2) the degree to which structures in contemporary society manipulate and/or perpetuate existing borders of gender, race, and sexuality; and 3) the degree to which heteronormativity participates in constructions of raced, gendered, and sexual identities. By focusing consistently on issues of concern in the U.S. context around intertwining discourses of gender, race, and sexuality, but also necessarily situating these relations in historical and global perspective, this course combines exposure to major texts of Women's Studies with less-recognized but necessary texts interrogating race, gender, and sexuality, as well as a selection of written criticism and films.

Instructor:

Melinda Chen

melc@socrates.berkeley.edu (checked daily)

Office hours: 3-6 PM Tuesdays in 3414 Dwinelle Hall, 2-3 & 5-6 Fridays in 1307 Dwinelle Hall, and by appt.

Mailbox: Women's Studies Office, 3326 Dwinelle Hall

Assignments

Reading Assignments : You will be encountering a diverse array of academic criticism, literature (fiction and poetry), film, and theory. Some of this reading, particularly the theory, will be challenging. In most cases, the difficult material will be limited to an excerpt, but one whose reading will still be illuminating. Together, we will learn how to approach the more intimidating material.

Presentations: At some point in the semester, each of you will be responsible, in small groups, for a short (5-10 minute) class presentations on one of the reading assignments. Details to follow.

Writing Assignments: Throughout the semester, we will have four "bigger" assignments: 2 shorter papers (Weeks 4 and 8), 1 draft of the final paper (Week 12), and the revised final paper (Week 16). Some of these assignments will involve written peer-editing and discussion of each other's work.

Plagiarism and other forms of academic impropriety: Most simply, plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else's work as one's own. If you are uncertain about whether something constitutes plagiarism, I'm happy to talk to you about it. Please know that any plagiarized work will receive, at minimum, a failing grade.

Extra assistance: If you feel you need help with writing beyond the scope of this class (talk to me if you like): The Bear Tutoring Center (Chavez Atrium, Cesar Chavez Center) has drop-in and by-appointment writing tutor service. See: <http://slc.berkeley.edu/writing/write.html>.

Journal: You will be keeping a journal throughout, in correlation with reading assignments. At minimum, please do as follows: Write 1 paragraph after each single reading, giving some sense of your critical evaluation. Some sample questions to think about: What do you think it aims to do? Does it succeed, in your opinion? Describe your reaction to the piece; in what ways did you find it provocative? What kinds of emotional reactions did you experience and were

they surprising in any way? Was anything missing, in your view? Please feel free to take additional notes, or write as you wish above and beyond the minimal requirements for the journal.

Grading (rough distribution)

- Papers 40%
- Participation 30%
- Journal and peer edits 30%

Course Materials:

Required:

- Course reader: available by at Instant Copying & Laser Printing, 2015 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley 510.704.9700.
- Online reserves (first readings and as necessary): go to <http://eres.berkeley.edu> and login using _____.
- Books (first three available at Ned's:)
 - Frederick Crews, The Random House Handbook
 - Maxine Hong Kingston, The Woman Warrior
 - Audre Lorde, Zami
- Bound journal (no spiral bindings; tape or cloth bindings only), to be handed in halfway through and at the end of the semester.
- One high-density, double-sided floppy diskette, labeled with your full name. You will use this diskette to turn in your Microsoft Word-format papers. Name your file: firstname-lastname-assignmentnumber [1,2,3,or 4]-date.doc. Email submissions: Given the uncertainties of email, this is to be done at your own risk! I will send a confirmation as soon as I am able (I check mail daily), so I recommend you send at least 24 hours before the deadline so I can inform you if it doesn't work. If I cannot read the file you send (I check mail daily), the paper will be dated as submitted only when I receive and read it.

Syllabus:

Each unit lasts about two weeks = four class meetings. Within each week, we will alternate discussions of assigned readings with in-class exercises and homework assignments.

WEEK 1 & 2. Standards of Composition and Rhetoric; Prescriptivism and Convention

Week 1.

