Spring 1-15-2014

ENG 3903-001: Women, Literature, and Language

Daiva Markelis
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2014

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2014/88

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2014 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spring 2014 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.
Purpose of the Course
The emphasis in this course will be on memoirs written by women in English during the past fifty or so years. The purpose is to enable you to explore the various themes that women writers of the memoir have undertaken as well as the different forms and stylistic devices they have utilized in their writing.

Goals of the Course
By the end of the semester, you will be better able to do the following:
1. Perceive how the memoir fits into the larger framework of autobiographical writing
2. Understand the role that gender plays in the writing of memoir
3. Examine how race, class, and ethnicity can influence a memoir's theme and tone
4. Explore how memoirists use fictional techniques to write about personal events
5. Investigate the blurring of boundaries between fiction and creative nonfiction
6. Understand the various ethical issues involved in the writing of memoir

Books
SMASHED, Koren Zailckas
I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS, Maya Angelou
A PIECE OF CAKE, Cupcake Brown
THE LIARS CLUB, Mary Karr
AN AMERICAN CHILDHOOD, Annie Dillard
DON'T LET'S GO TO THE DOGS TONIGHT, Alexandra Fuller
READING LOLITA IN TEHRAN, Azar Nafisi
THE WOMAN WARRIOR, Maxine Hong Kingston

Requirements
Write three papers. Two will be shorter papers, from 4-5 pages; the third will be longer, from 7 to 10 pages, and will contain outside sources. One of the shorter papers can be a personal essay dealing with a specific theme or time period of your life. We will discuss this option in class. There will also be a short final exam. All papers must be turned in on the due date at the beginning of class.

Grade Breakdown
Essay #1 15%
Essay #2 20%
Final Paper 35%
Final Exam 10%
Participation 20%
**Attendance/Participation**

Many of the ideas used in your essays will be generated in class discussions or in-class writing, which is why it is very important that you come to each class session. I realize, however, that emergencies do occur. Excused absences are those outlined in the student catalogue: “illness, emergency, or university activity.” Documentation is required for all excused absences. Unexcused absences are pretty much all others—oversleeping, hangovers, finishing papers for other classes, out-of-town trips “because I’m homesick.” More than two unexcused absences may lower your attendance/participation grade to an E.

NOTE: Participating in class means being prepared to discuss the day’s material. I have a finely honed BS meter, so comments such as “Sometimes I feel sad, like the author of Smashed” will not cut it. There may be occasional pop quizzes or in-class writing assignments; these will count towards your participation grade and cannot be made up.

**Class Disruption:**

I find people who nap or sleep in class to be disrespectful. If you are tired, feel free to get up and do some stretches. Bring coffee or soda if you like. People who interrupt one another are also disrespectful. If you are rude, I will ask you to leave class. ALL CELLPHONES MUST BE TURNED OFF BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.

**Formatting of Essays**

All assignments must be typed and double-spaced. No extra spaces in between paragraphs. Please use New York Times pt. 12 as your font. No ink other than black. At the top left corner of the first page, type your name, the assignment name or number, and the date you are submitting the assignment to me. The title of your paper should follow MLA formatting: Do NOT bold, underline, or put your title in italics. So, the top of your paper should look something like this:

Betty Smith  
Assignment #2  
September 10, 2013

The Importance of Landscape in Mary Karr’s *The Liar’s Club*

**Plagiarism: No One Likes a Cheater**

I adhere strictly to the English Department policy on plagiarism: Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Plagiarism is defined as “The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language.) Be especially careful regarding online sources. ANYTHING taken from the internet and used in a paper must be cited.
Using the Writing Center
I encourage you to use the EIU Writing Center located at 3110 Coleman Hall if you are having problems with your writing.

THIS SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE AT ANY TIME ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS AND DEMANDS OF THE CLASS. MAKE SURE YOU ALWAYS BRING IT WITH YOU FOR MODIFICATION.

**January**
- **Week #1**
  - 14 Course Introduction/In-class writing
  - 16 TBA
- **Week #2**
  - 21 Smashed, xi-134
  - 23 Smashed, 135-247
- **Week #3**
  - 28 Smashed, 247-the end
  - 30 The Liar's Club, 1-68

**February**
- **Week #4**
  - 4 The Liar's Club, 69-139
  - 6 The Liar's Club, 140-197
- **Week #5**
  - 11 The Liar's Club, 198-247
  - 13 The Liar's Club, 248-320
- **Week #6**
  - 18 Woman Warrior, "No Name Woman" and "White Tiger"
  - 20 Woman Warrior, "Shaman"
- **Week #7**
  - 25 Woman Warrior, "At the Western Palace"
  - 27 Woman Warrior, "A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe"
  - **PAPER 1# DUE**

**March**
- **Week #8**
  - 4 A Piece of Cake, 1-113
  - 6 A Piece of Cake, 114-200
- **SPRING BREAK**
- **Week #9**
  - 18 A Piece of Cake, 201-338
  - 20 A Piece of Cake, 339-the end
- **Week #10**
  - 25 I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, 1-70
  - 27 I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, 71-136
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Week #11</td>
<td>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, 137-208</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, 209-289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week #12</td>
<td>Don’t Lets Go to the Dogs Tonight, 1-84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t Lets Go to the Dogs Tonight, 85-148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week #13</td>
<td>Don’t Lets Go to the Dogs Tonight, 149-228</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t Lets Go to the Dogs Tonight, 229-the end</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week #14</td>
<td>An American Childhood, (selected chapters)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>An American Childhood (selected chapters)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week #15</td>
<td>Reading Lolita in Tehran (selected chapters)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reading Lolita in Tehran (selected chapters)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>