WS 320-4: At the Mouth: Unbridled Women Narrators
An Apprenticing and Writing Course with Betsy Warland

The course will involve lectures, discussions, and in-class writing exercises that focus on a different writing concept each week related to the topic of the unbridled women narrator. Examples of these concepts will be: identifying and maintaining the narrative’s specific state of consciousness; establishing depth of field in the narrative; creating an embodied narrator; “inscribing” or cueing the unspeakable; identifying and subverting one’s own coma story narrative template; working with memory as metaphor; and creating the idiosyncratic narrative formal structure such narrators each require.

In this course we will be engaging with four unbridled women narrators in: *The Autobiography of My Mother*, a novel by Jamaica Kincaid; *West With the Night*, a nonfiction book by Beryl Markham; *Masque*, a long poem for multiple voices by Rachel Zolf; and *Bloodroot – Tracing the Untelling of Motherloss*, a lyric prose memoir by Betsy Warland.

Students will select one of these books/authors to apprentice with throughout the course. Apprenticing writing assignments will include: a five page piece of their own that emulates their author’s style; a three page paper in which they investigate their book’s context via some form of historical documentation; a ten page faux face-to-face “interview” (or print via faux email or letter exchanges) "with" their author in which they inquire about their author’s formal strategies and stance; a ten page “spin-off” narrative piece of their writing in which they establish their own unbridled woman narrator’s world.

**Required Readings: (select one book)**


**Assignments and Grading:**

- Emulation assignment 10%
- Context paper 10%
- Interview assignment 20%
- Spin-off assignment 30%
- In-class writing exercises (turned in and graded) 10%
- Participation/discussion 20%

**Prerequisite for WS 320:** 60 credit hours.

The Department of Women’s Studies encourages clarity of thought and expression and good writing. Students will be evaluated on these skills in all courses given by the Department.