

ENG 3396: Selected Topics: Gender and Writing
Fall 2013 Dr. Nathan Shepley

Gender and Writing is a rhetoric course that explores connections between writing and the social construction of gender, particularly in American higher education contexts from the nineteenth century to the present. The course gives students opportunities to read influential scholarly work from literacy studies and rhetorical theory and opportunities to produce academic and exploratory writing that analyzes the interplay between social norms and the writer's identity.

Questions that students will consider include the following:

What has it meant, in particular settings from nineteenth to twentieth century America, to write like a woman? To write like a man?

How and with what effects have specific styles and genres of writing become marked as the province of one gender?

To what extent has following rules from writing textbooks and handbooks meant behaving as a certain type of gendered (and otherwise categorized) citizen?

How have specific individuals used their writing and speaking to challenge and change gender norms?

What was gained? What was lost? What do their struggles indicate about language and society?

What happens if we attempt to see writing as neutral, unconnected to social interests and situations?

As these questions suggest, the course will prove especially helpful to students interested in language education, sociopolitical aspects of writing, theories of rhetoric and gender, and/or literacy in nineteenth-twentieth century America.

Course meetings will require students' active participation. Writing assignments will include one academic paper (approximately 7-10 pages) and a few reflective and experimental pieces of writing (approximately 2-6 pages apiece).