ENGLISH 2316.161:
Literature and Culture
T/R 2:00-3:15 p.m. (CS 101)

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*The best way to reach me is via email. While I try to respond to all email within 24 hours, I am not available outside of regular business hours and likely won’t respond after 5 p.m. or on weekends.


Course Description: Women Writing Resistance
The authors that we will read this semester cry out against oppression and inequality while simultaneously exemplifying the possibility of coalition building between seemingly disparate groups; the act of writing, then, is a deliberate challenge to the status quo. Therefore, we will examine writing as a creative act that is a form of political activism that employs definite aesthetic strategies for resisting dominant cultural norms. We will read short stories, poems, fiction and nonfiction by women who write to resist. Their stories of resistance to oppression are global, for the conditions they present exist worldwide. But through the act of writing, these authors seek to envision and manifest a more equitable, peaceful, sustainable future for the Americas and the world.
In addition to the thematic focus of the course, the course work is also designed to allow you to explore what you know about literature’s connections to writing and culture as well as what you know about yourself as a member of society. Therefore, I am especially interested in helping you explore the intersection of the personal and public, the private and the social in your thinking, your reading, your writing, and your life. This class will ask you to explore what you know about culture (academic and otherwise) and yourself. We will look at writing, our own and that of others, as articulations of knowledge. We will, therefore, need to continually ask ourselves a number of important questions, such as:

- Who is the author of this piece?
- Why was this piece written? What “knowledge” does it attempt to impart?
- What do we know about the historical, social, and cultural background of this piece?
- How do I connect to this piece? (How do I relate to it through my own life and experience?)

Of course, our work should not be limited to these questions, and many more will arise throughout our discussions. However, it is important to remember that the work we do should involve deep analysis.

**Required Texts***:

*Several additional texts will be made available via Blackboard (Bb); you are required to print these texts and bring them to class on the day assigned. (Please note: if texts are not in hand, you will be considered absent that day.)*

**Course Objectives:**
1. To consider how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience by examining the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts.
2. To use literature to explore ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures and nationalities.
3. To recognize the distinctive characteristics of relevant literary periods, genres, and writers.
4. To understand and use basic literary terms and concepts.
5. To develop analytic skills by close reading, class discussion, and writing.
6. To use writing as a tool for learning.

**Student Learning Objectives:**
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills in four Core Objectives defined by the Higher Education Coordinating Board of the State of Texas:

- **Critical Thinking**
CT1. Generate and communicate ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information.
CT3. Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information.

Communication Skills
CS1. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication.

Personal Responsibility:
PR1. Evaluate choices and actions, and relate consequences to decision making.

Social Responsibility:
SR3. Engage in regional, national, and global communities.

Course Requirements and Policies:
Grading: In order to succeed in this class you must do all of the assigned work; this includes reading assigned texts prior to class, participating in in-class discussions, completing all informal writing assignments (missing just one or two will lower your grade substantially), and collaborating with your peers on analysis and interpretation. Therefore, if you are absent during any class period, contact the instructor and/or a classmate immediately. Please also note the absence and tardy policy explained in this syllabus.

Informal Writing: This includes in-class essays, guided writing, freewriting, response journal writing, explications, comparisons/contrasts, reviews or any combination of these. As these are informal assignments, it is not necessary to worry about grammatical or style conventions, but I do ask that they be typed and double-spaced per MLA and APA style conventions. These will most often be submitted via Blackboard; if you do not submit these via Blackboard, you will receive a zero for the assignment. Homework is due prior to the beginning of class, and will not be accepted late.

Please note: I prefer that you prepare assignments using Microsoft Word* (in .doc or .docx format). I will also accept .pdf or .rtf documents. I will not accept assignments created using Pages, as they are not compatible with most campus computers. Assignments created using Pages or any other incompatible software will receive a failing grade. In addition, email and/or hard copies of assignments will not be accepted unless directed otherwise.

*If you do not have Microsoft Word or Office Suite, TAMUCC now provides free access to all students. For more information about Office 365, go here: 
http://it.tamucc.edu/Office365/Office365.html

Formal Writing (Quizzes, Essay, and Exams): Quizzes will be given randomly throughout the semester, and will include questions based on previous discussions as well as questions based on the assignment due on the day the quiz is given. You must be in class to take the quiz; no make-up quizzes will be given.

You will also be asked to write a literary analysis that discusses the texts we will read this semester. This is a formal essay assignment that will require close reading and synthesis of
sources. You will be given a grading rubric well in advance of the due date; due date yet to be determined.

There will also be midterm and final exams. These will include text identification, close reading and analysis of short passages, as well as an essay portion that addresses either a complete text, or multiple texts in conversation.

