



# **WOMEN'S STUDIES through LITERATURE and ART**

**Complutense University of Madrid  
SPRING SEMESTER 2022**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

- **Professor: Dr. FRANCISCO JOSÉ CORTÉS VIECO**

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- **Class hours and classroom** (from **January** to **April/May 2022**): **to be determined.**

- **Office hours** to be determined, but possibility of on-line meetings or in **office A-330.1** (Building A).  
To ensure individual attention, please **ask for an appointment** by e-mail or after class hours.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will question the male-dominated canon of literature and art with the frequent exclusion of female authors from the cultural history of English-speaking countries, particularly until the advent of Feminist theory that since the 1970s questions the power of the literary and artistic Establishment. We will explore key issues about the origins of sex and gender differences, about the nature of patriarchy and its oppression of women, while making connections between gender, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation and art and writing as categories of analysis, as factors for women's subordination to men, and as pillars of the gradual empowerment of women (including as writers and artists) in modern times. We will concentrate our study on **novels, short stories, tales, theatrical plays, essays and poems by women in Great Britain and North America, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until contemporary times**, to pay tribute to acclaimed women authors and to discover lesser-known female voices. We will investigate other cultural expressions, like **comics, dance, paintings, music, photography, movies & TV series** to revise the canon of the traditionally 'male' literature and art. We will ultimately celebrate the courage of women writers and artists who succeeded in expressing their voices, building their identities, and fighting for women's rights against patriarchal ideologies.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES:**

- To place women and women's writings and art at the **center of discourse and scholarship**
- To acquire knowledge of the sociopolitical, medical, cultural and artistic factors that have historically repressed female voices, but also to examine how **feminist activism and women's literature and art have worked together and helped one another to overcome gender inequality** in more recent times.
- To develop **accuracy, finesse, and empathy** in the act of evaluating women's literature and art

## **CONTENTS OF THE COURSE:**

### **1. Women through Literature and Art until 1918:**

- **Historical Overview in Great Britain and the USA:** Women's writings since the Middle Ages and the Colonialization of North America, The Victorian Age and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), The Birth of Feminism: Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet and John Stuart Mill; Seneca Falls and Margaret Fuller.

- **Paradigms of Patriarchal Femininity through Men's Eyes:** Edgar Allan Poe & the death of the Beautiful Woman (poem "Annabel Lee"), **The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood** (paintings about women) and **Christina Rossetti** (poem "Goblin Market") and **The Virgin Mary myth and The Femme Fatale** (Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde's *Salome*) in paintings.

**Path towards Women's suffrage in Great Britain and the USA:** historical overview, 'The New Woman' (Kate Chopin's story "The Storm" and Susan Glaspell's theatrical play "Trifles")

### **2. Women, Transatlantic Modernity and Modernism (Interwar period)**

- **Virginia Woolf:** gender roles (the hostess), war and writing. Analysis of *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), and essays: "Professions for Women" and "A Room of One's Own" (Chapter I)

- London, Paris & New York: **Post-Impressionism, Art Deco and Surrealism**. Paintings by **Tamara de Lempicka, Leonora Carrington, Georgia O'Keefe**. **Modern dance (Isadora Duncan: excerpts from *Autobiography* and choreographies)** and modern fiction: story "Bliss" by **Katherine Mansfield**.
- Romance and **Gothic Fiction: Daphne du Maurier's novel *Rebecca* (1938)** and its **film adaptation *Rebecca*** by Alfred Hitchcock (1940).

### 3. Women in Postwar Times and the Reemergence of Feminism (1950's-1980's):

- **Women's civil rights and the prison of domesticity**: essays *The Second Sex* (1949) by Simone de Beauvoir and *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) by Betty Friedan. Short story "To Room Nineteen" by **Doris Lessing** and selected poems by **Adrienne Rich**. Scenes from the film adaptation *The Hours* by Stephen Daldry (2002): the character Laura Brown.
- **Sylvia Plath and US patriarchal institutions**: Analysis of the novel *The Bell Jar* (1963)
- **Princesses & witches: Women in Fairytales**. Analysis of selected poems by **Anne Sexton, Charles Perrault's** tale "Bluebeard" and its rewriting by **Angela Carter**: "The Bloody Chamber". Analysis of scenes from **Disney movies** (*Cinderella, Snow White* or *Sleeping Beauty*).
- **Trauma & fiction (Anaïs Nin's story "Birth"), photography (Diane Arbus), theatre (Eve Ensler's monologue "My Vagina was My Village") & art (Frida Kahlo's paintings: illness and pain)**

