ENG 5009-001: American Women Regionalists

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English 5009: American Women Regionalists

Josephine Donovan's "Breaking the Silence: Local-Color Literature and Subjugated Knowledges" claims that local color literature, "which was dominated by women, records in one of its principal subtexts the clash between dominant, colonizing, mathematizing disciplines and the rural, eccentric culture Foucault saw as having counterhegemonic potential. Scores of stories concern marginal communities peopled by deviant, often witchlike women who live in predisciplinary peace with their animals in a green-world environment. At times the authors were sympathetic to the characters whose lives were being erased by the encroaching disciplines. At other times the authors seem to ally themselves with the 'progress,' as Cooke does in 'Miss Lucinda,' joining in the colonization of their characters" (229).

This course seeks to explore local color literatures, not only of New England women writers, but also of women from other regions, including the South, the Southwest, and the Midwest. The goal is to unearth the alternative knowledge grounded in these sometimes marginalized stories, to look beyond and beneath regionalism to reveal the subversiveness of the works of these American women regionalists. I hope you all will enjoy the journey as much as I.

Texts

- Fetterley's *American Women Regionalists 1850-1910: A Norton Anthology*
- Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!*
- Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok*
- Ellen Glasgow's *Barren Ground*
- Zora Neal Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
- Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs*
- Course Packet (Available at Copy X)
- A Novel of your own for presentation—chosen from the attached list of works or on your own (with my approval)

Course Requirements

- Reading Responses: Every week you will be required to bring to class a two page response to something that sparked your interest in the reading. The responses should be typed and should prompt discussion in class and with your peers. Your responses should not summarize the reading. They should each respond to the reading in some analytical, persuasive, and/or theoretical or critical way. I really want to know how you feel about the reading and how you would approach it, critique it, apply theory to it.
• Book Presentation: In pairs, each of you will present a work outside the list to broaden our perspective on the genre of local color or American women's regionalism. You may choose your work from books available in my office or in the library—with my approval. Your presentation should capture the essence of your work and then take some theoretical approach(es) to it, to demonstrate to the class best literary practices. Please feel free to use technology and other visual aids to keep our attention!

• Short Paper: Each of you will expand one of your responses into a short paper of about 5 pages, in which you grapple with the issues you bring up there. Choose a response that interests you and that you feel you could say more about and develop it.

• Conference Paper and Presentation: Even if we only present our papers to the rest of the class, I want each of you to have the opportunity to not only write a conference-length paper (10-12 pages) but also to present it to a real audience. Your paper should try to answer a theoretical question about one or more of the works we have read for class in the context of secondary sources found in the course packet and in the library.

Grades

Reading Responses: 300 Points
Book Presentations: 200 Points
Short Paper 200 Points
Conference Paper and Presentation: 300 Points

1000 Points Total

Course Policies

English Department Statement 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 own 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 assignment of 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."

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.
English 5009 (American Women Regionalists) Tentative Calendar (Subject to Change)

August
29  Introduction to course and to Federalist women's historical/regional fiction.

September
5   Hobomok and Hope Leslie excerpt (Response due)
12  Stowe, Cary, Cooke, and Thaxter from Norton (Response due)
19  Jewett, The Country of the Pointed Firs and selected stories. (Response due)
26  Murfree, Freeman, King, and Chopin from Norton (Response due)

October
3   Hurston, Their Eyes were Watching God (Response due)
10  Nelson, Sui Sin Far, Zitkala-Sa, and Austin from Norton (Response due)
17  Cather, O Pioneers! (Response due)
24  Packet readings (Paper I draft ideas due)
31  Packet readings (Paper I due) and film

November
7   Book Presentations (Response due on book read)
14  Book Presentations/Ellen Glasgow's Barren Ground (Response due on presentations)
21  Barren Ground
25-29—Thanksgiving Break, no school

December
5   History speaker. Conference Paper draft ideas due.
12  Conference Papers due and presented