Course Description:

According to the Suffolk County Community College Catalog 2006-2008, “Sexism and the Humanities” “[i]nvestigates the philosophical, mythological and religious origins of sexism and develops the way these create a gendered perspective in all societies. Analyzes definitions of sexism and implications of biological differences. Investigates consequences of sexism and efforts to create alternatives through study of women and men in the arts (art, music, language and popular media)” (235). We will attempt to accomplish all of this by examining texts that range from ancient to contemporary, popular to obscure, and mainstream to subversive. In addition to carefully reading and enthusiastically discussing all assigned texts, students will develop a research essay related somehow to this semester’s area of inquiry, and will present his/her discoveries to the class.

Required Texts:


Perhaps 1-2 other texts TBA.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Class participation and quizzes 10%
Class participation means coming to class and arriving on time, showing evidence of thorough preparation for each class, and thoughtfully listening and contributing (verbally) to each class discussion. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class; if the class consistently shows evidence of preparation, quizzes will be given less frequently.

Reading responses (5) 20%
Five reading responses are due during the course of the semester. These are typewritten responses of 1 to 1 ½ pages in length (no more, no less) on a topic related to a day’s readings. For example, if you wish to turn in a response paper on 9/5, the response paper should discuss some aspect of De Pizan, Anger, and/or Cavendish. The particular focus
of these short papers is up to you, but generally a good response paper will take issue with, support, question, amplify, or draw a connection with the work(s) to which the student is responding. The five response essays may be turned in any time during the semester (you pick the due dates); however, no more than one response paper (from the same student) will be accepted per week.

**Exam #1**  20%
An in-class examination consisting of passage identification and short essay questions, covering the material up to the date of the examination.

**Exam #2**  20%
An in-class examination consisting of passage identification and short essay questions, covering the material after Exam #1 up to the date of the examination.

**Research paper and presentation**  30%
A ten-page research essay on a topic related to “Sexism and the Humanities.” Students are encouraged to choose a topic of particular interest to them. A list of possible topics will be distributed the second week of class, along with a handout outlining the format for the essay. Students will submit a research prospectus early in the semester. The final class sessions will be reserved for ten-minute(ish) presentations of student research.

**Course Policies and Procedures**

Academic Integrity, Cheating, and Plagiarism: The SCCC Catalog 2006-2008 defines these terms more extensively, but for our purposes, academic integrity means doing your own work, and cheating and plagiarism violations of academic integrity. Plagiarism means using the words or ideas of another person without properly crediting your source. I have discovered that some students commit plagiarism intentionally (like downloading a paper off of the Internet) and unintentionally (usually by not following the rules of citation properly). Neither intentional nor unintentional plagiarism is acceptable in college-level work. We will discuss citation on the second day of class. From that point on, you are accountable for properly crediting any sources used in your writing. If you have questions then or at any time during the semester, it is your responsibility to ask them. Ignorance in this matter does not constitute an excuse. Cheating is only another version of plagiarism; the distinction is usually made because cheating generally occurs in contexts in which citation/borrowing is irrelevant. In other words, you wouldn’t copy your peer’s test paper, write “All answers courtesy of Bob,” and expect to receive credit for the exam. Both cheating and plagiarism are serious violations of academic integrity, offenses which by their nature are antithetical to the principles of a learning environment. Any student who is caught cheating or plagiarizing, or aiding and abetting cheating or plagiarizing (i.e. acting like the aforementioned Bob), will receive an F for the course and will be referred to the College for consideration of other disciplinary action. This is in keeping with the college catalog, which states that violations of academic integrity “may result in a failing grade for the course and/or serious disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Conduct” (69).
**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend class and to arrive on time. Reading quizzes will be given at the beginning of class and will not be given again for those who are late or absent. Attendance will be taken once at the beginning of class. Frequent (more than two) absences will have a deleterious effect on your grade. Students who miss more than three classes—for whatever reason—will receive a failing grade.

**Conduct:** This is a college and everyone here is expected to act like an adult. Students who are disruptive or inattentive will be dismissed from class and will be counted absent for that class period. Examples of unacceptable behavior include talking out of turn, audibly burping, walking in and out of class excessively, writing social notes, sleeping, reading materials that do not pertain to our class, allowing cell phones, etc., to sound in class, and attempting to derail class discussions.

**Late Work:** All assignments are due and all examinations must be taken on the dates indicated on the syllabus. Only in cases of documented and unforeseeable emergencies will make-up examinations be given or late work accepted.

**Reading:** All reading is expected to be done in advance of the class session in which the reading is to be discussed. For example, if the syllabus says that on 9/5 we are discussing De Pizan, Anger, and Cavendish, those readings should be completed before class on that day. While it is reasonable (and encouraged) for you to come to class with questions about a particular text, you should read well enough to have a basic comprehension of the text before you come to class. This may mean reading the materials more than once!

**Tentative Schedule of Assignments:**

8/27 Course introduction; syllabus distributed; handouts distributed; student information collected

8/29 Discussion of reading from handouts; historical assumptions about the sexes; citation

9/3 No class—Labor Day

9/5 Unit I: Historical Foundations of Sexism and Public Expression Discussion of Christine De Pizan 13-18, Jane Anger 19-21, and Margaret Cavendish 21-23

9/10 Discussion of Mary Wollstonecraft 41-47 and Maria Edgeworth 48-51

9/17 Discussion of George Elliot 79-86, Fanny Fern 92-94, and Virginia Woolf 123-137

9/19 Discussion of *The Awakening*, Chapters I-VIII; Biographical and Historical Contexts 113-136
9/24 Discussion of *The Awakening*, Chapters IX-XIX; Biographical and Historical Contexts 137-156; syllabus proposals distributed

9/26 Discussion of *The Awakening*, Chapters XX-XXX; Criticism 159-178; syllabus vote


10/3 Exam #1 given in class; new syllabus distributed

10/8 Discussion of “The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture” and “This Sex Which Is Not One”; final paper prospectus due in class.

10/10 Discussion of *A Well of Loneliness*, Chapters One through Ten

10/15 Discussion of *A Well of Loneliness*, Chapters Eleven through Twenty-Two

10/17 Discussion of *A Well of Loneliness*, Chapters Twenty-Three through Thirty-Four

10/22 Library session #1; meet in the Library Reference Room (Peconic 206)

10/24 Discussion of *A Well of Loneliness*, Chapters Thirty-Five through Forty-Three

10/29 Discussion of *A Well of Loneliness*, Chapters Forty-Four through Fifty-Six

10/31 Discussion of selections from *Thresholds of Difference: Structures of Address in Zora Neale Hurston* and *Black Writing, White Reading: Race and the Politics of Feminist Interpretation*

11/5 Library session #2; meet in the Library Reference Room (Peconic 206)

11/7 Discussion of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Chapters 1-6

11/12 No class—Veterans’ Day

11/14 Discussion of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Chapters 7-13

11/19 Discussion of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Chapters 14-20

11/21 No class—Thanksgiving recess

11/26 Discussion of *Anita and Me*, pages TBA
11/28 Discussion of *Anita and Me*, pages TBA

12/3 Discussion of *Anita and Me*, pages TBA

12/5 Discussion of *Anita and Me*, pages TBA

12/10 Final papers due in class; Exam #2

12/12 Final presentations

12/17 Last day of class; final presentations; final papers returned

12/19 No class—Friday day classes meet instead of Wednesday day classes