...it was delightful to read a man’s writing again....It indicated such freedom of mind, such liberty of person, such confidence in himself....but after reading a chapter or two a shadow seemed to lie across the page. It was a straight dark bar, a shadow shaped something like the letter 'I.' One began dodging this way and that to catch a glimpse of the landscape behind it. Whether that was indeed a tree or a woman walking I was not quite sure. Back one was always hailed to the letter 'I.' (Virginia Woolf, Room of One's Own, p. 95).

In this course we will investigate the presence (or absence) of the letter "I" in six novels by Canadian women. If women are traditionally cast as objects, as part of the background, then how can they begin to foreground their experience and desire, and resist patriarchal definitions? How do these six novelists envision (and write) female subjectivity? Do they attempt to imitate the "freedom of mind" brandished by Woolf's male writer, or do they speak in a voice of their own? In our attempt to answer these questions, we will begin with more traditional novels, and move toward experimental texts. We will pay particular attention to themes of oppression and resistance, and to the roles of style and language in each of the six novels.

REQUIRED READING

Atwood, Margaret, Lady Oracle. Seal Book.
Laurence, Margaret, The Diviners. McClelland.
Hebert, Anne, Kamouraska. New Press Canadian Classics.
Thomas, Audrey, Mrs. Blood. Talon Books.

In addition, students will be required to read supplementary critical material. (on reserve in Library)

ASSIGNMENTS

15% Response Paper (5 pages)
40% Essay (15-20 pages)
15% Class Presentation and Participation
30% Scheduled Final Exam

Prerequisites: 60 credit hours

STUDENTS MAY APPLY TO THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT TO HAVE WS 303-3 DESIGNATED AS CREDIT TOWARD THE ENGLISH MAJOR REQUIREMENT.