ENGL-4313.001: Women Writing Modernism: Modernism “When Women are Alone”
Professor Jennifer Sorensen
Email: TBA
Course Meets MW 3:30 – 4:45 pm in ECDC-219C
Office: FC258  Office Phone: TBA
Office Hours on Wednesdays from 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm and by appointment

In *A Room of One’s Own*, Virginia Woolf writes of her invented novelist “Mary Carmichael” that “Mary is tampering with the expected sequence” and that she “wanted to see how Mary Carmichael set to work to catch those unrecorded gestures, those unsaid or half-said words, which form themselves […] when women are alone, unlit by the capricious and coloured light of the other sex” (80, 83). This course will consider how Modernism looks and sounds differently “when women are alone” in its construction. We will uncover the “unrecorded gestures” and unexpected “sequences” that emerge from reading these modernist women alone together. We will read fiction by Woolf, Edith Wharton, Gertrude Stein, Jean Rhys, Elizabeth Bowen, Djuna Barnes, Rebecca West, Zora Neale Hurston, and Katherine Mansfield and poems by H.D. and Gwendolyn Brooks. We will also explore a range of criticism about writing by women and engage with feminist theories.

Course Goals:
I have designed the course to help you develop and hone the following skills:
* Close-Reading Analysis Skills across a variety of genres as we’ll be reading a diverse and genre-bending group of novels, short stories, and poems.
* The ability to think critically and to argue (verbally and in writing) about both the micro and macro levels of a range of literary texts (i.e. at the level of the sentence, the paragraph, the chapter, and the structure of the whole novel or story and at the level of the line, the stanza, the poem, and the poetic volume).
* The ability to engage with literary criticism and theory about modernism and gender and to use these materials to deepen your engagement with primary texts and to enhance your ability to think productively across texts.

I aim for you to emerge from the semester with a complex and nuanced understanding of the literary modernism that emerges from these women writers.

Required Texts for the Course: (Available at the TAMUCC Bookstore)

(Posted on Blackboard):
Katherine Mansfield, “Bliss” (1918)
Djuna Barnes, *The Book of Repulsive Women* (1915)
Gwendolyn Brooks, *A Street in Bronzeville* (1945)

Many secondary sources (both literary criticism and feminist theory) will also be posted on blackboard and assigned throughout the semester.

**Assessment:**
Your final grade for this course will be determined by the following breakdown of the percentage weighting of each course component:

- **2 Close Reading Practice Posts (to Blackboard)**: 10%
- **Smaller Discussion Question and Paragraph Response Posts (to Blackboard)**: 5%
- **Critical Engagement Blog Response**: 5%
- **Paper 1**: 20%
- **Paper 2**: 35%
- **Collaborative Critical Engagement Group Project**: 10%
- Participation: 15%

**Assignments and Policies:**

**Close Reading Practice Posts:** This semester you will practice and develop your close-reading skills by submitting 2 short responses to our course blackboard site. These short (1 page) responses will sometimes be directed by more specific instructions (i.e. you will respond to a question or prompt that I post) and will always be submitted electronically via the Discussion Board area on our course Blackboard site. These short writes encourage you to write-to-learn and the emphasis is placed on the process of closely engaging with course readings. They will be graded on a √ (for fulfilling the expectations of the assignment), √ + (for exceeding expectations through an exceptionally thoughtful and interesting response), or a 0 (for failing to post a response or for posting a response that fails to fulfill the expectations of the assignment). If you receive a √ or √ + on both of the postings, then you will be awarded full credit for this 10% of your final grade. Each posting assignment will specify more precisely the expectations for successful completion in that particular case. Late responses (after the due date and time but within 24 hours) will receive ½ credit. Any response posted later than 24 hours after the due time will not be read and will receive a 0.

