

Kristina Aikens  
Email: Kristina.Aikens@simmons.edu  
Office: C301B  
Office Hours: TTh 5:00-6:20 & by appointment

**English 193: Women in Literature**  
Fall 2005 TTh 6:30-7:50pm

This course will primarily explore novels written by women, about women, and arguably, for women. Over the course of the semester, we will consider the shared concerns as well as the significant differences among these writers. We will discuss how their works—which span in time from the early nineteenth century to a futuristic world created in the late twentieth—engage with concerns about marriage, love, sexuality, madness, confinement, childhood, motherhood, religion, work, political activism, history, and autobiography, as well as other topics that arise. Along the way, we will also discuss two films that raise related questions.

**Required Texts**

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford University Press)  
Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Penguin)  
Buchi Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* (George Braziller)  
Julia Alvarez, *In the Time of Butterflies* (Plume)  
Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (Grove)  
Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (Anchor)

**Course Requirements and Grade Percentages**

Attendance (required)  
4 Response papers: 40% (10% each)  
2 Formal papers: 40% (20% each)  
Quizzes and Participation: 20%

**About the Course Requirements**

**Response papers:** You are required to write four short (2 pages) response papers on novels over the course of the semester. (You may not write on films unless you compare them with a novel.) The first two response papers **must** be on *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*; after that, the next two response papers can be on any of the four remaining novels. These papers must focus primarily on **material we have not yet discussed in class**; for example, if you wish to hand in a response on September 15, it must focus primarily on Volumes 2, 3, and/or 4 of *Pride and Prejudice*, **not** on Volume 1. That said, you may make connections between your primary focus and material from other parts of the novel or even other texts. You may touch on class discussions but should not simply regurgitate what we've already covered. Your papers must be analytical in nature; you may discuss emotional responses to the material if you wish, but you must then analyze exactly how the text achieved that emotional response.

**Formal papers:** You will also write two longer (5 pages) formal essays that will posit an argument about some aspect of a novel (or novels) and analyze the novel(s) to provide extensive evidence for that argument.

**Quizzes:** I will periodically give short quizzes. If you've done the reading, they should be easy. It is *your* responsibility to contact me if you want to make up a quiz.

**Participation:** This is a discussion class; therefore, I expect everyone to make a concerted effort to contribute verbally and to listen and respond to your classmates with respect. Obviously, you must keep up with the reading in order to participate in conversation. If you never speak in class, it will be hard for me not to assume you haven't done the reading. I understand that speaking in class is more difficult for some students than for others, but I hope everyone will make a sincere effort to contribute. Likewise, in order to help create a comfortable environment where opinions can be expressed, those of you who have no problem speaking in class should make an effort not to dominate, but to allow others the space to speak as well.

**Attendance:** You are allowed two absences for this class. Please reserve them for illness and emergencies. After two absences, your participation grade will be lowered by half a grade for each subsequent absence (i.e., a B becomes a B-). Five absences will result in a failing grade.

### **Formatting Your Papers**

All papers must be typed in a 12-point font, double-spaced, and printed in black ink. The margins should be one inch on all four sides. Please staple your papers, number each page, and include the following information in the top left-hand corner of the first page: your name, the class name and number, my name, the date, and the paper number (i.e. Response #1). Of course, you should always title your papers (including responses) and proofread carefully.

### **Office Hours**

I am always willing to meet with students outside class to discuss any aspect of the class. I will regularly be in my office during my office hours, but I am also available by appointment. Please email me or speak with me in class to set up a time. If you are trying to contact me on a Tues or Thurs about a meeting that day, you may also call my cell phone, 617-909-3161, as I will probably be at Simmons or on my way, even if I'm not in my office. Please use this number sparingly.

**Schedule: English 193, Fall 2005** \*Note: I reserve the right to change the schedule if necessary.

Sept. 8 Introduction

Sept. 13 Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Volume 1)

Sept. 15 *Pride and Prejudice* (Vol 2)

Sept. 20 *Pride and Prejudice* (Vol 3)

Sept. 22 Bridget Jones and *Pride and Prejudice* (Last day for *P&P* response papers)

Sept. 27 Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Vol 1)

Sept. 29 Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Vol 2)

Oct. 4 *Jane Eyre* (Vol 3)

Oct. 6 *Jane Eyre* and *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (Last day for *JE* response papers)

Oct. 11 Holiday – no classes

Oct. 13 Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* (Chapters 1-7)

Oct. 18 *The Joys of Motherhood* (Chapters 8-13)

Oct. 20 *The Joys of Motherhood* (Chapters 14-end)

Oct. 25 *The Joys of Motherhood*

**Formal Essay # 1 due in class**

Oct. 27 Alvarez, *In the Time of Butterflies* (Vol 1)

Nov. 1 *In the Time of Butterflies* (Vol 2)

Nov. 3 *In the Time of Butterflies* (Vol 3 & epilogue)

Nov. 8 *In the Time of Butterflies*

(\*Reminder: after *In the Time of Butterflies*, only two more novels remain for response papers.)

Nov. 10 Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (Chapters 1-3)

Nov. 15 *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (Chapters 4-6)

Nov. 17 *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (Chapters 7-8)

Nov. 22 & 24 Fall Break

Nov. 29 Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (Chapters I-VI)

Dec. 1 *The Handmaid's Tale* (Chapters VII-XI)

Dec. 6 *The Handmaid's Tale* (Chapters XII-end, including “Historical Notes”)

Dec. 8 *The Handmaid's Tale*

Dec. 13 Formal Essay #2 due in my mailbox by noon