WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM

SPRING 1992

CHERI RAUSER
Lec. Thur. 8:30-10:20
Tut. Thur. 10:30-11:20

W.S. 203-3

FEMALE ROLES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

This course will analyze novels in an interdisciplinary investigation of the definitions of self/other as derived from sex roles. We will examine the portrayal of women in novels, while keeping in mind the authorial and historical context in which the piece was written. Sex-roles are acquired and maintained by culturally-specific psychological mechanisms that both encourage women to acquire 'appropriate' sex-roles and seek to perpetually confine them within those definitions. The reproduction of contemporary cultures includes the reproduction of women into these gendered role(s).

While using novels as its primary source, this course will approach the topic from an interdisciplinary perspective, complementing the literary sources with material from psychology, sociology, history, political theory and popular culture. The inclusion of supplementary readings from these disciplines will facilitate an investigation of contemporary issues of concern to many women. Those issues include mothering, ethnic, race and class relations, violence against women, health, aging, and sexual orientation.

REQUIRED READING

Campbell, Maria. *Halfbreed*, 1973 (autobiography)
Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*, 1989
Markandaya, Kamala. *Nectar in a Sieve*, 1956
Ostenso, Martha. *Wild Geese*, 1925
Weldon, Fay. *Praxis*
Winterson, Jeanette. *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*, 1985

RECOMMENDED READING

Park, Christine and Caroline Heaton (eds.) *Close Company: Stories of Mothers and Daughters*, (short stories)

SUPPLEMENTARY AND RECOMMENDED READINGS ON RESERVE IN THE LIBRARY

COURSE STRUCTURE

The first class(es) will briefly look at sociological, psychological, anthropological, historical and biological research and theory that contribute to our understanding of sex-role psychology.
Subsequent lectures, tutorials and supplementary readings will provide material helpful in understanding the social and psychological mechanisms that define and perpetuate sex roles for women. These lectures and readings are meant to inform the students' understanding of the issues raised and/or implied by their reading of the main texts: the novels.

ASSIGNMENTS

25% Final Exam (take-home)
30% Seminar Presentation
10% Class Participation and Attendance
35% Paper

Final Exam - Take Home (25% of final mark)
Choose one of three questions. Two to four pages maximum.

Seminar Presentations (30% of final mark--15% oral and 15% written)
Students will make at least one short seminar presentation (10 to 15 minutes) on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor. Presentations will consist of oral and written components. The oral component will be presented one week, with the written version handed in the next. Two pages minimum.

Class Participation and Attendance (10% of final mark)
General attendance and participation.

Paper (35% of final mark)
A short (9-12 pages maximum) paper on a topic of the student's choice. The topic must be discussed with the instructor before work is done. The purpose of the paper is not to survey a large amount of material in a research project, but rather to think about and work with a small amount of information critically. The paper could consist of a critical book review of one of the course readings, a literary analysis, a social scientific study, or a discussion paper focusing on one or more of the course topics and utilizing several sources from the supplementary reading list.

Prerequisite: Women's Studies 100 (may be taken concurrently)

THIS COURSE MAY BE APPLIED TO THE CERTIFICATE IN LIBERAL ARTS

THIS COURSE MAY BE USED AS AN ELECTIVE FOR THE CERTIFICATE IN FAMILY STUDIES

TUTORIALS WILL BE HELD DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASSES