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ENG 4300-001: Senior Seminar: Language and Gender

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**ENGLISH 4300--Senior Seminar: Language and Gender**

Dr. Buck, Associate Professor  
Office: Coleman Hall 339E (3040)  
Telephone: Office: 581-5012 (please leave a message if I'm not there)  
Mailbox: English Dept Office, Room 308 Coleman  
Office Hours: 9:00-9:30 MWF and by appointment

**Course Objective**  
In this course, we will investigate how language reflects cultural assumptions about the changing roles of men and women in contemporary society. The following questions will be central to the course:  
1) How does language reveal and perpetuate social attitudes?  
2) What kinds of power and dominance can we identify, and what role does language play in empowerment or marginalization?  
Students will be introduced to different types of linguistic analyses of language used by and about women and men. Furthermore, students will be guided through the research process of data collection and textual analysis. The course will be in seminar format: aside from some introductory background lectures, the semester will be arranged around student-directed discussions of assigned readings.

**Textbooks**  
--Sara Mills, *Feminist Stylistics* (available at TRS; this textbook is also on Reserve in the library)  
--Reading Packet at Copy X, MLK Union (required). Also on Reserve at Booth Library.

**Course Evaluation**  
Grade for the course will be based on 3 paper and folder projects. You will also be required to informally present readings to the class since this is a seminar. You will not be graded on these presentations, but failure to come to class prepared adequately for 3 presentations will result in a lowering of the final grade by one grade. Your final grade will consist of the following weighted components:  
- Paper Project I--33%  
- Paper Project II--33%  
- Paper Project III--33%  
Grading scale in this class is always 100-90% = A; 89-80% = B; 79-70% = C; 69-60% = D; below 60% = F.

**Paper Projects**  
You will be given a detailed description of the requirements and expectations of these projects at the beginning of each unit. We will have much class discussion while working on these papers in process to help you with your thinking. Always bring in questions you have.

**Writing Folders**  
You will need to purchase a manilla folder for this class. That is where you will be keeping your materials for each unit. Please always bring your folders to class throughout the unit.

During the unit, you should keep all your work in process in the folder (drafts, interview and research notes, reader feedback, self-evaluations, in-class writing, etc.). At the end of each unit, you will turn everything in to me (your folder and final revised paper). See attached sheet for dates.

Please do NOT include handouts I give you or notes you take from lectures or discussions in class; you should keep all that for yourself in another notebook.

**Presentations of Readings**  
Since this is a seminar, students will carry the discussion of the readings. You should always read carefully and take notes as you read so that you are prepared for class discussion.  
1) Be able to summarize the main points and arguments of the text;  
2) Be prepared with a personal response, comment, critique of the reading;  
3) Bring a list of important terms and their definitions that come out of the reading;  
4) Be ready to discuss the importance of the reading in relation to other texts in your reading history (make connections, in other words, with other classes, books, articles, films, knowledge, you have been exposed to). You should come to class with detailed notes that you have taken from the readings. Coming to class unprepared and with no notes will result in a lowering of your final grade. Since this is a seminar, you will also be doing
informal sharing of your paper project results with the rest of the class.

**Active Attendance**

You are expected to attend every class as scheduled because teaching/learning requires dialogue and without you we can have no dialogue. Our class work is a crucial part of this course; you will be required, too, to do individual and group work in class. Come to class ready to articulate your knowledge and formulate your questions for the class.

An absence policy is important 1) so that I can be equitable to all members of the class and 2) so that you will be successful in this class. Please note that more than five unexcused absences in this course is grounds for failing this course.

Definition of an excused absence:
1. University obligation, in which case you will need to present me in advance with a letter explaining the purpose and date of your upcoming absence.
2. Emergency or medical illness, in which case you will need to call my voice mail at 581-5012 BEFORE class begins on the day of your absence. Notifying me after class begins will not be considered excused.
--If you must miss class, I will expect you to find out from someone in the class what you've missed so that you'll be prepared for the next class meeting. Handouts will only be distributed once; it is your responsibility to photocopy assignments from another student if you are absent.

**Tardiness**

--Please be on time for class; habitual tardiness is disruptive and disrespectful of other class members. I will be taking roll each morning as soon as class begins. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to notify me after class so that I take your name off the absence sheet. If you fail to notify me immediately after class on the day you are late, you will be recorded as absent.

**Late Assignments**

All written assignments must be submitted when due; no late assignments will be accepted. Papers are due when class begins on the designated dates. Make-up work will be permitted for excused absences only.

**Typing and Presentation**

All formal papers must be typed (double-spaced) in MLA format.

**Where to Go For Help with this Course**

1. Come to see me in my office in 3040 Coleman Hall during my office hours and by appointment.
2. Go to the Writing Center, CH 3110, where graduate students can help you with planning, drafting, revising your papers. Their phone number is 581-5929.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

**Plagiarism**

The English Department requires that instructors quote to all students the university's policy on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--'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)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of NC for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.
This schedule should be used as a guideline, but we are likely to make changes as we go along depending on the needs of the class. Mills as author refers to your textbook. All other articles are in your reading packet.

Course Readings for English 4300
Language and Gender--Senior Seminar

UNIT I: LANGUAGE AND FEMINISM

Week One
Introduction to the course
Language and Feminism: Historical Contexts
2. Hogeland, "Fear of Feminism: Why Young Women Get the Willies."
4. Adrienne Rich, "Taking Women Students Seriously"

Week Two
5. Cameron, "Why is Language a Feminist Issue?"

INTRODUCTION TO PRIMARY RESEARCH
SET UP INTERVIEWS

JAN 18 QUIZ #1 (IN-CLASS FOLDER WRITING)

Week Three
Gender Bias and the Lexicon: Stereotypes and Categorizations--Part I
7. Mills
   --Generic Pronouns, pp. 87-88
   --Generic Nouns, pp. 89-93
   --Women as Marked Term, pp. 93-95
   --Effects of Sexist Language, p. 95
9. Mills, pp. 102-127
   --Naming--what we call things
   --Semantic derogation of women
   --Endearments and diminutives
   --Euphemism and taboo
   --Lexical gaps for female experience
   --Dictionaries, gatekeepers, strategies

WRITE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
CONDUCT INTERVIEWS
COLLECT DATA

Jan 21 Holiday

Week Four
Gender Bias and the Lexicon--Stereotypes and Categorizations--Part II
11. Proverbs, Jokes, Presuppositions, Mills, pp. 128-158
12. Gender Free Writing Guidelines, Mills, pp. 96-102

FEB 1--BRING IN INTERVIEW NOTES TO PRESENT TO CLASS. Keep interview research notes in folder.
Weeks Five and Six
DOCUMENTATION AND DRAFTING
FEB 6--PAPER I DUE
PRE-WRITING TUTORIALS
FEB 15--PAPER I REVISED DUE

UNIT II: GENDER POSITIONING IN READING AND WRITING
Weeks Seven and Eight
14. Mills, pp. 44-65
15. Robinson, "Treason our Text"
16. Kolodny, "Dancing Through the Minefield"
17. Faderman, "What is Lesbian Literature"
18. Mills, 66-79

MARCH 1--QUIZ #2--IN-CLASS FOLDER WRITING

Week Nine
PAPER II AND FOLDER DUE

Week Ten: Spring Break

UNIT III: ANALYZING GENDERED CONVERSATION AND LITERARY DIALOGUE
Week Eleven
Conversations and Speech: The Deficit Model
20. Robin Lakoff, Extract from Language and Woman's Place.
22. Graddol and Swann, "Conversation: The Sexual Division of Labor."

Week Twelve
Conversations and Speech: The Cultural Difference Model
23. Deborah Tannen, "'Ill Explain it to You': Lecturing and Listening"
25. Deborah Cameron. "Rethinking Language and Gender Studies: Some Issues for the 1990s."

MARCH 29--QUIZ # 3--IN-CLASS FOLDER WRITING

Week Thirteen
Workshop--Analyzing Literary Dialogue
Modeling Selections from Short Fiction, Novels, Plays
Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"
Hemingway, "Cat in the Rain"

Week Fourteen
PRESENTATIONS OF YOUR SELECTED DIALOGUE AND ANALYSIS TO THE CLASS (Bring photocopies of text for the class)
DRAFTING WEEK

Week Fifteen
Paper III due
TUTORIALS

Week Sixteen
PAPER III REVISED AND FOLDER DUE