

English 385: Major Authors: Jean Rhys and Edna O'Brien Spring 2020

Dr. Patricia Gott

Office: 318CCC, Phone 346-4347**

Office Hours: M 1:30-2:30, T 1-2 and by appointment

Email: pgott@uwsp.edu ****Please check your email frequently for announcements. Reserve phone only for when email is not available—I check email daily but not my office phone.**

Course Description:

Even though single women now comprise a large percentage of the population, one might argue that they are a largely misunderstood and stereotyped group. Consider the overtones of the terms “spinster” and “Old Maid,” both of which remained in popular parlance until quite recently. This course will focus primarily on novels written by Jean Rhys and Edna O'Brien to elucidate the situations and strengths of the single woman as she is depicted in modern British and Irish literature. We will examine supplementary readings from Charlotte Bronte, as well as some non-fiction source material and watch a few films. **THIS CLASS FULFILLS A WGS REQUIREMENT.**

Here's what I expect of you as we read and talk together this semester. I'd like you to:

- to read widely and carefully and annotate as you do;
- to be prepared to expand your appreciation of literature written by women and women's lives;
- to come to recognize the broad spectrum of approaches female authors take to represent single women;
- to write mindful and carefully thought out papers that elucidate and illustrate key themes of the works under consideration;
- finally, to locate directions for future reading and reflection. In this vein, feel free to bring in additional texts/films/ideas as they occur to you.

Required Texts:

(Except for O'Brien's *The Country Girls*, the novels and Rhys short story collection are available at the University Bookstore)

--Edna O'Brien. *The Country Girls*. **Available on Canvas.**

--Edna O'Brien. *Girl. A Novel*. (2019) **Purchase text.**

--Jean Rhys. *Voyage in the Dark*. (1934) **Purchase text.**

--Jean Rhys. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. (1966) **Purchase text.**

--Charlotte Bronte. *Jane Eyre*. **Obtain a used cheap copy** or at our library if you're unfamiliar with the text. You can also read it online We will be watching film clips and examine select chapters. (The text provides an intertextual linkage to Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*. I may also distribute a chapter or two to discuss in class). **Purchase text (if you choose to buy it at the bookstore).**

--Short stories of O'Brien and Rhys. **Available on Canvas; some may be distributed.**

-- Also selections from Sheila O'Connor. *Evidence of V: A Novel in Fragments, Facts and Fiction* (2018). **Class Handouts OR CANVAS.**

Required Work:

--**One short report** (two typed pages MINIMUM—Aim for two and a half to three pages ideally) **for three of the longer works we read** (*Rhys, O'Brien or Eyre*) that discusses some of the major thematic concerns. (20% percent per response-60%); *Note that I would like you to submit these reports as we complete that week's discussion of the novel. In other words, if you choose to write on Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark*, the report in response to this novel will be due by the beginning of the class on Week 4.

--**Occasional in-class free writes** or notes from group work (10% total); length will range from a minimum of one –half of a page to one full page;

--**One longer paper** (six pages minimum, ten pages maximum) that focuses on one or two of the assigned texts (your choice) and identifies central issues present in one of the assigned works (25%). You may choose to develop ONE of your shorter reports into this paper. Approximately two weeks before the end of the semester, I will ask you to write either an outline or a topic proposal for this paper to be submitted to me and discussed with classmates (5%).

Attendance Policy: You should have little trouble PASSING English 385 IF you **keep up with the readings, attend class each week, write developed and engaged papers that are submitted on time, and participate regularly** in class discussion. However, missing more than two classes with an unexcused absence may cause your final grade to be lowered by one letter grade (i.e., A to B). I make NO distinction between excused and unexcused absences except for religious holidays or official organized and documented UWSP events. In other words, illness in most cases is an excused absence. (See **NOTE*** below). In the case of scheduled college events, you must notify me at least one class period in advance of an absence and I may require you to complete the assigned work ahead of time. You are also responsible for acquiring any handouts or assignments you miss; also, please note that I cannot make up class periods for individuals who **choose to miss class**. I cannot reteach the class you have missed for you.

*Note: *In the case of severe illness that is documented or a family emergency, please contact me to make up work. Finally, please try to avoid excessive tardiness and leaving class early. Also, if you know you will be arriving late to class more than once or twice a semester due to class or work schedules, please let me know near the beginning of the semester.*

Paper Due Dates: Papers, reading responses and free writes are due the day indicated on the syllabus. For final drafts, late papers may be penalized one whole letter grade per class period that they are late. **Final drafts handed in more than a week late may not be accepted.** Exceptions to the late paper policy will be granted on a case-by-case basis. ****DO NOT EMAIL ME YOUR PAPERS unless you have received approval from me. (Both the late paper and email policy are option reserved for situations like family emergencies or severe DOCUMENTED ILLNESS. In these exceptional cases, you do need to contact me ahead of time to see if I will accept your emailed or late paper.** (Occasionally, I will contact individual students to email me papers to use as a strong sample for class discussion).

Grade Range: As far as the grade range, a C represents average but satisfactory development of the above criteria, a B represents above average development, and an A representing superior development and effort towards the criteria above. Work that represents below average development will receive a D. D work suggests that a writer is not involved in his or her writing and is unaware of the contexts, format, and stylistic choices that affect that writing. Work that is not submitted will receive an F. **Note: Incompletes can be given only in the case of a medical emergency.** We will discuss the grading rubric in more detail later.

