

Literature 373.2 and Women's Studies 373.1

Working Women

Spring 2009
MW 2:45pm-4pm
113 Karpen Hall
Professor: Erica Abrams Locklear

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Course Rationale and Strategy

Welcome to Literature 373.2 and Women's Studies 373.1, Working Women. This semester we will consider narratives by and about working women. We will begin the semester by exploring Harriet Jacobs' account of what "work" meant for an enslaved woman in the nineteenth century. As we discuss the conditions under which she labored, we will necessarily investigate how race, class, gender, and sexuality (particularly the dominance her master exerted over her) affected her life. Jacobs' narrative establishes an important framework from which we will build our analysis of other narratives about working women because it operates as particularly potent example of how she used writing to speak out against inequality, marginalization, and exploitation. As with other texts we read this semester, we will discuss how her narrative serves as a call to action, one that demands positive change in labor conditions. As the semester progresses we will apply these same ideas to various texts, repeatedly interrogating how authors portray the female working experience. In doing so, we will discuss the texts' form, style, and the rhetorical decisions authors make when creating their texts and the effects those decisions have on us, the readers. This course asks that you engage critically with the texts we discuss, allowing you to formulate and express your own arguments in written and spoken form. I believe that one way to achieve such critical engagement is through primary research, so the final project for this class asks you to interact with a "working woman" in our community. We will work on this project several times during the semester, so you will be prepared to interview the person whom you've gotten to know and then weave your findings into an essay that investigates—and makes an argument about—the similarities and differences between your interviewee's experience and the textual representation of a working woman's story we have read during the semester. I am looking forward to reading about your discoveries, and I hope you leave this class with an understanding of how labor impacts our daily lives and the stories we tell about them.

Course Objectives

- Consider how race, class, gender, and sexuality affect authors' portrayal of women's work
- Work towards a gendered definition of "working class"
- Investigate how primary research informs our understanding of literature
- Demonstrate critical reading and thinking skills by actively engaging with the literature we consider
- Share your own literary interpretations with others in this class
- Communicate your ideas clearly and effectively in written form, including a writing style that embraces good word choice, rhythm, organization, and grammar

Course Materials

- Online readings available on Moodle
- *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs
- *Without a Net: The Female Experience of Growing Up Working Class*, edited by Michelle Tea
- *Yonnonidio: From the Thirties*, Tillie Olsen
- *Where We Stand: Class Matters*, bell hooks

- *The Dollmaker*, Harriette Simpson Arnow
- *Bastard Out of Carolina*, Dorothy Allison
- Access to internet, email, a word processing program, and a printer

Course Requirements, Policies, and Grading

You must complete a final project, a mid-term exam, and a final exam to receive course credit.

Email Policy: I send emails containing important class information fairly often. I send these to your UNCA account, and it is **your** responsibility to ensure that you receive them. If you have your mail forwarded to another address, be sure to regularly clean out your UNCA inbox so that messages are not returned.

Late Work Policy: Late work is **not** accepted. Period. (This means papers, Moodle assignments, and anything else you neglect to submit on time). As for exams, if you have a uniquely extreme situation that you can fully document, let me know and I may be able to schedule a make-up time.

Cell Phone Policy: Except in a real emergency, explained to me ahead of time, all cell phones must be turned off in this class. If yours rings, vibrates, or makes some other disruptive sound during class, with each occurrence your final grade will be lowered by one point.

Absence and Late Policy: You are expected to attend every class, on time. Late arrivals are disruptive and disrespectful to other students. However, I recognize that under certain circumstances you may be unable to attend class. As such, the following policy stands in this course:

- You may miss up to two classes without penalty. Each absence beyond the two allotted will result in your final grade for the course being lowered one letter grade. For example, if you missed four classes, the highest possible grade you could earn would be a C.
- You may have two late arrivals without penalty. Each late arrival beyond the two allotted will result in your final grade for the course being lowered by one point.

