WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM

SUMMER 1992
Harbour Centre/Daytime

W.S. 303-3
WOMEN AND CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN LITERATURE

"...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

25% 1st Essay (5-10 pages)
35% 2nd Essay (10-15 pages)
15% Class Presentation
25% Scheduled Final Exam

THE THEORY: REQUIRED READINGS

Berger, John, Ways of Seeing (Chapter 3)


Blau DuPlessis, Rachel, selections from Writing Beyond the Ending

de Beauvoir, Simone, selections from *The Second Sex*

Gilbert, Sandra, and Susan Gubar, "The Queen's Looking Glass," *The Madwoman in the Attic*


Moi, Toril, "Introduction: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" *Sexual/Textual Politics*

Woolf, Virginia, selections from *A Room of One's Own* and *Women and Writing* ed. Michele Barrett.

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