ENG 4300-4390-002-098: Senior Seminar: Language and Gender

Buck

Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2006

Recommended Citation
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2006/136

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2006 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2006 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.
ENGLISH 4300--Senior Seminar: Language and Gender

Dr. Buck, Professor
Office: Coleman Hall Room 3040
Telephone: Office: 581-5012 (please leave a message if I'm not there)
Mailbox: English Dept Office, Room 3155 Coleman
Office Hours: 9:00-9:30 and 11:00 to 11:30 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 Express, MLK Union (required). There will also be a few required readings on Reserve in the library.
--Robyn Wiegman and Elena Glasberg, Literature and Gender

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 throughout the semester since this is a seminar. You will not be graded on these presentations, but failure to come to class prepared adequately for 2 presentations will result in a lowering of the final grade by one grade. Your final grade will consist of the following weighted components:

Paper and Folder Project I--33%
Paper and Folder Project II--33%
Paper and Folder 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. You may not use papers you write in other classes to fulfill the requirements of this course.

Writing Folders
You will need to purchase a paper 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. They (tutors/peers/parents) may not edit, proofread, correct, or rewrite any portion of your paper.

**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. (R) following the source means the article is ON RESERVE IN THE LIBRARY. All other articles are in your reading packet.

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

UNIT I: LANGUAGE AND FEMINISM

Weeks One and Two
Introduction to the course
Language and Feminism: Historical Contexts

Week Two
6. Alice Walker, "Am I Blue?"

INTRODUCTION TO PRIMARY RESEARCH METHODS--The Interview/ The Survey

SEPT 1 QUIZ #1 (IN-CLASS FOLDER WRITING)

Week Three
Gender Bias and the Lexicon: Stereotypes and Categorizations
8. Mills
   --Generic Pronouns, pp. 87-88
   --Generic Nouns, pp. 89-93
   --Women as Marked Term, pp. 93-95
   --Effects of Sexist Language, p. 95
10. 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

Sept 4 Holiday

Week Four
Language, Gender, and Education
12. Mills, Proverbs, Jokes, Presuppositions, pp. 128-158
13. Mills, Gender Free Writing Guidelines, pp. 96-102
Weeks Five and Six
DOCUMENTATION AND DRAFTING
SEPT 20--PAPER I DUE
PRE-WRITING / REVISION WORKSHOPS / READING OF PAPERS TO CLASS; SEPT 29--PAPER I REVISED AND FOLDER DUE

Week Seven
Men's Studies
   "Feminism and the Politics of Masculinity" (pp. 169-180 and 195-205) and "Masculinity and Social Relations" (pp. 96-110 and 120-125). (R)

"The Things They Carried"
Film: One Man's Struggle with Gender-Biased Language
Film: Men and Masculinity: Changing Roles, Changing Lives

FOLDER WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE OCT 16
Over the next week, look around you at all the literacy (printed text) that comes in your view (newspaper text, cartoons, jokes, personal ads, packaging on products, signs, song lyrics, printed text--a paragraph or two--in novels, textbooks, and so forth).

Select three items (that can be photocopied) that are interesting (or disturbing or humorous) that you would like to analyze in terms of very subtle attitudes they project about language and gender. Using what you've learned from the readings in the course, analyze the presuppositions they entail that might be missed by a general uncritically-conscious audience. In your folder you should include each item followed by and stapled to your analysis, which may be handwritten.

Bring your items and analyses to present to the class on Oct 16.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE#</th>
<th>CALL NUMBER</th>
<th>COPY</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LOAN PERIOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENG 4300</td>
<td>HQ1090 .E32 1995.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Edley, Nigel</td>
<td>Men in perspective: practice, power, and identity / Nigel Edley and Margaret Wether</td>
<td>3 Hr (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P120.M45 L36 1997.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Language and masculinity / edited by Sally Johnson and Ulrike Hanna Meinhof.</td>
<td>3 Hr (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P120.S48 C36 2003x.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cameron, Debor</td>
<td>Language and sexuality / Deborah Cameron and Don Kulick.</td>
<td>3 Hr (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P120.S48 G47 1995.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gender articulated: language and the socially constructed self / Kira Hall and Mary B</td>
<td>3 Hr (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P120.S48 G53 1999x.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gibbon, Margar</td>
<td>Feminist perspectives on language / Margaret Gibbon.</td>
<td>3 Hr (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P120.S48 L346 2002.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Language and sexuality: contesting meaning in theory and practice / Kathryn Campb</td>
<td>3 Hr (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P120.S48 M55 1995.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mills, Sara, 195</td>
<td>Feminist stylistics / Sara Mills.</td>
<td>3 Hr (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P120.S48 R66 1999.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Romaine, Suzan</td>
<td>Communicating gender / Suzanne Romaine.</td>
<td>3 Hr (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PN45 .L512 2001x.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Literary theory, an anthology / edited by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan.</td>
<td>3 Hr (B)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>