Tuesday, 1/20	Introduction and overview. Setting up of peer groups. In-class "memory exercise": first and third person accounts; perspective; implications for "personal"/subjective and "professional"/objective writing
Thursday, 1/22	Discussion of memory assignments. First person vs. third person. Subjectivity and objectivity in professional, personal writing contexts. Finding a suitable stance. Readings due: Nicole Brossard, Picture Theory, New York: Roof Books, pp. 124-134. Adrienne Rich, Foreword: On History, Illiteracy, Passivity, Violence, and Women's Culture. On Lies, Secrets and Silence. W.W. Norton & Co., 1979, pp. 9-18. Due: Student info/self-evaluations Assignment for next Thursday: Exercise in research, freewriting, and analysis Part I. Going to a public (gathering) place; observing a surprisingly "gendered" event; freewriting.

Week 2.

Tuesday, 1/27	Discussion of readings. Understanding prescriptivism, normativity, and convention. Expectations of different genres. Readings due: David Crystal, "The Prescriptive Tradition" George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language"
Thursday, 1/29	High-school essay design vs. university expectations: what are the differences, and why? Conventional essay structure. In-class "mock" peer editing exercise. Due in class: Exercise in research, freewriting, and analysis Part I. Assignment for next Thursday: Exercise in research, freewriting, and analysis Part II, including 1-page reflective self-evaluation. Shifting from the freewrite to analysis. Produce a concise 2-page paper out of this analysis.

WEEK 3 & 4. Women Writing, Women Speaking: An Introduction

Week 3.

Tuesday, 2/3	Discussion of The Yellow Wallpaper. Readings due: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, The Yellow Wallpaper. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1929.
Thursday, 2/5	Presentations of primary materials and discussion of analysis. Discussion of readings. Women and literature. How does "literature" relate to "scholarship", and vice versa? What does it mean to be intimidated by a text, and what can one do about it? Readings due: Theresa Hak-Kyung Cha, Dictée (excerpt) Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "Infection in the Sentence: The Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship"

Week 4.

Tuesday, 2/10	Presentations: Pammy, Lynn Readings due: Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own Due in class: 1-2 page paper: analysis of gendered event. Copies go to peers.
Thursday, 2/12	Discussion: A Room of One's Own, cont'd., readings Writing a research paper. Library resources. Peer discussions on proposals: thesis, resources, plans for research. Readings due: Joanna Kadi, Thinking Class (excerpt) Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision". On Lies, Secrets, and Silence, pp. 33-49.

WEEK 5 & 6. The Multiple Meanings of "Silence" in Gendered Perspective

Week 5.

Tuesday, 2/17	Introduction to (feminist) theories of silence(s). Silent? Or silenced? From literal to metaphorical silence. Presentations: WenJing, Ivonne Readings due: Tannen, Deborah, and Muriel Saville-Troike, eds. "Introduction," Perspectives on silence. Trinh T. Minh-ha, "Commitment from the Mirror-writing Box," Woman, Native, Other. Indiana U. Press, 1989, 5-44. Due in class: Peer edits (1 paper copy to me, 1 paper copy for your peer).
Thursday, 2/19	Presentations: Karina, Nancy Readings due: Maxine Hong Kingston, Woman Warrior, part 1/3.

Week 6.

Tuesday, 2/24	Presentations: Thomas, Lizzy, Sara Readings due: Woman Warrior, 2/3. Due in class: Revisions of 1-2 page paper (gendered analysis) Handed out in class: Second paper assignment (4-page paper)
Thursday, 2/26	Sexuality/gender, continued. Readings due: Woman Warrior, 3/3. King-Kok Cheung, "Introduction". Articulate Silences. Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 1-26.

	This week and next: Discuss midterm papers in office hours if necessary.
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WEEK 7 & 8. Writing Double Consciousness, Writing Ethnicity

Week 7.

Tuesday, 3/2	Presentations: Nadia, Melissa Readings due: Frantz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness" (excerpt). Black Skin, White Masks. Grove Press, 1967, 109-117. Peer meetings to discuss second paper assignments
Thursday, 3/4	Presentations: Jill, Jessica Readings due: Gloria Anzaldua, Chapters 6 ("Tlilli, Tlapalli") and 7 ("La conciencia de la mestiza"). Borderlands/La Frontera, Aunt Lute Press, 1987, 65-98. Joy Harjo, "Reconciliation – A Prayer", from The Woman Who Fell From the Stars (poem)

Week 8.

