COLT 1812H Professor Meera Viswanathan

F 3-5:20 Marston Hall #108

Spring 2014 Office Phone:  x3-3855

Office Hours:  W11-12, F 11-12 1:00-2:00 and by appt.

**"Women's Literary Make-up": Mirrors, Maquillage and the Tenth Muse**

In this course, we will focus on the problem of creative inspiration for women writers and artists and how the pursuit of aesthetic perfection, both somatic and literary as well as their interrelation, becomes a recurring motif in women's writing from various traditions. The role of mirrors, the body as canvas, metaphors of sewing and the domestic ‘arts,’ make-up and the notion of female guises, female creation versus procreation, the question of women’s muses and the erotics of female aesthetics will be among the topics explored.  Readings will include fiction and poetry from various modern world literary traditions as well as a number of theoretical essays. This is an undergraduate seminar open to juniors and seniors. Prerequisite: coursework in literature and at least one course in gender studies/women's studies.

In addition to the required texts, I frequently will recommend other primary and secondary readings that complement or elaborate upon critical aspects of this course.  Other requirements for the course include regular class attendance and vigorous participation in discussion (15%); weekly short response papers (1-2 pages) due as noted by Wednesday at 5 PM on CANVAS (20%); two short papers (5 pages) (30%) and one longer seminar paper/project (12-15 pages) (35%).

**Schedule:**

**Week One- The monstrous nature of mythic women artists.**

January 24 F Introduction.  Syllabus.

Women, mirrors and the Tenth Muse phenomenon.

Pygmalion, Procne/Philomela, Medusa and Penelope.

**Week Two – Erotics of female aesthetics**

January 31 F Readings:  “The Woman Writer” by Toshiko Tamura

“Smile of a Mountain Witch” by Minako Oba

“Rabbits” by Mieko Kanai

“ A Child is Being Beaten” by Sigmund Freud “ Beating Fantasies and Daydreams” by Anna Freud

**Week Three- Painted ladies/ladies who paint**

February7 F Readings:  Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*.

“Taking the Pencil out of God’s Hand” by Frances Dolan

“Making Up, Making Over” by Kathy Peiss

**Week Four-   No class**

February 14 F No class (rescheduled for Reading Period).

**Week Five- Piecing together the female artist as misfit**

February 21 F Readings: L. Frank Baum, *Patchwork Girl of Oz*

Shelley Jackson, *Patchwork Girl*

“I am a Double Agent” by Paul Hackman

“Of Needles and Pens and Women’s Work” by Kathryn King

**Week Six- Literary Make-up:  “I have heard of your paintings too…”**

February 28 F Readings: Jean Rhys, *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie*

“The Make-up of Jean Rhys’ Fiction”

Recommended:

“A Defense of Cosmetics” by Charles Baudelaire

“The Pervasion of Rouge” by Max Beerbohm

“The Aesthetic Significance of the Face”  by Georg Simmel

**Week Seven- Private correspondence:  women’s revelations**

March 7 F Readings: Mariama Ba, *So Long a Letter*

“Epistolary Friendship” by Ann McElaney-Johnson

“Writing Home” by Irene Tucker

“Mariama Ba’s “Une Si Longue Lettre” by Shaun Iriam

**Week Eight- Mirroring self**

March 14 F Readings: Charlotte Bronte, *Villette*

“The Queen’s Looking Glass” from *Madwoman in the Attic*, ed. Gilbert and Gubar

**Week Nine-   Female creation versus procreation**

March 21 F Readings: Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale*

“‘Teaching Them to Read’” by Harriet Bergmann

“The World As It Will Be” by Stephanie Barbe Hammer

“Reconstructing Margaret Atwood’s Protagonists” by Patricia Goldblatt

**Week Ten- HOLIDAY**

**Week Eleven-   Challenging the norms of culture, politics and genre:  the female graphic novel**

April 4 F Readings: Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*

Alison Beck, *Fun House*

“Frames and Mirrors in Marjane Satrapi’s Persepolis” by Babak Elahi

“The Entangled Self” by Nancy K. Miller

**Week Twelve- Conjuring worlds:  the female artist as sorceress**

April 11 F Readings: George Eliot, *Adam Bede*

“Realism Affirmed and Dismantled in Adam Bede” by J. Hillis Miller

“Narrative Transference and Female Narcissism” by Nancy Anne Marck

“‘The Sound of the Scythe Being Whetted’” by Sarah Gates

**Week Thirteen- Disguise, illusion and allusion:  women’s covert aesthetic strategies**

April       18 F Readings: Fumiko Enchi, *Masks*

“The Double Weave” by Amy Vladeck Heinrich

“Eroticism and the Writings of Enchi Fumiko” by Yoko McClain

**Week Fourteen- Portait of an Aesthetician**

April 25 F Readings: Clarice Lispector, *Agua Viva*

“Freedom and Self-Realization” by Earl E. Fitz

“Mother, Blessed Be You Among Cockroaches” by Tace Hedrick

**Week Fifteen (Reading Period)**

May 2 F Conclusion.

**May 10 FINAL PAPERS/PROJECTS DUE, on CANVAS and hardcopy in my box**

**Required Reading List:**

1.  *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* by Frank Baum

CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (September 9, 2012)

ISBN-10: 1479286125

ISBN-13: 978-1479286126

2.  *Patchwork Girl* by Shelley Jackson

CD-ROM: 300 pages

Eastgate Systems Inc; Cdr edition (January 1995)

ISBN-10: 1884511236

ISBN-13: 978-1884511233

3*.  Persepolis* by Marjane  Satrapi

Pantheon; 1 edition (October 30, 2007)

ISBN-10: 0375714839

ISBN-13: 978-0375714832

4. *Villette* by Charlotte Bronte

Wordsworth Editions Ltd; First Edition edition (April 1, 1998)

ISBN-10: 185326072X

ISBN-13: 978-1853260728

5.  *Agua Viva* by Clarice Lispector

New Directions Books

New Directions (June 13, 2012)

ISBN-10: 0811219909

ISBN-13: 978-0811219907

6.  *Masks* by Fumiko Enchi

Vintage; 1st Aventura ed edition (September 12, 1983)

ISBN-10: 0394722183

ISBN-13: 978-0394722184

7.  *Adam Bede* by George Eliot

Signet Classics, Mass Market Paperback

Signet Classics (August 3, 2004)

ISBN-10: 0451529421

ISBN-13: 978-0451529428

8.  *So Long a Letter* by Mariama Ba

African Writers, Heinemann; New Ed edition (September 2008)

ISBN-10: 0435913522

ISBN-13: 978-0435913526

9.  *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin

Norton Critical Edition, Norton(1993)

ASIN: B004U29GXG

10.  *The Handmaids Tale* by Margaret Atwood

Anchor; 1st Anchor Books edition (March 16, 1998)

ISBN-10: 038549081X

ISBN-13: 978-0385490818