



**ENGLISH 420
SPECIAL TOPICS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE
STUDIES OF THE GENDERED BODY: FREAKS, MUTANTS & OUTCASTS
SPRING 2011**

Professor: D. Harlan Wilson
Office: 257 Dwyer
Phone: 419.586.0317
Email: david.wilson@wright.edu
Course Website: www.wright.edu/~david.wilson

Meeting Place & Time

184 Andrews | TTh 11:40-1:20

Course Description

ENG 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 & Debates*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 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 given 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 Essay

In this 4-5 page 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 & Debates*. Essays must be formatted according to MLA style.

Final Essay

This 8-10 page essay should be based on the ideas discussed and developed in class and online throughout the quarter as well as your own research. Students are responsible for developing their 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.

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.

Class Calendar

Week	Schedule
1	Introduction to the Course <i>Geek Love</i> <i>Gender Studies</i> – Chp. 1
2	<i>Geek Love</i> <i>Gender Studies</i> – Chp. 2
3	<i>Sin City: That Yellow Bastard</i> <i>Gender Studies</i> – Chp. 3
4	FILM: <i>Sin City</i>
5	Due: Midterm Essay <i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i>
6	<i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i> <i>Gender Studies</i> – Chp. 4
7	<i>Snow White</i> <i>Gender Studies</i> – Chp. 5
8	<i>Snow White</i> <i>Gender Studies</i> – Chp. 6

9 *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*

10 Office Hours

E **Due:** Final Essay

(NOTE: This schedule is subject to minor changes.)