



ENGLISH 420: SPECIAL TOPICS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Topic	Studies of the Gendered Body: Freaks, Mutants and Outcasts
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 420 studies representations of the gendered body in twentieth and twenty-first century American novels that readily engage gender issues by way of bodies that are marginalized, transformative, and/or indicative of “otherness.” We will investigate the constructed nature of gender as a corporeal and linguistic phenomenon, and we will use gender as a vehicle to look at other themes such as sexuality, identity, patriarchy, masculinity, class, subjectivity and selfhood. Theoretical models (e.g., psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, feminism) will also be studied and applied. The goal of the course is to expose students to new ways of reading texts while considering the process of textual production itself.

There are three major topics of interrogation: [1] the inevitability of making categories, [2] play as a means of offsetting categories, and [3] the social, cultural and political ramifications of (de)categorization.

This is a reading-intensive multimode seminar. Half of our time together will be spent in classroom lectures and discussions. The other half will take place online, via Pilot, where you will discuss topics related to the course material in several forums.

PRIMER

Cranny-Francis, Ann et al. *Gender Studies: Term and Debates*. New York: Palgrave, 2003.

NOVELS

Barthelme, Donald. *Snow White*. Austin: Touchstone, 1996.

Dunn, Katherine. *Geek Love*. New York: Vintage, 2002.

Le Guin, Ursula. *The Left Hand of Darkness*. New York: Ace Trade, 2000.

Miller, Frank. *Sin City: That Yellow Bastard*. Milwaukee: Dark Horse, 2005.

Robins, Tom. *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*. New York: Bantam, 1990.

GRADING SCALE

Final grades will be based on the following percentages:

Discussions	25%
Midterm Essay	25%
Final Essay	50%

DISCUSSIONS

This is a discussion-oriented seminar. Sometimes I give short lectures, and typically I provide context for the books, theories, etc. that we will talk about on a particular day. But the onus is on you to make the class as interesting and edifying as you want it to be. Not only should you read the material for a class period, you should take notes and come prepared to ask questions. Above all, come prepared to *talk and think*. In ideal discussions, I function as a mediator for students to talk about books in an informed, intelligent, and respectful manner.

MIDTERM AND FINAL ESSAY

For the midterm essay, you must analyze the role of gender dynamics in one of the novels we have read and discussed so far in the course. You are not required to use secondary sources for this writing assignment, but you should use our primer, *Gender Studies: Terms and Debates*. Essays must be formatted according to MLA style. 4-5 pages.

The final essay should be based on the ideas discussed and developed in class and online throughout the quarter as well as your own research. You are responsible for developing your own topics and choosing one or more novels to write on. Essays should make use of secondary sources and be formatted according to MLA style. 8-10 pages.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism occurs when a writer: [1] copies verbatim from an author without quotation or attempts to disguise the act by selective omissions or alterations; [2] paraphrases from an author without naming the source in the text of the paper or providing a list of references at the end; [3] turns in a paper written by somebody else. As a point of academic integrity, you are required to submit original material of your own creation. Plagiarism of any material is a serious offense and, if established with sufficient evidence, can result in failure of the course or dismissal from the university.

STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER (SSC)



The Student Success Center offers FREE services to help students meet their full potential. Students can find tutoring in any subject, study buddies, one-on-one technology workshops, feedback on writing assignments, and general academic skills coaching. Web: lake.wright.edu/ssc. Phone: **419.586.0333**. Location: **182 Andrews**.

OFFICE OF DISABILITIES SERVICES (ODS)

If a student has a disability that requires special accommodations, it is essential that he or she discuss it with the instructor and the Office of Disability Services before or during the first week of the semester. ODS will work with these students on an individual basis to determine what services, equipment and accommodations would be appropriate regarding their documented needs. Students who qualify for these types of service should initiate contact with the instructor and/or ODS as soon as possible to enable the university to meet their needs. Please call Deanna Springer at **419.586.0366** or email her at **deanna.springer@wright.edu**. For more information, visit the ODS in **182 Andrews**.

LIBRARY AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER (LTC)

The Library and Technology Center provides free access to scholarly resources in all formats. Students can also visit the LTC for assistance with creating or editing multimedia projects (i.e., PowerPoint, Voiceovers, Website development, etc.). Phone: **419.586.8400**. Location: **197A Andrews Hall**.

CLASS CALENDAR

Below is a weekly breakdown of readings and assignments, including one film screening. Full descriptions of assignments will be discussed in class and are available on Pilot.

- 1** Introduction to the Course
Geek Love
Gender Studies (Chp. 1)
- 2** *Geek Love*
Gender Studies (Chp. 2)
- 3** *Sin City: That Yellow Bastard*
Gender Studies (Chp. 3)
- 4** FILM: *Sin City*
- 5** **Due:** Midterm Essay
The Left Hand of Darkness
- 6** *The Left Hand of Darkness*
Gender Studies (Chp. 4)
- 7** *Snow White*
Gender Studies (Chp. 5)
- 8** *Snow White*
Gender Studies (Chp. 6)
- 9** *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*

10 Office Hours

E **Due:** Final Essay