### 4. Women and Contemporary Literature & Art (since 1980's until today):

- Ethnicity & Race: Black Feminism and 'Womanism' (Alice Walker). **Music**: reevaluation of **voices of African-American singers** (gospel, jazz and blues). Migration to the USA: short story "The Thing around your Neck" by **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**. Latinas: essay **Judith Ortiz Cofer's** "The Myth of the Latin Woman". Chinese-American silence: **Maxine Hong Kingston's** story "No Name Woman"
- **Women & Sexual Orientation**. Study of Jeannette Winterson's novel *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* and its adaptation to **TV series** (selected scenes).
- **Women & Sexual Violence**. Study of **Margaret Atwood's** novel *The Handmaid's Tale* and its adaptation to **TV series** (selected scenes).
- **Women & Comic**: evolution of genre, autobiography and **Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*** (2000-03)

### COMPULSORY READINGS:

Some texts/movies chosen are in the public domain, so you can get them for free on the Internet. But you will also receive by email/Virtual campus all literary texts and movies (scenes or full films) to be studied during the term. This means that you do not have any excuse not to read or watch them. **It is worthless to come to class without being prepared for the lectures, so please DO READ/WATCH ALL TEXTS beforehand.** It is not mandatory, but you are encouraged to purchase or borrow from the library some or all five novels of this course (*Mrs. Dalloway, Rebecca, The Bell Jar, Oranges are not the Only Fruit* and *The Handmaid's Tale*), on one of which you must choose to write the essay.

- Poems: **Edgar Allan Poe's** "Annabel Lee" and **Christina Rossetti's** "Goblin Market"
- **Kate Chopin's** short story "The Storm" and **Susan Glaspell's** play "Trifles"
- **Katherine Mansfield's** short story "Bliss" and **Isadora Duncan's *Autobiography*** (excerpts)
- **Virginia Woolf**: novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, essays ("Professions for Women", "A Room of One's Own")
- **Daphne du Maurier's** novel *Rebecca* and **Alfred Hitchcock's** film adaptation *Rebecca*.
- Essays (excerpts): Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*
- **Doris Lessing's** short story "To Room Nineteen", selected poems by **Adrienne Rich** and selected scenes from film adaptation *The Hours* by Stephen Daldry.
- **Sylvia Plath**: the novel *The Bell Jar*
- Selected poems by **Anne Sexton** and selected scenes from **Disney movies**
- **Charles Perrault's** tale "Bluebeard" and **Angela Carter's** rewriting: "The Bloody Chamber"
- **Anaïs Nin's** short story "Birth" and **Eve Ensler's** monologue "My Vagina was My Village"
- **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's** short story "The Thing around your Neck", **Judith Ortiz Cofer's** essay "The Myth of the Latin Woman" and **Maxine Hong Kingston's** "No Name Woman"
- **Jeanette Winterson's** novel *Oranges are not the Only Fruit*
- **Margaret Atwood's** novel *The Handmaid's Tale* and **Marjane Satrapi's** comic *Persepolis*.
- Selected scenes from TV series: *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* and *The Handmaid's Tale*
- **Paintings and photography** throughout the term to be sent before class or watched in the classroom
- Selected **music and dance**: African-American singers (jazz, gospel and blues) and Isadora Duncan

## COURSE EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- **60%- Compulsory Essay:** the **instructions** on how to write this essay will be sent to you by email or via Virtual campus during the course, and you will have, at least, eight weeks to write this paper. You must select one of the five novels to be read and studied in class (**Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* or Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*) and to find a convenient **topic of your choice** for your essay. The **submission deadline** is **the last day of class in April/May 2022**. This written work is to be submitted printed and during class hours (never by email). Grade "0" (zero) is the grade if plagiarism is detected, if the essay is not submitted, or if the essay is handed in after the deadline in April/May 2022. Bibliographical research (not only Internet sources) is required for this essay. Students have to quote both primary and 'scholarly' secondary sources in their work and provide a list of bibliography at the end of their paper.**

