

Jacquelyn Ardam, Visiting Assistant Professor
email: jwardam@colby.edu

Class: Mondays & Wednesdays, 11:00-12:15, Miller 241
Office Hours: Mondays, 4-6; Thursdays, 12-4, Miller 218

English 398:
Forms of Otherness: 21st-Century Women's Writing



This course will examine poetry, lyric prose, mixed-genre, and hybrid works of literature by 21st-century American women writers. We will be concerned with the relationship between cultural, historical, and social concerns (including race, colonialism, gender, and sexuality) and the structures, restraints, and (im)possibilities of language and poetic form. We will pay particular attention to the intersections of otherness and poetic forms, and consider the ways that formal experiments challenge hegemonic and oppressive structures. We will read work by Harryette Mullen, