

ENGL 0631-501 (11302)
Special Studies in American Literature:
American Women Writers, 1770-1920--
Personal and Public Voices in Action
Bates 218, Tuesdays, 6:30-9:15

Welcome!

Dr. Beth Ann Rothermel

- Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-3:00 and 5:45-6:15; Thursdays, 2:00-3:00; and by appointment, Bates 103, 572-5336
- E-mail: brothermel@wsc.ma.edu (you may usually expect to receive a reply to an e-mail within 24 hours of the time you send it during the work week; e-mails received over the weekend may not receive replies until the beginning of the week)
- Home Page Address: <http://www.wsc.ma.edu/brothermel>

Required Texts and Supplies (please purchase the correct editions):

- *Milcah Martha Moore's Book: A Commonplace Book of Early American Literature*. Ed. Catherine La Courreye Blecki and Karin A. Wulf. Univ. Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1997.
- *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women*. Ed. Shirley Wilson Logan. Carbondale: Southern IL U P, 1995.
- *Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: An Anthology*. Ed. Karen Kilcup. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1997.
- *The Awakening, An Authoritative Text Biographical and Historical Contexts Criticism (A Norton Critical Edition)* (Paperback), by Kate Chopin.
- *The House of Mirth, Authoritative Text Backgrounds and Contexts Criticism (A Norton Critical Edition)* (Paperback), by Edith Wharton.
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston. I ordered the HarperPerennial edition.

Brief Course Description:

This course examines works of poetry, fiction, drama, and oratory produced by women from 1770-1920, a period that begins with the rise of Republican Womanhood and ends with the Roaring Twenties. In particular, we will examine the evolution of first-wave feminist thinking during this period, considering how the complex social and cultural lives of women shaped their thinking and gave rise to imaginative and socially significant

discourse. We will also consider the intersecting nature of the public and private spaces out of which this varied discourse grew.

Historian Glenna Matthews: "I would not claim that there is any one period when 'public woman' definitively achieved a positive connotation, nor for that matter do I think that at the current time we see real symmetry between public men and public women. What I do think is this: cumulatively, the actions of many courageous pioneers have served to open up new possibilities for public women, both in the real world and in the realm of the imagination" (5).

The Rise of Public Woman: Woman's Power and Woman's Place in the United States 1630-1970. Published in 1992 by Oxford University Press.

Assignments: This course requires you to write 6-8 short response papers (weekly 1-2 page pieces reflecting on the reading at hand); a summary and review of a scholarly article with presentation/discussion; an annotated bibliography or an exploratory essay (7-9 sources); and a final documented literary argument (15-20 pages).

Grading: Your final grade will be based on the following:

- * Response Papers: 200
- * Research Review: 150
- * Presentation: 100
- * Annotated Bibliography or Exploratory Essay: 100
- * Documented Argument: 350
- * Participation: 100

Total: 1000 points

Criteria for successful participation are as follows:

For a checkplus, the student will make frequent contributions to discussions several times per class meeting in a way that forwards the discussion effectively (helping to make the discussion more collaborative or constructive; encouraging others to participate by asking provocative questions or noting arguments or disagreements; listening to what others say and drawing on it for further comments); the student will have no more than one absence, and show excellent preparedness for class.

For a check, the student will make regular contributions (at least a couple of times per class meeting) to discussion in a way that forwards the discussion effectively; the student will have no more than two absences; the student will usually show preparedness for class (be up to date on readings).

Attendance: This class is a seminar involving discussion and collaborative learning, so attendance is vital. Your success as well as the success of the course depends upon your regular participation. Students with more than two absences will likely be asked to withdraw from the course.

When I compute grades at the end of the semester, numbers will correspond to the following letters (i.e., 925 and above equals A, 900-924 equals A-):

- * A = 925
- * A- = 900
- * B+ = 875
- * B = 825
- * B- = 800
- * C+ = 775
- * C = 725
- * C- = 700
- * D+ = 675
- * D = 625
- * F = 624 and below
- * Checkplus = 93
- * Check = 80
- * Checkminus = 67

Scholastic Dishonesty: Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Plagiarism may lead to failure for the course and/or suspension from the college. All cases will be reported to the Graduate Dean.

Tentative Course Schedule--Subject to Change:

January 16: Welcome and introductions. Generating guiding questions and gauging our collective knowledge.

Reading for Jan 23: *Milcah Martha Moore's Book: A Commonplace Book of Early American Literature*. Selections by Susanna Wright, Hannah Griffitts, and Elizabeth Fergusson, along with a few other pieces. Read the preface at the beginning of the book and from p. 107 on, items 1-13, 18-26, 37-47, 58, 63, 69, 77, 80-91, 96-100, 115-117, 124, and appendix p. 319-320. You are welcome to read the chapters by Wulf and Blecki.

January 23: Moore's Book. The eighteenth-century context: Poetry and rhetoric--private and public spheres.

Reading for Jan 30: Online, read Mercy Otis Warren's play *The Group* at <http://www.samizdat.com/warren/>. Read preface and selected poems by Phillis Wheatley (poems TBA) at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~rbear/wheatley.html#1>.

In *Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: An Anthology* read Native American myths, 1-6, Eliza Leslie, pp. 21-24, and Lydia Maria Child, 68-75.

January 30: Warren and Wheatley. Republicanism and women's consciousness. The advice book.

Reading for Feb 6: *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women*. Read introduction, and then works by Stewart, Truth, and Harper, pp. xi-46. Also, in *Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: An Anthology* read Old Elizabeth, pp. 14-20 and Rebecca Cox Jackson, pp. 50-57.

Feb 6: African American women's oratory and spiritual writings.

Reading for Feb 13: In *Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: An Anthology* read poetry by Frances Sargent Osgood, Frances Harper, Alice Cary, and Lucy Larcom. Pages TBA.

Feb 13: Nineteenth-century poetry by American women. Shifting definitions/experiences of the private sphere.

Reading for Feb 27 (no class on the 20th as Tuesday will keep a Monday schedule): In *Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: An Anthology* read Rose Terry Cooke, Emily Dickinson, Helen Hunt Jackson, Sarah Morgan Bryant Piatt, and E. Pauline Johnson. Pages TBA.

Feb 27: Nineteenth-century poetry.

Reading for March 6: In *Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: An Anthology* read Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Harriet Spofford, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary Wilkins Freeman, Pauline Hopkins, Sui Sin Far, and Maria Cristina Mena. Pages TBA.

March 6: Trends in nineteenth-century fiction by American women writers.

Reading for March 20 (no class on March 13): Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*.

March 20: Novels by American women writers. Kate Chopin.

Reading for March 27: Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*.

March 27: Edith Wharton.

Reading for April 3: Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

April 3: Zora Neale Hurston.

Reading for April 10: In *Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: An Anthology* read samples of women's journalism, Fanny Fern, Rebecca Harding Davis, E. Pauline Johnson, Zitkala-Sa. In *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women* read Anna Julia Haywood Cooper and Ida B. Wells. Pages TBA. Also due, a proposal for final documented argument.

April 10: Journalism and oratory by American women writers of the late nineteenth-century.

Reading for April 17: Reading TBA. Working on annotated bibliography or exploratory essay, due April 24.

April 17: TBA.

Reading for April 24: TBA. Working on annotated bibliography or exploratory essay, due April 24.

April 24: Tentative workshop and conferences.

For May 1: Initial draft of documented argument. Prepare brief informal inquiry presentation of work in progress.

May 1: Final class with brief inquiry presentations.

Final documented essay due in my office by 5 pm Tuesday, May 8.