- **40%- Continuous Assessment: Mandatory Class Attendance and Participation. Seriousness, commitment and high motivation** are required in the classroom: no use of mobile phones or tablets, no computers for purposes other than taking class notes, no chatting or conversations with classmates. **Students must always come to class** (and sign the class attendance list everyday), and **be always on time** (no arrival in the classroom after the start of the class unless occasional *force majeure*), because **absenteeism, misbehavior and lack of punctuality have a negative impact on the final grade.**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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- Millet, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.
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- . *Of Women Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. New York: Norton, 1995.
- Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of Their Own*. London: Virago, 1977.
- . "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness". *Critical Inquiry* 8, 2 (1981): 179-205.
- . *Sister's Choice: Tradition and Change in American Women's Writing*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991.
- . *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*. London: Virago, 1998.
- . "Toward a Feminist Poetics" in *The New Feminist Criticism*. New York: Virago, 1985.
- Smith, Barbara. "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism". *The Radical Teacher* 7 (1978): 20-27.
- Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose*. London: Woman's Press, 1984.
- Wittig, Monique. *The Straight Mind and other Essays*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.



## COURSE PROGRAM

WEEK	LECTURES	ANNOUNCEMENTS	COMPULSORY READINGS
WEEK 1	<b>WOMEN &amp; HISTORY (until 1900)</b> -Women's Writings since Middle Ages and North America's Colonialization, Victorian Age, <b>the Birth of Feminism</b> (Mary Wollstonecraft & Margaret Fuller), Charlotte Brontë's <i>Jane Eyre</i>	Welcome by the <b>Professor</b>  <b>Course Presentation</b>	
WEEK 2	<b>WOMEN &amp; MEN'S EYES</b> <b>-PAINTING: The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Virgin Mary vs. Femme Fatale</b> (Aubrey Beardsley and Salomé) <b>-POETRY: Edgar Allan Poe's</b> "Annabel Lee" and <b>Christina Rossetti's</b> "Goblin Market"		-Edgar Allan Poe's poem "Annabel Lee" -Christina Rossetti's poem "Goblin Market"
WEEK 3	<b>WOMEN &amp; SUFFRAGE</b> -The New Woman: <b>Kate Chopin's</b> <b>SHORT STORY</b> "The Storm" and the woman scholar: <b>Jane Ellen Harrison</b> <b>-THEATRE: Susan Glaspell's</b> "Trifles" - Brief <b>historical review</b> of female Suffrage and WWI in UK and USA. - <b>Virginia Woolf: ESSAYS</b> "A Room of One's Own" and "Professions for Women"		<b>-Kate Chopin's</b> story "The Storm" <b>-Susan Glaspell's</b> play "Trifles" <b>-Virginia Woolf's</b> "A Room of One's Own" (chap. I) & "Professions for Women"
WEEK 4	<b>WOMEN &amp; MODERNISM</b> - <b>Virginia Woolf</b> and analysis of <b>NOVEL Mrs. Dalloway</b> (1925): gender roles (the hostess), madness and war.	<b>Compulsory essay:</b> instructions to write essay will be available (essay topic is to be chosen by the student)	<b>-Virginia Woolf's</b> novel <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>
WEEK 5	<b>WOMEN &amp; MODERNITY</b> <b>-Katherine Mansfield</b> and Post-impressionism. Analysis of <b>SHORT STORY "Bliss"</b> <b>-Isadora Duncan: modern DANCE</b> <b>-AVANT-GARDE PAINTING: Tamara de Tempicka, Georgia O'Keefe and Leonora Carrington</b>		<b>-Katherine Mansfield's</b> short story "Bliss" -Excerpts from <b>Isadora Duncan's</b> <i>Autobiography</i> and her choreographies
WEEK 6	<b>WOMEN &amp; THE GOTHIC</b> -Women's choice of Gothic fiction <b>-Daphne du Maurier.</b> Analysis of <b>NOVEL Rebecca</b> (1938): the romance. <b>-FILM ADAPTATION: Rebecca</b> (1940) by <b>Alfred Hitchcock.</b>		<b>-Daphne du Maurier's</b> novel <i>Rebecca</i> <b>-Alfred Hitchcock's</b> film adaptation <i>Rebecca</i>
WEEK 7	<b>WOMEN &amp; DOMESTICITY</b> <b>-ESSAYS: Simone de Beauvoir's</b> <i>The Second Sex</i> & <b>Betty Friedan's</b> <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> <b>-Doris Lessing's</b> <b>STORY</b> "To Room Nineteen" & <b>Adrienne Rich's</b> <b>POEMS.</b> <b>-FILM ADAPTATION: The Hours</b> by S. Daldry (the Laura Brown scenes)		-Excerpts from essays by <b>Simone de Beauvoir</b> and <b>Betty Friedan</b> <b>- Doris Lessing's</b> story and selected poems by <b>Adrienne Rich</b> -Laura Brown scenes from film <i>The Hours</i>