**Smaller Discussion Question and Paragraph Response Posts:** As you will be reading some fiendishly challenging texts this term, you will also be periodically submitting shorter responses—often in the form of thoughtful discussion questions or short paragraph analyses of moments in the texts—in order to keep actively thinking (through writing) about the deluge of words that we’ll be reading together. These shorter assignments will always be submitted electronically via the Discussion Board area on our course Blackboard site and I will always send out an email announcement to let you know what to post and when to post it. They will not be commented upon or returned to you, but I will read them (and sometimes draw from them in our class discussions) and they will constitute 5% of your final grade. If you follow my instructions for each short assignment and submit them all on time, then you will receive full credit for this portion of your grade. I hope that they will also serve as a fruitful resource and testing ground for your ideas as you think through questions about each text and develop your longer responses and two formal paper assignments.
Critical Engagement Blog Response: Beginning in Week 5 of our semester and concluding in Week 13, you will each choose 1 critical essay (either from a pre-selected group of essays posted on Blackboard or with a pre-approved choice (must be approved at least 1 week ahead of time) to read for one class meeting. I will pass out a sign up sheet in class ahead of time so you will pick your text/due date in advance. You will write up a short 3-4 paragraph-long response (the writing here is informal blog-style writing intended to engage with the critical material and explore your ideas about it (no argument or structure required)) and post it to Blackboard (in the Discussion Board area and due before the start of class on the day that you present). This assignment is meant to provide an additional opportunity for you to engage with literary criticism and to enhance our shared critical library online for anyone who wishes to supplement their thinking and writing with additional critical perspectives. I’ll manage our critical choices throughout the semester and will be happy to include any selections that you all find most relevant so that the choices reflect our shared interests and not just my own.

Paper 1 (3-4 pages) (Due Sunday October 18th by 10 pm posted on Blackboard): This paper assignment will ask you to build upon the close-reading analysis skills developed through the shorter blackboard postings as you will construct a sustained close-reading argument focused around an element of the style, a theme, a character, or an extended moment in one of the texts that we’ve read by this point in the term. In this paper, you will develop a persuasive argument about your chosen text using specific evidence from the text. You should have genuine questions about the text and particular issue/element that you select—questions that you would like to answer through the writing process (i.e. questions that you can’t answer immediately, questions that you have to look closely at the text and work through to come to a conclusion about). The aim of this assignment is for you to formulate an interesting, debatable argument that you develop and support with ample specific evidence from the text and convincing analysis of that evidence. This paper should have a clear thesis statement, should develop its main argument through a clearly organized structure, and should convince the reader through compelling analysis of textual evidence over the course of the three to four pages. An assignment sheet with more specific guidelines, advice, and expectations will be handed out in class.

Paper 2 (6-7 pages) (Due Wednesday Dec 9th by 4:15 pm posted to Blackboard): This paper will allow to build on the skills you practiced in the earlier paper and in the on-line posts as you develop a longer argument about one aspect, theme, character, or series of connected moments in one of the texts we’ve read in the course (you cannot write on the same text that you chose for the first paper assignment). An assignment sheet with more specifics will be handed out in class.

Critical Engagement Collaborative Group Projects (Due on Blackboard November 15 (sign up sheet for groups a more detailed assignment sheet will be handed out in class)): Each student will work in a team of 3-5 students to develop a collaborative group project using 1 selected critical reading from our course blackboard page’s critical resource library to illuminate key questions from our semester-long discussions of modernism written by women in this course. The goal of these projects is to engage with a critical essay to think productively across 3 of our course texts: you will use one secondary source (one selection from the critical and theoretical sources collected on Blackboard) to open up new dimensions in and to enrich our understandings of the connections between the 3 selected primary texts from the course. More details will be provided and handed out in class and each group will meet with me to help formulate a plan for a successful project. I will work with your group to help you engage with the criticism and to produce an effective, electronically submitted (on blackboard) project which integrates the criticism with our course texts and enhances our course-long exploration of what modernism looks like when women are alone in its formation). These projects are due toward the end of the semester because they are intended to help you think across texts and to make connections between the diverse array of primary and secondary texts we’ll be reading all term.