SCALE: A = 94-100 % A- = 90-93% B+ = 87-89%
 B = 83-86% B- = 80-82% C+ = 77-79% C = 73-76% C- = 70-72% D+ = 67-69%
 D = 63-66% D- = 60-62% F = 0-59%

Active participation in class discussion:

This course is designed to encourage your maximum input which can be demonstrated via your engagement with the material. The small amount of lecturing that I do will focus largely on background material (of the historical, biographical or gender-based type of criticism). This course, however, will often be discussion-based, so you should expect to be **actively** engaged discussion class and in small group work. Come to class prepared to talk about your ideas; your classmates and I want to hear them, and that's how we all learn. Contributing to group discussion should increase your confidence as an active, careful reader.

Academic Dishonesty: The writing you do in this class must be your own original work, reflecting your own thinking and learning process. Copying from the work of a present or former student, as well as copying from books or the Internet without citing the source, is cheating. This kind of cheating has serious consequences for everyone involved. In the work world, it can result in legal action, and for student writers, it can result in a failing grade for the assignment or for the course. **A note on using literary criticism:** Although we may occasionally consult outside critical sources to apprise us of the critical discussion that informs certain works, keep in mind that when you write your papers, I am most interested in seeing what you have to say about what you've read.

Brief Reminder of MLA Documentation: This course assumes you are familiar with **MLA documentation and how to cite sources correctly.** If you are not, please talk to me. In your papers and presentations, if you use a source other than the texts assigned for this class, you must acknowledge the source, both in text and on a Works Cited page. For text citations, use parenthetical references instead of footnotes. The first time you quote from the text, use the author's name and page number (Woolf 1966). Henceforth, you only need include the page

number in the rest of the paragraph until you move to another source. For in class free writes, you don't need to include a Works Cited page UNLESS you cite sources other than those from our textbook. The main message you should get from this admittedly brief introduction to plagiarism is that it will be to your benefit to ask questions if you are not sure how to format MLA citations. Also see Rules for Writers, 8th ed. or the Purdue OWL (Online Writing LAB) MLA webpage for specific examples.

Cell phone/Laptop policy: Use of cell phones, unless for a specific class purpose, is prohibited. This is a class where we want to be fully engaged, and one way to do that is if we are communicating fully with me and each other FACE TO FACE and without distraction. If you use a laptop to make notes, please sit near a wall so that others are not distracted by your screen; please refrain from using your laptop during the discussion portion of the class.

Recording Policy: Students may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of lectures or other class activities without written permission from the instructor. Anyone violating this policy will be asked to turn off the device being used. Refusal to comply with the policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom, and possibly being reported to the Dean of Students.

Resources: The Tutoring and Learning Center provides free tutoring to any student interested in improving his or her writing abilities. TLC tutors do not correct or proofread your drafts; instead, they teach you strategies that good writers use during the processes of writing. These include strategies for brainstorming, drafting, and revising. Located in the basement of the library, the TLC is available for assistance with writing projects for all your classes.

Students with learning differences may want to visit UWSP's DATC (6th floor ALB Hall x 3365) to work with that office.

GOTT.
Preliminary 385 Course Schedule / spring 2020

Our schedule is subject to change; if it turns out that we need to work in additional readings or otherwise modify the reading list slightly, I will give you advance notice via email or in class.

VERY IMPORTANT!! Please complete all readings for each class ahead of time AND annotate or take careful notes as you read, as you will be asked to share your views on the work with the class.

Week 1 (Jan. 22): Course introduction/Introductions to one another/"Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid distributed and discussed.

Week 2 (Jan. 29): Images, Stereotypes and Notions of Single Women/See "Spinsterhood: An Evolving Stereotype" <https://hollywoodspinster.wordpress.com/2011/05/25/the-modern-day-spinster-a-menacing-icon/>

Discuss Rhys bio and read *Voyage in the Dark* (Through Part One)/

**Also overview of selections from *Evidence of V: A Novel in Fragments, Facts and Fiction* (Sheila O'Connor)

Week 3 (Feb. 5): Finish *Voyage in the Dark*/Discuss Evidence of V

Week 4 (Feb. 12): O'Brien: *The Country Girls*, First Half (Ch. 1-11) (**REPORT ON Voyage DUE IF You Choose to write on this text*...**)

Week 5 (Feb. 19): Finish *The Country Girls*

Week 6 (Feb. 26): Film excerpts (**REPORT DUE on CG IF*...**)

Week 7 (Mar. 4): *Jane Eyre*: Ch. selections To be announced (TBA)/Film excerpts

Week 8 (Mar. 11): *Jane Eyre*: Ch. selections TBA/Film excerpts

Week 9 (Mar. 18): **SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS!**

Week 10 (Mar. 25): Rhys: *Wide Sargasso Sea*, First Half (Through half of Part 2; pg.)
 Critical Perspectives on Rhys discussion

Week 11 (Apr. 1): Rhys: Finish *Wide Sargasso Sea* (**REPORT DUE IF*...**)

Week 12 (Apr. 8): O'Brien: *Girl*, First Half

Week 13 (Apr. 13): Finish *Girl*

Week 14 (Apr. 20): Exchange rough draft of topic proposals (a few sentences) or the beginning of a short outline on your final paper with one another/ O'Brien, Rhys stories discussed

Week 15 (April 27): Final Thoughts/ Typed *Topic proposal* OR *outline due for Final Paper to be handed in to me (REPORT DUE IF*...)*.

Week 16: (May 5): No Class—Optional Conferences in my office, 318 CCC (Sign up in advance)

Finals Week: FINAL PAPERS DUE at Exam Time, Friday May 15: 10:15 a.m.