**CORE106 Fall 2015**

**September 11, 2015**

**Class Notes**

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* c 3 and 4

Big Themes:  
  
Start to see some shifting of the “social construction” frame. “Motherhood”? “Nerves that feed the brain…”? Do men speak with a different voice?

Complaint about Woolf whining start to resonate. Why shouldn’t poverty and hardship inform and feed great art? Why is the anger necessarily a problem?

Think about incandescence. Why is it so important to Woolf’s understanding of writing?

* Writing is really hard.
* Anger undermines it.
* It requires contemplation.

Does she shortchange the importance of experience?

1. What are the conditions for a considered life?
2. What do we make of the tension between heroic female characters and their literal treatment in history?
   1. P. 43: Imaginatively she is of the highest importance…
3. What does VW mean by “she is a vessel”?
4. Could you imagine that Judith Shakespeare’s travails could have made her a **better** writer? (see also p. 56).
5. On p. 48: She suggests something about the law of motherhood. Does that role make women inherently “different” and bely the idea of social construction.
6. Is she being accurate about laboring, uneducated, servile people (p. 48).
7. We see no evidence of Shakespeare writing about his “mind”. What does VW think self awareness has done to art?
   1. Explain the word “incandescence.”
8. Memo: Writing is really hard. The world’s “notorious indifference.”
   1. Is VW’s understanding of the writing life understating the need for observation?

The chapters are filled with evidence of the contempt for women in arts (the Johnson quote on p. 54).

Chapter 4:

The women who did write before the 1800’s had anger issues.

Part of the oppression is that women had to write through the prism of that anger.

Aphra Behn: Does she make too much about the “money” part of it?

“Extreme activity of the mind…women could start to make money by writing.”

Why novels? Simple..less concentration is required.

Why is Jane Austen different? “Without hate, without bitterness…” p. 67

Does the idea of “masculine values” suggests that the “social construction” frame starts to shift? (p. 73). “Again the nerves that feed the brain would seem to differ in men and women.”