Participation: Your participation grade will be based on your active engagement with class materials, your frequent and thoughtful contributions to class discussions of all shapes and sizes, your active listening to your classmates and to me, your productive work in frequent in-class small group activities, your reflections upon and completion of the assigned reading, and your coming to class prepared (with materials, thoughts, questions,
and assigned work) every day. In order to engage actively with these texts and to promote lively discussions, you will need to prepare diligently for class each day—I encourage you to thoroughly mark up your texts (write all over them, use post-it notes, keep a reading journal on a separate page if you prefer), flag key passages that interest you, jot down questions as they occur to you, and come to class ready to discuss and to contribute questions and themes, passages, and patterns that you find particularly intriguing and worth talking about.

As you will see, I keep records of participation every single class meeting so that these grades are fair, substantial, and able to be documented: I keep a huge spreadsheet of each day’s grade (assessed using a 4 point grading scale from 4 (an A for outstanding, engaged, thoughtful participation) to a 0 (total non-participation)) and the semester’s participation grade is an average of all of these daily marks (thus local highs and lows get evened out). Also, participation in this course can also extend beyond the boundaries of the classroom and efforts to engage more fully with the reading and writing in the course during office hours also contributes to good participation (I also record frequent office hours attendance and will bump up one or more of the daily marks to reflect this alternative, valuable form of engagement). I will give everyone mid-term participation grades so that you can see how you are doing in this area of the course. If you are concerned about your ability to effectively participate, please come and talk with me in office hours and we can develop strategies to improve your active participation.

You are responsible for obtaining all of the class readings for the course (including printing out any electronic resources assigned and accessible through Blackboard), for reading them carefully prior to class, and for bringing them to class with you as we will work actively with the assigned readings every single class session. If you do not bring your reading materials assigned for a given class meeting to class with you, then you will receive a zero for that day’s participation. We will work actively with the texts every single day and thus you really need to have them with you in order to actively contribute and even to keep up with our discussions.

*Please turn off all cell phones before class begins. No electronic devices—including computers—are to be used during class sessions. If you have your cell phone or any other electronic device out during class, you will receive a zero for that day’s participation.*

**Attendance Policy and Lateness:** This course will be very discussion-intensive—so if you miss a class meeting, you are missing a lot any day that you miss. But obviously I understand that life sometimes gets in the way and so you may have two absences with no penalty. For each absence after the first two, your course grade drops 1/3 of a letter grade (i.e. from B to B-). Please use those two permitted absences wisely—they are to be used for times when you absolutely cannot make it to class (illnesses, family or personal emergencies, planned trips, etc.) and not for sleeping in, work for other courses, etc. Each day that you are even slightly late will deduct from that day’s participation grade. Please be right on-time to class every day as we will start promptly at 3:30 pm.

**Late work:** Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each 24 hour period that they are late (if it was due on Wednesday at 4 pm it will be marked 1/3 grade down if it is turned in after then but before Thursday by 4 pm; if it is turned in after 4 pm on Thursday, it will be marked down an additional 1/3 of a letter grade and so on). Please make every effort to have all your assignments in on time! I do not read drafts over email.

**The 24-Hour Rule:** Please wait 24 hours after I return your graded paper before you come to discuss that paper with me. If you would like to discuss your paper with me, please come to my office hours or schedule an appointment (I often require several days notice if you need to make an appointment outside of office hours).