WEEK	LECTURES	ANNOUNCEMENTS	COMPULSORY READINGS
WEEK 8	<b>WOMEN &amp; USA</b> <b>SYLVIA PLATH</b> The author and analysis of NOVEL <i>The Bell Jar</i> (1963): the 'A' student, the burden of virginity, suicide, US psychiatry and the mental asylum		- Sylvia Plath's novel <i>The Bell Jar</i>
WEEK 9	<b>WOMEN &amp; FAIRY TALES</b> - Anne Sexton: analysis of POEMS "Briar Rose", "Rapunzel", "Cinderella" and "Snow White" - TALE: Charles Perrault's "Bluebeard" and Angela Carter's rewriting: "The Bloody Chamber" - Disney FILM ADAPTATIONS: analysis of scenes from "Snow White", "Cinderella" and "Sleeping Beauty"		- Selected poems by Anne Sexton - Charles Perrault's Tale "Bluebeard" and Angela Carter's story "The Bloody Chamber" - Scenes from selected Disney Movies
WEEK 10	<b>WOMEN &amp; TRAUMA</b> - Introduction to Trauma - STORY: Anaïs Nin's "Birth" - THEATRE: "My Vagina was my Village" by Eve Ensler - PHOTOGRAPHY: Diane Arbus and 'The Freaks of New York' - ART: Frida Kahlo and Illness		- Anaïs Nin's short story "Birth" - Eve Ensler's monologue "My Vagina was My Village"
WEEK 11	<b>WOMEN &amp; SAME-SEX LOVE</b> - Jeannette Winterson. Analysis of NOVEL <i>Oranges are not the Only Fruit</i> (1985): religion, mother-daughter relationship and lesbianism. Analysis of scenes from its TV SERIES		- Jeannette Winterson's <i>Oranges are not the Only Fruit</i> - Selected scene from TV Series <i>Oranges are not the Only Fruit</i>
WEEK 12	<b>WOMEN &amp; ETHNICITY</b> - Womanism and Black Feminism. MUSIC: gospel, jazz and blues - African women: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's SHORT STORY "The Thing around your Neck" - Latinas: Judith Ortiz Cofer's ESSAY "The Myth of the Latin Woman" - Chinese-American women: Maxine Hong Kingston's BOOK CHAPTER "No Name Woman"		- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's short story "The Thing around your Neck" - Judith Ortiz Cofer's essay "The Myth of the Latin Woman" - Maxine Hong Kingston's "No Name Woman"
<b>SEMANA SANTA / EASTER: SPRING BREAK:</b>			
WEEK 13	<b>WOMEN &amp; GENDER VIOLENCE</b> - Margaret Atwood: Analysis of NOVEL <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (1985): theocracy, women's sexual slavery, motherhood, rebellion and survival - TV SERIES: <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>		- Margaret Atwood's novel <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> - Selected scenes from TV Series <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>
WEEK 14	<b>WOMEN &amp; COMIC</b> - After WWII (Wonder Woman) - Women's graphic novel as autobiography. Analysis of COMIC <i>Persepolis</i> (2000-2003): history, witness and personal testimony	<b>Submission deadline: compulsory ESSAY</b> (delayed submission will not be accepted) <b>Farewell</b>	- Marjane Satrapi's comic <i>Persepolis</i> (vol. 1 to 4)