

Fall 2017
WST 4930/WST 6935
Feminism in Women's Popular Genre Fiction

Instructor: Dr. Tace Hedrick
Office: 302 Ustler
Office Hours: Thursdays 2:00-3:45 pm and by appointment
Email: tace@ufl.edu
Meeting: **Tues 4:05-6:00 TUR 2346**
Th 4:05-4:55 TUR 2322

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change.

Required Texts:

bell hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*
E.L. James, *Fifty Shades of Grey* (Romance)
Cecilia Grant, *A Lady Awakened* (Historical Romance)
Octavia Butler, *Bloodchild and Other Stories* (Feminist African-American SF)
Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez, *Dirty Girls' Social Club* (Latina Girlfriend/Romance)
Barbara Neely, *Blanche On the Lam* (African-American Mystery)
Patricia Highsmith, *The Price of Salt* (Lesbian "Pulp" Romance)
Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (Feminist Dystopia)
Nancy Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*

Movies/TV We'll Watch if We Have a Chance:

9 ½ Weeks (Film)
Carol (Film)
The Handmaid's Tale (HBO)

Online Reading:

Gramsci, "Hegemony." <http://www.theory.org.uk/ctr-gram.htm#hege>
Marx on ideology:
<https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/marxism/modules/marxideology.html>
Frye, Marilyn. "Oppression." *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1983. <http://www.unbeknownst.org/oppres.htm>.

Course Reserves

Berlant, Lauren. "Chapter One: Cruel Optimism." *Cruel Optimism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. 23-50. **ebook**

Cawelti, John G. "Chapter One." *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976. pp 5-36.

Palmer, Jerry. "Ideology and Narrative"; "Hegemony and Subject Position"; "Genre." *Potboilers: Methods, Concepts and Case Studies in Popular Fiction*. New York,

NY: Routledge, 1991. pp 89-129.

Jameson, Frederic. "Magical Narratives: On the Dialectical Use of Genre Criticism." *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981. pp. 103-150.

Radway, Janice. "Language and Narrative Discourse"; "The Ideal Romance." *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984. 119-156; 186-208.

Dávila, Arlene M. "The Politics of Latino Spin." *Latino Spin: Public Image and the Whitewashing of Race*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2008. pp 25-96

Hedrick, Tace. "Genre and the Romance Industry." *Chica Lit: Popular Fiction and Americanization in the Twenty-First Century*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015. 27-58. **ebook**

Gill, Rosalind and Herdieckerhoff, Elena "Rewriting The Romance?" *Feminist Media Studies*. Vol. 6 no. 4, 2006, pp 487-504.

hooks, bell. "Romance: Sweet Love." *All About Love: New Visions*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2001. 169-188.

Course Goals: In this course we will be reading genre and feminist theory, criticism, and popular fiction in an effort to see how feminism has been taken up and adapted by popular-culture genres such as speculative fiction, romance, and the detective/mystery novel. If we have time, we will watch a couple of movies. We will also be discussing possible differences and similarities in novels whose main characters (and authors) are white, of color, straight or queer.

T=long day; Th=short day

August

Week One

T 22 Course Goals: Feminism, Genre Fiction, and Power
Th 24 **Online, see above:** Frye, "Oppression" (**Study Questions**); Marx on Ideology

Week Two

T 29 **Online, see above:** Gramsci, "Hegemony"
Th 31 **Course Reserves:**
Cawelti, John G. "Chapter One." **all students**

September

Week Three

T 5 **Course Reserves:**
hooks, "Sweet Love"; Radway, "The Ideal Romance"; "Language and Narrative Discourse" **all students, graduate student presentation**
Th 7 **Undergraduates: Paper #1 Topics**

Discussion

Week Four

T 12 *Fifty Shades of Grey* through Chapter 14
hooks “A Feminist Sexual Ethic” *Feminism*
Th 14 *Fifty Shades of Grey* Finish
Graduate student proposal DUE

Week Five

T 19 **Course Reserves:**
Palmer, Jerry “Ideology and Narrative”; “Hegemony and Subject
Position”; “Genre” **all students, graduate student presentation**
Th 21 **Discussion**

