

**College of Arts and Letters**  
**Department of Humanities, Arts, and Religion**  
**HUM 375: Women in American Arts & Culture**

General Information

Fall 2006

Professor Gioia Woods

928-523-8168 & course email

TA Danielle Gervasio

Herein we examine women's participation in American arts and culture. We will consider how art is a lens through which to view culture; as such, we'll investigate how women's artistic production embodies the political, social, and economic conditions that influence American women. How do diverse American women construct or resist American identity? How do gender, class, race, sexual orientation, and ethnicity complicate American identity? What cultural histories do women artists and writers rely upon? In order to approach these questions, we will explore genres ranging from fiction, poetry, memoir, visual art, music, and "folk art" to gain insights into how American women identify themselves and are identified by others.

This course is divided into four thematic units. Within each unit, you will be expected to read a variety of material, view visual art, and complete relevant assignments. Please note that each unit must be completed by the due date; subsequent units open after previous units are due.

The Teaching Assistant for this class is Danielle Gervasio. She is an NAU graduate who specialized in Humanities and Art History. Her distinguished record at NAU earned her the position of standard bearer for the College of Arts & Sciences. Danielle is currently pursuing graduate study in European history, and you'll find she has an excellent understanding of the content of this class and my expectations.

Course structure

Hum 375 is a web course. All instruction, learning, assessment, and exchange of ideas will occur online. **Please be prepared for a fast-paced, reading intensive experience.**

Required texts are available at the NAU Bookstore, <http://www.bookstore.nau.edu/> You may order copies of the required texts online through the NAU bookstore or at any bookstore of your choice. Texts include, in this order:

1. *Kindred*, Octavia Butler
2. *Interpreter of Maladies*, Jhumpa Lahiri
3. *Solar Storms*, Linda Hogan
4. *Ecological Feminism*, edited by Karen Warren (electronic book available through Cline)
5. *The Woman Warrior*, Maxine Hong Kingston
6. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Azar Nafisi

All other readings (poetry, short stories, and theoretical/critical essays) are made available within each unit lecture. You may access readings from the links provided within each lecture. If you are unable to do so, check to see if your browser blocks pop-ups (look in the space below the URL). If it does, it is very simple to disable this function.

### Assignments & evaluation methods

Each unit is worth 175 points for a course total of 700 points.

- Within each unit students are required to contribute three original paragraph-length, thoughtful, and relevant discussion postings in response to the provided prompt (25 points each). You are also required to become involved in class discussion by responding to each other's posts; in many ways, our discussions will be the heart of the class.
- You are also required to complete one reading quiz (50 points) per unit. You have 90 minutes to complete each quiz.
- Finally, you are required to submit one short (3-page) response paper (50 points) for each unit. Prompts will be provided to guide each response paper.

Extra credit is not available. Assignments **MUST** be completed on time for credit. **NO** late work is accepted.

You can find **quizzes** under the Course Tools menu under "Assessments"; to enter a **discussion**, click on "Discussions" under the Course Tools menu. **Response paper prompts** will be available under the Course Tools menu under "Assessments." You may wish to draft and revise your essay in a word document, then simply copy and paste or attach your essay in the Assessment tool. All assessments and discussions will be graded based on the following criteria:

- Clarity of purpose
- Depth and detail of development
- Logic of analysis and interpretation
- Originality of ideas
- Control of mechanics, spelling, and usage

Plagiarism, the intentional or unintentional representation of someone else's work as your own, is a very serious offense. To avoid plagiarism, cite your sources and construct original knowledge. Cheating and plagiarism will result in failure of the course.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

**August 28-September 21, Unit 1: Introduction.** Please take time to familiarize yourself with the course by investigating all the class icons, reading the syllabus, and noting due dates. Please check your browser to make sure you are Java enabled. If you are not, you will be instructed how to proceed. This is very important--you don't want to be stuck when an assignment is due.

In this Introductory unit, we will consider several theoretical approaches to women's arts & culture. Be prepared to view visual art, read theoretical articles, and read Octavia Butler's novel *Kindred*.

- Discussion post 1 due Friday, Sept. 1, 11:00 pm
- Discussion post 2 due Friday, Sept. 8, 11:00 pm
- Discussion post 3 due Friday, Sept. 15, 11:00 pm
- Reading quiz 1 due Wednesday, Sept. 18, 11:00 pm
- Response paper 1 due Wednesday, Sept. 20, 11:00 pm

**September 22-October 19 Unit 2: Identity.** In this unit we will consider various definitions of "identity" and examine various theoretical approaches to constructing categories such as "woman," "immigrant," and "American." Be prepared to view visual art, read theoretical articles, and read Jhumpa Lahiri's collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*.

- Discussion post 4 due Friday, Sept. 29, 11:00 pm
- Discussion post 5 due Friday, Oct. 6, 11:00 pm
- Discussion post 6 due Friday, Oct. 13, 11:00 pm
- Reading quiz 2 due Wednesday, Oct. 11, 11:00 pm
- Response paper 2 due Sunday, Oct. 15, 11:00 pm

**October 17-November 10, Unit 3: Earth.** In this unit we will examine a variety of ways women construct theoretical, physical, and emotional relationships with the natural world. Be prepared to view visual art, read selections from Karen Warren's e-book *Ecological Feminism*, and read Linda Hogan's novel *Solar Storms*.

- Discussion post 7 due Friday, Oct. 20, 11:00 pm
- Discussion post 8 due Friday, Oct. 27, 11:00 pm
- Discussion post 9 due Friday, Nov. 3, 11:00 pm
- Reading quiz 3 due Wednesday, Nov. 1, 11:00 pm
- Response paper 3 due Wednesday, Nov. 8, 11:00 pm

**November 11- December 5, Unit 4: Nation.** In this final unit we will examine the intersections between women's cultural production and ideas of nation and nationality. Be prepared to view and discuss visual art, read theoretical articles, and to read Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and selections from Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.

- Discussion post 10 due Wednesday, Nov. 15, 11:00 pm
- Discussion post 11 due Wednesday, Nov. 22, 11:00 pm
- Discussion post 12 due Wednesday, Nov. 29, 11:00 pm
- Reading quiz 4 due Friday, December 1, 11:00 pm
- Response paper 4 due Tuesday, December 5, 11:00 pm