Take note that failure to attend class regularly and on time can result in failure of this course.

Assuming you attend class regularly and on time, your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Participation (in class and online), 5%
- Quizzes, 10%
- Moodle assignment, 10%
- Mid-term exam, 15%
- Final exam (cumulative), 20%
- Final Project, 40%

Grade Scale (used for final course grade)

A (93-100)	B (83-88)	C (72-77)	F (64 and below)
A- (91-92)	B- (80-82)	C- (70-71)	
B+ (89-90)	C+ (78-79)	D (65-69)	

Late Withdrawals and Incompletes Policy: Late withdrawals and incompletes are only granted in dire circumstances. They require my approval, a formal procedure, and involvement with other university officials, who may deny the request even if I have approved it.

Moodle Component

This semester you will use Moodle to access class documents, participate in online discussion forums, link to helpful web sites, and to check your grade. To get started using Moodle, visit

<http://learnonline.unca.edu/> From there you may enter your username (which is the same as your UNCA username) and password (which was emailed to you). If you did not receive an email containing your password, click the “Yes, help me log in” button and follow the directions.

During the semester you are responsible for two Moodle postings. These postings are meant to act as a catalyst for our class discussion. Throughout the semester you should also post to the site as you feel appropriate, to share your thoughts, ask questions, and respond to the ideas of others in this class. For a complete description of this assignment, see the document entitled “Moodle Assignment” on our Moodle site, near the top of the page, under News forum.

Final Project Information

All components of your final project must be submitted on time. If you try to submit any part of your project late without clearing it with me *beforehand*, you’ll receive a zero for that component. **The complete final project (due the last day of class) must be handed in during class, in person, unless previous arrangements have been made. Email submissions are not accepted unless cleared with me beforehand.**

If you submit work in which you use research and you fail to cite it (in-text or in a Works Cited page following your essay) you’ll receive an F. That’s plagiarism, and it’s illegal. It’s also illegal to use anyone else’s work and claim it as your own. I do not take plagiarism cases lightly, nor does this university. If you plagiarize you will receive an F for the work in which plagiarism is involved, the incident will be reported to the department chair, and the incident will also be reported to the Dean of Academic Administration, who will then determine whether any other punishment should be taken. This can include cancellation of scholarships, suspension, and expulsion. To avoid such a frightening fate, familiarize yourself with the policies listed at <http://www.unca.edu/lit/policies.htm> If you are ever unsure about how to cite a source, consult the MLA Handbook or ask me for help.

Staple your work. Really.

For a complete description of your final project assignment, see the document entitled “Final Project” on our Moodle site, near the top of the page, under News forum.

Course Schedule

Below you’ll find a list of daily assignments, including dates for our mid-term exam, final exam, and final project (note that we’ll continue to work on this in parts as the semester progresses). Be aware that reading assignments are listed for the day that they are due. Pop quizzes happen. Be prepared.

Week One

Wednesday, January 14: Get to know one another; also discuss the syllabus, Moodle assignment, and expectations for the course.

Week Two

Monday, January 19: Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, no class

Wednesday, January 21: Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* 1 – 55 (up to chapter 12)

Week Three

Monday, January 26: Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* 55 – 113 (up to chapter 27)

Wednesday, January 28: Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* 113 – ending

Week Four

Monday, February 2: Ed. Michelle Tea, *Without a Net* xi (Introduction) – 40 (up to “A Catholic Leg”)

PROJECT: Print, read, and bring the final project assignment to class

Wednesday, February 4: Rebecca Harding Davis, “Life in the Iron Mills” (available on Moodle)

Week Five

Monday, February 9: Tillie Olsen, “I Want You Women Up North to Know” and “I Stand Here Ironing” (both available on Moodle)

Wednesday, February 11: Tillie Olsen, *Yonnonidio* 1 – 65 (up to chapter 5)