Tuesday, 3/9	Presentations: Candice, Bridget Readings due: Audre Lorde, Zami, 1/2.
Thursday, 3/11	Presentations: Tyler, Thu Readings due: Audre Lorde, Zami, 2/2. Patricia Hill Collins, "Black Women and the Sex/Gender Hierarchy" DUE IN CLASS: Second paper assignment (4-page paper) Handed out in class: Final paper assignment (8-page paper)

WEEK 9 & 11 (Week 10 = no class; Spring Break). Poetics/Erotics/"The Body"

Week 9.

Tuesday, 3/16	Discussion: Rhetorical poetics. "Writing the Body" Readings due: Luce Irigaray, "When Our Lips Speak Together" Ann Rosalind Jones, "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of l'écriture feminine"
Thursday, 3/18	Readings due: Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic" Sarah Chinn, "Feeling Her Way: Audre Lorde and the Power of Touch" (GLQ 9:1-2, 181-204) (excerpt) Rosemarie Garland Thomson, "Disabled Women as Powerful Women in Petry, Morrison, and Lorde" (excerpt)

[WEEK 10: SPRING BREAK]

Week 11.

Tuesday, 3/30	Class discussion: Barthes. Readings due: Roland Barthes, "A Lover's Discourse" (excerpts)
Thursday, 4/1	Readings due: Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice"

WEEK 12 & 13. Language and Ideology/Power

Week 12.

Tuesday, 4/6	Gender normativity; gendered structures. "Sex" and "gender". Readings due: Judith Butler, Gender Trouble (excerpt)
Thursday, 4/8	Discussion of Butler, cont'd; language and cultural capital. In-class exercise and peer group discussions Readings due: Pierre Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power (excerpt)

Week 13.

Tuesday, 4/13	Writing gender, writing sex. How might we define sexist language? What language, whose language? In-class exercise: Taking a position on a current language-and-gender issue. Readings due: Deborah Tannen, "I'll Explain It To You': Lecturing and Listening" Bosmajian, Haig. "The Language of Sexism" in Language Awareness. Paul Eschholz et al. eds., 122-130.
Thursday, 4/15	In-class exercise cont'd. Readings due: Martyna, Wendy. Beyond the He/Man Approach: The Case for Nonsexist Language. Signs 5: 482-493 Primary materials: New York Times article on "misbegotten" Nobel prize laureates Due in class: drafts of final paper (1 paper copy for your peer and 1 on diskette for me)

WEEK 14 & 15. "New" Embodiments: Science Fiction, Cyborg, Transgender

Week 14.

Tuesday, 4/20	Discussion: Gender and technology. Does "technology" revise or perpetuate gender systems? Readings due: Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto"
Thursday, 4/22	Discussion: Science fiction. Readings due: Samuel Delany, Trouble on Triton (excerpt; not in reader; I will hand out photocopies in advance) Due in class: Peer edits of final drafts (1 paper copy for me, 1 paper copy for your peer)

Week 15.

Tuesday, 4/27	Transsexuality and transgender existence/ identity. How do these ways of being and of identifying work with/against/beside sex and gender norms? Readings due: Kate Bornstein, Gender Outlaw, pp.3-52.
Thursday, 4/29	Readings due: Max Wolf Valerio, "Now That You're a White Man': Changing Sex in a Postmodern World – Being, Becoming, and Borders" In Anzaldúa and Keating, This Bridge We Call Home

WEEK 16 & 17. Film and discussion.

Week 16.

Tuesday, 5/4	JOURNALS and FINAL PAPERS are both due in class Film, Ma Vie en Rose.
Thursday, 5/6	Discussion, Ma Vie en Rose.

Week 17.

Tuesday, 5/11	Closing; review; looking outward and on.
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Women's Studies 1B (M. Chen), Spring 2004: INFORMATION SHEETS/SELF-EVALUATIONS

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone number in case I need to reach you: _____

____ It's OK to distribute the above contact information to other students (check if yes)

Major (or tentative fields): _____

Have you taken any Women's Studies courses before? If so, which ones?

Can you make it to the announced office hours? If not, what's the best time slot for you?

Tell me about your writing:

1. Describe in a paragraph your evaluation of your own writing/writing skills. Are there things about it that please you? That you feel frustrated or intimidated by?

2. Describe in another paragraph what you would like to accomplish vis-à-vis your writing, and vis-à-vis topics of Women's Studies, in this class. Are there any subareas of Women's Studies that particularly interest you?