

English 3362: Women in Literature
Fall 2014
Dr. Patricia Lee Yongue

Course Description

The content and focus of English 3362 are determined by the professor of record. In this iteration of the course, we shall read, analyze, and discuss six novels by American writers from the vantage point of how these writers develop female characters, engage female characters in relationships (with men, other women, community, etc.), and identify female characters in terms of intelligence, emotional life, psychological life, physical appearance, age, race, ethnicity, etc. Are female characters as well-developed as characters as their equivalent male characters (a craft question)? What constitutes femininity for these writers? How do male and female writers differ in their characterization of women? Why? How are they alike? Why? How are the portrayals idiosyncratically American? Of course, there are a multitude of issues and questions beyond those cited above, and we shall do the best we can to address as many issues as possible. We shall also look at some key critical and theoretical essays about female characters in fiction.

Learning Objectives

1. Students participating responsibly will become familiar with six major American texts and their representations of women and the female characters' interactions with others.
2. Students participating responsibly will gain exposure to methods of critiquing the characterization of women in fiction from a feminist cultural and psychoanalytical perspective.
3. Students participating responsibly will gain experience in critical thinking and writing and in productive oral communication.

Assignments

Although I have not yet determined the precise nature of the written assignments, students will be required to submit short critical essays with a research base and complete at least two exams, including a final exam.

Required Texts

Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*
Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*
Willa Cather, *My Ántonia*
Willa Cather, *My Mortal Enemy*
Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*
James Baldwin, *If Beale Street Could Talk*