**Academic Integrity:**
Violations of academic integrity include cheating, plagiarism (failure to acknowledge via appropriate citation the sources for written, visual, on-line, and other sorts of material), fabrication, multiple submissions (e.g.,
submitting the same or substantially the same paper for two or more courses without prior approval of all instructors). Any assignment found to violate the TAMUCC guidelines for academic integrity will be reported to the college dean and the Office of Student Affairs in accordance with university policy. Please read “Academic Integrity” guidelines carefully and ask me if you have any questions: these guidelines are posted at http://catalog.tamucc.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=177#Academic_Integrity

Academic Advising
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Grade Appeals Process
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

The Writing Center
You will be doing a lot of writing in this course and the TAMUCC CASA Writing Center is an excellent resource to help you. The Writing Center offers one-on-one tutoring sessions with experienced student writers to help you with a whole range of skills—getting started, building arguments, grammatical issues, organization, and many more—and I highly recommend using this resource. They offer appointments (easy to schedule with their online system) and also walk-ins during their open hours. See their website for more details: http://casa.tamucc.edu/wc.php

Services for Students with Disabilities:
If you think you may need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services and make an appointment to see me within the first two weeks of the semester. Thank you. Here is the website: http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/

Religious Observances:
If a class meeting conflicts with a religious holiday, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we can make alternate arrangements. In most cases, I will ask you to turn in your assignment ahead of your scheduled absence, but, in accordance with the TAMUCC policy on Religious/Academic conflicts, your absence will not affect your grade in the course.

Communication:
The best way to get in touch with me outside of class and office hours is by email. During the semester, I check my email regularly every weekday. I probably will not be able to respond as promptly on weekends or late at night (I will most likely not respond on the same day if you email after 6 pm). Email is a great way to ask a question, share a comment, or make an appointment to talk in person. If you have a long, complicated question, please come visit during office hours or make an appointment so that we can talk it over in person. All conversations about grades and comments on written work should take place in person. I will email the class if class should be cancelled due to extreme winter weather or other emergency, or if I want to circulate course information to the class so please check your own email regularly. If you must miss a class, please do not email me asking what you missed. It is your responsibility to check in with a classmate to find out what was covered
and to obtain the notes from that day. You should exchange email addresses with at least two of your classmates so that you can contact them if you have to miss class.

Name: ____________________________________________________

Email: ____________________________________________________

Name: ____________________________________________________

Email: ____________________________________________________

I reserve the right to make minor changes and to adjust this syllabus if necessary for the improvement of the course.
Weekly Schedule:

Week 1:
W Aug 26: Introductions, Syllabus Review, & Beginnings

Week 2:
M Aug 31: Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*, Chapters 1-6 (pp 3–112)
W Sept 2: Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth*, pp 5–42 (Book I, Chapters 1-4)

Week 3:
M Sept 7: **Labor Day No Class**

Week 4:
W Sept 16: Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth*, pp 189–256 (end) (Book II, Chapters 8–14)

**Saturday September 19th:** Close Reading Post #1 Due on Blackboard by 6 pm

Week 5:

Week 6:

**Thursday Oct 1:** Close Reading Post #2 Due on Blackboard by 10 pm

Week 7:

Week 8:

**SUNDAY October 18th:** Paper 1 Due by 10 pm posted on Blackboard

Week 9:
M Oct 19: Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark*, pp 7–74, **Final Paper assigned**

Week 10:
M Oct 26: Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark*, pp 139–188 and alternate ending

**Week 11:**
M Nov 2: Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, pp 1–76 (Chapters 1-6)

W Nov 4: Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, pp 77–138 (Chapters 7-15)

**Week 12:**
M Nov 9: Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, pp 139–193 (Chapters 16-20)

W Nov 11: Gwendolyn Brooks, *A Street in Bronzeville* (read entire volume (pp 3–59))

**SUNDAY November 15:** Critical Engagement Collaborative Projects Due on Blackboard by 10 pm

**Week 13:**
M Nov 16: Elizabeth Bowen, *The Death of the Heart*, pp 3–74

W Nov 18: Elizabeth Bowen, *The Death of the Heart*, pp 75–154

**Week 14:**


**Happy Thanksgiving!**

**Week 15:**
M Nov 30: Elizabeth Bowen, *The Death of the Heart*, pp 301–418 & Course Overview

**Final Paper Due: Wednesday December 9th by 4:15 pm posted to Blackboard**
(There is no final exam for this course).