

English 381R: Contemporary American Women's Novels

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Course Description: We will be reading novels by American women writers and discussing questions of genre (What makes a text a novel; What are the variations on the novel), gender (Do women write differently? What do these writers have to say about American women's lives?), and questions of identity, nationality and ethnicity.

Course Requirements:

- 1) Reading: you will be asked to read approximately 150 pages a week; in addition, there will be some secondary readings in nonfiction and critical theory.
- 2) Weekly reading responses, 1-2 pages, due every Friday.
- 3) One 3-5 page paper
- 4) One formal research paper
- 5) Occasional classroom exercises, quizzes
- 6) final exam

Policies:

Attendance: You should be present for every class and prepared to participate. If you are absent, you are responsible for informing yourself about any missed assignments or announcements, and for material covered during that class. All absences should be for good reason; however, you may miss two classes without explanation. I will lower your grade for every unexcused absence after these two. Excessive absences (more than five) may be cause for dropping you from the class.

Class Participation: This will count for 15% of your grade. For full credit, you will need to attend every class ready to participate. This means not just responding when called on, but coming to class with questions from the reading and topics for discussion, responding to other students' comments on the text, and taking active responsibility for the liveliness and pertinence of discussion.

Plagiarism: In this course, as in all other courses, you are bound by the Honor Code. Therefore, the work you submit for this class must be your own. If you use any outside sources in your writing for this course, you must acknowledge them by using the MLA system of documentation, which is presented in detail in *The Bedford Handbook*. **All Websites or other Internet sources must be acknowledged and documented.** If you have any questions regarding the Honor Code as it applies to this course, please consult me or pages 94-97 of the Oxford College catalog.

Grade breakdown:

Weekly responses	20%
Short paper	15%
Research Paper	25%
Class Participation	15%
Final Exam	25%

All grades for this course will be recorded using the plus/minus scale described on page 32 of the Oxford College catalog.

Required Texts:

Ana Castillo So Far From God
Edwidge Danticat Breath, Eyes, Memory
Louise Erdrich Tracks
Gish Jen Typical American
Toni Morrison Song of Solomon
Bharati Mukherjee Jasmine

Tentative Weekly Outline of Reading:

January 15	Introduction and Objectives
Jan 20	Martin Luther King Day
Jan 22-24	<u>Tracks</u>
Jan 27-31	<u>Tracks</u>
February 3-7	<u>Song of Solomon</u>
Feb 10-14	<u>Song of Solomon</u>
Feb 17-21	<u>Song of Solomon</u>
Feb 24-28	<u>Jasmine</u>
March 3-7	<u>Typical American</u>
March 10-15	Spring Recess

March 17-21	<u>Typical American</u>
March 24-28	<u>Breath, Eyes, Memory</u>
March 31-April 4	<u>Breath, Eyes, Memory</u>
April 7-11	<u>So Far From God</u>
April 14-18	<u>So Far From God</u>
April 21-25	<u>TBA</u>
April 28	Review

Exam: Friday, May 2 at 9:00