ENGLISH 4391.001: Topics in Writing Studies
Women’s Rhetoric(s)
Spring 2019
TR 5:30-6:45 p.m. (IH 157)

Instructor: Dr. Wendy Walker
Office: Faculty Center 126
Office Hours: MW 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.; T 3:30—4:40 p.m.; and by appointment
Office Phone: 361-825-2979
Email: Wendy.Walker@tamucc.edu *

*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.

Jean Bradbury, “Hear Our Voice”

Course Description: This course will examine the ways in which women writers have interrupted the rhetorical tradition that historically rendered them silent and invisible. The writers we will read, from Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz to Terese Mailhot, use transgressive forms which blur the lines between the public and private to reconceptualize the means of persuasion. In so doing, they assert the right to speak, claim the means necessary to represent themselves, and create a form a rhetorical action in the process.
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. Students will be able to identify and analyze the strategies used by women rhetors, as well as how these strategies have changed over time.
2. Students will understand how women rhetors have raised questions about gender, difference, and the rhetorical canon, to challenge, complicate, and expand the canon, as well as create a form of rhetorical action.
3. Students will be able to address how our own historical moment constrains, shapes, and enables women speakers and writers today.

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 can lower your grade substantially), and collaborating with your peers on analysis, interpretation, and the writing process. Therefore, if you are absent during any class period, contact the instructor and/or a classmate immediately. Please also note the absence policy explained in this syllabus. In addition, please note the following:

- Most of your assignments will be submitted via Blackboard; emailed and/or hard copies of these assignments will not be accepted unless directed otherwise.
- In most cases, assignments are due just prior to our class meeting time on the due date provided.
- All writing, whether informal or formal, should be prepared per MLA style, so typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins. You should also use a Times New Roman 12-point font.
- You will not receive individualized feedback on all informal writing assignments, including drafts, via Blackboard. If you would like individualized feedback on any assignment, please make an appointment to meet with me.

Homework, Informal Writing, and Quizzes: All homework assignments are connected to course readings or major projects and should be completed to engage fully with the course material. The assignments are designed to make connections between your personal experiences and the material you are encountering in this course. These assignments will also prepare you to engage and participate as an active member within classroom discussions. This includes in-class essays, guided writing, freewriting, response journal writing, explications, comparisons/contrasts, reviews or any combination of these.
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.

Homework will be assigned in class or on Blackboard. As these are informal assignments, it is not necessary to worry about grammatical or style conventions (except when specified; for example, you must use basic MLA formatting for informal assignments, but this is limited to margins, font (Times New Roman) size, and double-spacing).

**Formal Writing***:
**Facilitation:** Throughout the semester, students will facilitate a 10-minute discussion of one of the course readings. You will be assigned an author, text, and a date for your facilitation; in addition to leading the discussion, you will prepare a handout that includes information about the author and the socio-historical context of that author's text, a brief summary, and questions for the class to consider regarding the issues embedded in the text.

**Exams:** There will be two exams given this semester. These will be essay exams for which you will be given multiple prompts to which you must respond. Typically, I give prompts on a Thursday and give you until the following Monday to complete the exam; therefore, they are take-home exams and necessarily open-book. As these are considered formal assignments, you will need to format and cite per MLA style conventions, and include a Works Cited page.

**Final Writing Project:** For the final writing project, you will do research on a contemporary author of your choice, create an analysis of their work, and present an argument as to why that author should be added to the canon of rhetoric by women. In addition to a written argumentative essay, you will also create a presentation to introduce your author and your analysis to the class.

*Please note: All formal writing assignments must be prepared using Microsoft Word (in .doc or .docx format).* If you do not have Microsoft Word or Office Suite, TAMUCC now provides free access to all students online. For more information about Office 365, go here: [http://it.tamucc.edu/Office365/Office365.html](http://it.tamucc.edu/Office365/Office365.html)

**Grading Scale***:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation, quizzes, informal</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>writings, group work, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam #2</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitation and Discussion</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Writing Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A = 90-100%  B = 80-89%  C = 70-79%  D = 60-69%  F = 59% or below
*I use Blackboard to record grades, and while this allows you to consistently check your standing in the class, please note that Blackboard does not allow me to weigh grades until final calculations are done; therefore, grades may appear higher than they actually are. (Calculating your grades based on the points you've accumulated and the total will not yield an accurate reflection of your grade.) If you ever have questions about your standing in the class, please contact me directly.