Week Six

T 26 *A Lady*
Th 28 *A Lady*

October

Week Seven

T 3 **Course Reserves:**
Jameson, Frederic. “Magical Narratives: On the Dialectical Use of Genre
Criticism.” **All students, graduate student presentation**
Th 5 **Discussion**

Week Eight

T 10 *The Price of Salt*
Th 12 *The Price of Salt*
Paper #1 DUE Undergraduates
Paper #2 Topics Undergraduates

Week Nine

T 17 **Course Reserves:**
Berlant, Lauren. “Chapter One: Cruel Optimism” **all students, graduate
student presentation**
Gill, Rosalind and Herdieckerhoff, Elena “Rewriting The Romance?” **all
students**
Th 19 **Discussion**

Week Ten

T 24 *Dirty Girls Social Club*
Hedrick, Tace. “Genre and the Romance Industry”; Dávila, Arlene M.
“The Politics of Latino Spin.”
Th 26 *Dirty Girls Social Club*

Week Eleven

T 31 *Blanche on the Lam*
hooks “Race and Gender,” “Women at Work,” *Feminism*

November

Th 2 *Blanche on the Lam*

Week Twelve

T 7 *The Handmaid’s Tale*

Th 9 *The Handmaid’s Tale*

Week Thirteen

T 14 *Bloodchild* “Bloodchild”; “The Evening”; “Near of Kin”
Course Reserves: Butler, “We Keep Playing the Same Record”;
Bollinger, “Symbiogenesis, Selfhood, and Science Fiction” **all students**
Th 16 *Bloodchild* “Speech Sounds”

Week Fourteen

T 21 **TBA**

Th 23 **Thanksgiving**

Week Fifteen

T 28 **TBA**

Th 30 **Paper #2 Due**

December**Week Sixteen**

T 5 **Last Class TBA**

Undergraduate Assignments: Two 7-10 page papers and reading quizzes; and some grammar and style quizzes are possible. You are responsible for reading and understanding all assignments, whether we discuss them in class or not. This is non-negotiable. If you have a question about something we have not discussed in class, you need to ask me to discuss it with you, preferably during office hours.

Graduate Assignments: One 8-page presentation; one final 15-20 page paper (not including bibliography), and reading quizzes; and some grammar and style quizzes are possible.

Reading Quizzes: The reading/style/grammar quizzes will consist of five questions, which are graded on a pass-fail basis. Two or more wrong is a “fail.” Each failing grade will subtract .25 points from your end-of-semester score.

Study Questions: I will provide the study questions. You are required to turn in answers, though they will not be graded. However, each set of answers not turned in will subtract one point from your end-of-semester score.

Structure and goal of the undergraduate papers: The point of these papers is for me to see how well you are learning to think critically, and to work with the ideas, terms, and concepts we discuss in class or that you find on your own. Use your **own ideas**, not just what we have said in class. You'll be required to use your **pocket style manual**.

The papers must be at least **7 full** pages long, not including your bibliography. There must be a clear introduction (1), a focused body of your argument/interpretation (3), and a clear summing-up of your conclusion. **Quotes are required**.

In terms of style, each paper must:

- go to the **bottom** of page number 7 at least (or you will lose **two points**)
- be done correctly in **Modern Language Association (MLA) Style**. If you are uncertain about what this means, go to “MLA Style” on <https://owl.english.purdue.edu>
- have a **Works Cited** page,
- have a **title page** with a catchy title,
- be numbered on every page **except** page number one,
- be double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman,
- **no** extra spaces between paragraphs,
- have 1-inch margins on all sides.

Much of the above is a matter of formatting on the computer. If you don't know how to do this, ask in class. We will discuss various required aspects of **MLA** style throughout the course, but here are the main requirements. You must know how to properly:

- cite references and page numbers in parenthetical style
- use quotation marks and punctuation properly
- cite references in the **Works Cited** page.

CLASS POLICIES

Students with disabilities: Please consult with me as soon as possible so that I can make appropriate accommodation for you.

Electronics in the Classroom: Please turn off all computers, Bluetooth and handheld devices, and cell phones. I do not allow the use of computers in the classroom unless the student has a medical reason to take notes via computer.

Class Deportment: You are now adults and must be expected to behave as such. However, to remind everyone:

- If you are more than 15 minutes late, do not come to class. Coming in this late is hugely disruptive.
- If you are too tired or sick to pay attention in class, please do not come.
- Do not read other material in class—such as anything on your phone.
- If you cannot come prepared for class discussion, please do not come.