Week Six

Monday, February 16: Tillie Olsen, *Yonnonidio* 67 – 130 (up to chapter 7)

Wednesday, February 18: Tillie Olsen, *Yonnonidio* 131 – ending

Week Seven

Monday, February 23: Ed. Michelle Tea, *Without a Net* 41 – 84 (up to “My Memory and Witness”)

PROJECT: Your prospectus is due today. Post it on Moodle in the Final Project forum and bring a printed copy to class to workshop

Wednesday, February 25: bell hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters* 1 – 88 (up to “Class and Race: the New Black Elite”)

Week Eight

Monday, March 2: bell hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters* 89 – ending

Wednesday, March 4: **Mid-term Exam**

Week Nine

Monday, March 9: Spring Break

Wednesday, March 11: Spring Break

Week Ten

Monday, March 16: Ed. Michelle Tea, *Without a Net* 85 – 118 (up to “Blueprints and Hardwires”)

PROJECT: Your interview questions are due today. Post them on Moodle in the Final Project forum and bring them to class for workshopping

Wednesday, March 18: Harriette Simpson Arnow, *The Dollmaker* 1 – 71 (up to chapter 5)

Week Eleven

Monday, March 23: Harriette Simpson Arnow, *The Dollmaker* 72 – 149 (up to chapter 11)

Wednesday, March 25: Harriette Simpson Arnow, *The Dollmaker* 150 – 234 (up to chapter 16)

Week Twelve

Monday, March 30: Harriette Simpson Arnow, *The Dollmaker* 235 – 304 (up to chapter 20)

Wednesday, April 1: Harriette Simpson Arnow, *The Dollmaker* 305 – 383 (up to chapter 25)

Week Thirteen

Monday, April 6: Harriette Simpson Arnow, *The Dollmaker* 384 – 471 (up to chapter 31)

Wednesday, April 8: Harriette Simpson Arnow, *The Dollmaker* 472 – 543 (up to chapter 35)

Week Fourteen

Monday, April 13: Harriette Simpson Arnow, *The Dollmaker* 544 – ending (including afterword)

Wednesday, April 15: Ed. Michelle Tea, *Without a Net* 119 – 159 (up to “Getting Out”) **PROJECT:** Your interview transcripts and a rough draft of your essay are due today. Post both to Moodle in the Final Project forum and bring printed copies of both to class for workshopping

Week Fifteen

Monday, April 20: Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina* 1 – 91 (up to chapter 7)

Wednesday, April 22: Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina* 92 – 152 (up to chapter 11)

Week Sixteen

Monday, April 27: Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina* 153 – 231 (up to chapter 17)

Wednesday, April 29: Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina* 232 - ending

Week Seventeen

Monday, May 4: Ed. Michelle Tea, *Without a Net* 161 – ending **PROJECT:** Your complete project is due today; be prepared to discuss your findings with the class

Final Exam

Wednesday, May 6: 3pm – 5:30pm

Evaluation and Additional Resources

I take evaluation of student work very seriously. If you have any questions about a grade you received or comments on an assignment or exam, please don't hesitate to see me.

I'm available during office hours and by appointment; I check email frequently, and that is often the best way to get in touch with me.

The UNCA Writing Center also offers free, individual peer-writing tutorials for UNCA students. The center is in 136 Ramsey Library; the phone number is 251-6596. I strongly recommend these services, but plan ahead. While the center welcomes drop-ins, it is always best to make an appointment, so don't wait until the day before an essay is due expecting to see someone at the center. Ideally, you'd conference with me at least once about your essay, complete the peer review process, *and* drop by the writing center if you have any doubts about the quality of your work. For more information about the center, visit <http://www.unca.edu/uwc/>

UNCA and I are dedicated to making reasonable accommodations for people with documented disabilities. Please notify the Office of Disabled Student Services in 107 Lipinsky Hall (232-5050), as well as me, of any special needs. I would like to be notified within the first two weeks of class.