**In-class participation:** Your attendance in class and your input during class discussions, activities, and assignments are valuable and necessary for your own success as well as the success of this course. Participation in class will be observed through in-class discussions, informal writing assignments, group work, peer review, and quizzes.

**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:

- Excessive absences may result in a point deduction from your in-class participation grade.
- 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.)
- If you participate in a sport or some other university sanctioned event or activity that requires you to miss class, appropriate documentation must be provided.
- Lastly, I am not unsympathetic to tragedy and understand that extenuating circumstances occur at incredibly inconvenient times. However, examples of this (such as a death in the family or major illness) have become the most overused and abused excuses given for missing classes and/or major assignments. Therefore, I require that you provide documentation of your circumstance to the Office of Student Engagement and Success if you are to continue in my class after a lengthy absence.

**Classroom/professional behavior**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor's ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This
prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Statement of Civility**
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. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**Disabilities Accommodations**
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 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.

**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 in a “0” or “F” on that assignment.

**Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**
**Definition:** In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation of academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and
proper citation.

- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University's OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/, and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

**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.

**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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.** 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.

**Grade Appeals**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, 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.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

**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.

**Support for Basic Needs:**
Insufficient basic needs—food, a safe living space—can affect your performance in classes and make your university experience more challenging. If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food, or you lack a safe and stable place to live, you might consider several resources on campus.

- Contact the Division of Student Engagement and Success for support. Specifically, the office of Student Assistance provides consultations, resource management, and institutional support for “extenuating circumstances.” Their website is here: [http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/StudentAssistance.html](http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/StudentAssistance.html). The Student Assistance Coordinator is Kristeen Gonzalez. UC318, M-F 8AM-5PM. 361-825-2612
- If you do not have access to or cannot afford sufficient food, be aware that “Izzy's Food Pantry” provides on-campus access to food. Find more information here: [http://seas.tamucc.edu/FoodPantry/](http://seas.tamucc.edu/FoodPantry/)
- If you feel comfortable doing so, please talk with me and / or your other professors. We may be able to assist.

**Tentative Schedule (See Daily Schedule/Assignments on Blackboard for regular updates):**

**Week 1**
Tuesday, January 15: Introduction to Course
Thursday, January 17: Julien of Norwich, from *Revelations of Divine Love*

**Week 2**
Tuesday, January 22: Margery Kemp, from *The Book of Margery Kempe*
Thursday, January 24: Jane Anger, from *Her Protection for Women*

**Week 3**
Tuesday, January 29: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, from “La Repuesta”
Thursday, January 31: Mary Wollstonecraft, from *A Vindication of the Rights of women*

**Week 4**
Tuesday, February 5: Margaret Fuller, from *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*
Thursday, February 7: Seneca Falls Convention, “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions”

**Week 5**
Tuesday, February 12: Exam #1 due;
Thursday, February 14: Sojourner Truth, “Speech at the Woman’s Rights Convention, Akron, Ohio”

**Week 6**
Tuesday, February 19: Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, “We Are All Bound Up Together”
Thursday, February 21: Sarah Winnemuccca, from “Life Among the Piutes”

**Week 7**
Tuesday, February 26: Virginia Woolf, “Professions for Women”
Thursday, February 28: Helene Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa”

Week 8
Tuesday, March 5: Cixous, cont’d.
Thursday, March 7: TBD
Spring Break: March 11-15

Week 9
Tuesday, March 19: Adrienne Rich, “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision”

Week 10
Tuesday, March 26: Audre Lorde, “The Transformation of Silence into Action”
Thursday, March 28: Gloria Anzaldúa, “Speaking in Tongues”

Week 11
Tuesday, April 2: Alice Walker, “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens”
Thursday, April 4: Paula Gunn Allen, “Grandmothers of the Sun: Ritual and Gynocracy in America”

Week 12
Tuesday, April 9: Exam #2 due
Thursday, April 11: Leslie Marmon Silko, “Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit”

Week 13
Tuesday, April 16: Terese Mailhot, Heart Berries
Thursday, April 18: Maihot, cont’d.

Week 14
Tuesday, April 23: Mailhot, cont’d.
Thursday, April 25: Mailhot, cont’d

Week 15
Tuesday, April 30: Draft Workshop
Final Exam: Final Project Presentations