Late Policy: For every 3 times that you are late 10 minutes or more to class, I will deduct two points from your total score at the end of the semester.

Absences: Because we have one 3-hour class per week, I allow two unexcused absences. **Each unexcused absence** after the first two will result in the **loss of two points** from your total end-of-semester score.

Late Papers: Late papers will not be accepted unless you have a legitimate (for example, doctor's) excuse.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism means using someone else's work as your own, and not acknowledging that it is your own; it's a form of stealing. This means that when writing a paper, **your quotes and paraphrases from other sources which are not your own must be referenced**, that is, you must say what your source is and tell the reader how to find it; if not, you have plagiarized. A plagiarized paper will get an automatic F.

Grading:

Grading is done on a point scale. Each assignment will be worth a possible 11 points (an A). Always make sure that you check the grading scale below; a 7 or 8, for example, does NOT mean a failing grade.

A= excellent; unusually outstanding; good writing (**one or less writing errors per page**) and original thinking: that is, thinking critically beyond what you have read and discussed in class. You use reading and class discussion, as well as other sources if needed, to back up your ideas so that you are not just giving an opinion but an informed argument. You think of yourself as a writer interested in her ideas and interested in sharing them.

B= above average; only a few (**on average, two or so per page**) writing errors, a standard (not original) argument for the subject, though you should work harder on contributing your own ideas about the subject.

C= average based on general class performance; several writing errors (**on average, 3-4 per page**); you understand the subject but you tend to repeat and/or merely summarize what has already been said in the readings or in class discussion.

D= below average; you don't understand the subject and/or you have enough writing errors that your argument cannot be followed.

F= incomplete or failing to meet the requirements of the assignment

Two 7-10 page papers: 24 points @ 12 points each

24 points maximum end-of-semester score:

	<u>GP</u>	<u>Points Per Paper</u>	<u>Final Grade</u>
A	4	12	24-23
A-	3.67	11	22-21
B+	3.33	10	20-19
B	3	9	18-17
B-	2.67	8	16-15
C+	2.33	7	14-13
C	2	6	12-11
C-	1.67	5	10-9
D	1	4	8

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSIGNMENT:

Paper Presentation: Please choose one particular idea or significant figure from your reading for your day on which to present in class. Please have copies of your 8-page presentation to pass out to the class and professor, so we can read along. Treat this presentation as you would a presentation at a conference: the writing goes together, the ideas are clear, but it doesn't necessarily have to be completely finished: you welcome any questions or comments.

Proposal: Paste <http://theprofessorisin.com/2011/07/12/how-today-how-to-write-a-paper-abstract/> into your browser if you need help in writing a proposal, or Google "how to write a graduate student paper proposal."

Here's what will net you the best paper proposal, one which is focused yet with some room to think **critically** about how representations of gender, race, and sexuality circulate in the accordance of privilege, knowledge, and power. Make your work as focused and "small" as possible: that is, take a small, nicely-bounded object, set of texts, set of images, etc. and instead of going wide, go deep, at the same time answering the "so what" question by giving your reader an interpretation, a close reading, a reason why they should be interested in what you're discussing. Then, when you write, make your work as "thick" as possible by digging down into and around your research question or interest.

Final Paper: You should begin to think about these papers right away; if you see a text, set of images, artist, photo or painting (yes, you could write on one (or two) photos or painting, if your thesis is complex enough) which you think you might write about on this syllabus, "read" (about) it ahead of time so you can be thinking about it. I would prefer it if the final paper had something to do with your own final PhD project, but that is not a requirement. What is a requirement is that you have **at least** one to two references for each page you write; for example, I don't want to see a 20-page paper with only 10 references in the Bibliography. **IMPORTANT NOTE: If you take an incomplete, you will not be able to receive an A for your paper.**

STUDY QUESTIONS

Marilyn Frye, "Oppression"

1. Say in your own words what you think Frye means when she talks about "double binds" being part of an oppressive structure. Give an example you think fits with this idea.
2. Frye gives as an example of structural oppression the image of the birdcage. Explain her example in your own words, including her discussion of the microscopic vs. the macroscopic viewpoint. Why call this idea of oppression "structural"?