**NO LATE ESSAYS OR EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED. You must turn these in prior to the class period in which it is due or receive a failing grade on the assignment.**

Grading Scale*:
Participation, quizzes, informal writings, group work, etc. 30%
Midterm Exam 25%
Literary Analysis 15%
Final Exam 30%

A = 90-100%  B= 80-89%  C= 70-79%  D=60-69%  F=59% or below

*I use Blackboard to record grades, but do so only for formal assignments; therefore, you will not receive individual grades for informal work (though these are calculated into your midterm and final grades). While Blackboard allows you to consistently check your standing in the class, please note that it does not allow me to weigh grades until all assignment grades have been submitted. Therefore, grades may appear higher than they actually are. If you ever have questions about your standing in the class, please contact me directly.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism: University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result a failing grade for the course and students risk being placed on academic probation, suspension, or expulsion. If you are unsure about whether or not you might be plagiarizing, please talk to me.

Attendance: Because the formal work you do in the course depends on your in-class participation, collaboration with your classmates, and discussion, your grade will be lowered if you miss more than four classes; it will be lowered by 1/3 for each absence beyond the initial four. That is, a B will drop to a B- and so on. Additionally, please note that NO ABSENCES ARE EXCUSED. (So, if you are sick, and have a doctor’s note, that absence is still included in the four allowed absences you are allotted for the semester.) Therefore, please consider the following:

- If you must miss a class, you are responsible for what you missed; you will be expected to be prepared for the next class that you attend and will not get an
extension on any homework that is due. (I recommend that you exchange contact
information with a peer so that you can get notes on that day’s discussion, etc., as I
will not provide these.)

- Excessive tardiness and/or leaving early will also lower your grade.
- If you participate in a sport or some other university sanctioned event or activity
  that requires you to miss class do not take this course during your travel season.
- Lastly, I am not unsympathetic to tragedy and understand that family deaths occur
  at incredibly inconvenient times. However, this has become one of the most
  overused and abused excuses given for missing classes and/or major assignments.
  Therefore, I require that you make arrangements through the Division of Student
  Engagement and Success. You can reach them to begin this process at 361-825-
  2612.

Dropping a Class: I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class.
However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise.
Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do.
Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to
drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form.
Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being
dropped from the class. **Wednesday, November 15** is the last day to drop a class with an
automatic grade of “W” this term.

University Community Discourses, Diversity and Personal Responsibilities: Texas A&M
University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population
of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is
free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city,
state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified,
respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious
background, sexual orientation or disability. In class discussions, readings, and writing
throughout this quarter, we will examine ideas from diverse perspectives. At this
university, students and faculty are afforded an academic environment that allows for
intellectual expression; challenging issues and ideas may arise, but none of these should be
expressed in an inappropriate manner either verbally or in writing. One of the goals of a
university is to challenge us to think again about what we know (and all that we don’t
know). This demands that we all share responsibility for creating and maintaining a
democratic and civil learning environment in our classrooms and in the larger university
community: we will be conscious of and accept responsibility for what we say and do, how
we act, how our words and actions have consequences, and how our words and actions
affect others. Racism, sexism, and other non-democratic or oppressive behaviors are
unacceptable. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be
tolerated.

**Special Notices:**
Grade Appeals Process: As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website: http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

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.

Disability Services: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Statement of Academic Continuity: In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

Tentative Schedule (See Daily Schedule/Assignments on Blackboard for regular updates):
August 29: Introduction to Course
August 31: Writing the Body
September 5: Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*
September 7: *The Bluest Eye*, cont’d.
September 12: *The Bluest Eye*, cont’d.
September 14: *The Bluest Eye*, cont’d.
September 19: *The Bluest Eye*, cont’d.
September 21: *The Bluest Eye*, cont’d.
September 26: *The Bluest Eye*, cont’d.
September 28: Nellie Wong, “When I Was Growing Up”
October 3: Cherrie Moraga, “La Guera”
October 5: Midterm Exam
October 10: Anzaldua, “Entering into the Serpent,” from *Borderlands* (Bb)
October 12: Sandra Cisneros, “Guadalupe the Sex Goddess”; Naomi Quinonez, “La Diosa in Every Woman” (Bb)
October 17: Audre Lorde, “The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power”
October 19: Demetria Martinez, *Mother Tongue*
October 24: *Mother Tongue*, cont’d.
October 26: *Mother Tongue*, cont’d.
October 31: *Mother Tongue*, cont’d.
November 2: *Mother Tongue*, cont’d.
November 7: Literary Analysis due
November 9: Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale*
November 14: *The Handmaid’s Tale*, cont’d.
November 16: *The Handmaid’s Tale*, cont’d.
November 21: *The Handmaid’s Tale*, cont’d.
November 23: *The Handmaid’s Tale*, cont’d.
November 28: Thanksgiving Break
November 30: *The Handmaid’s Tale*, cont’d.
December 5: *The Handmaid’s Tale*, cont’d.

Final Exam: TBA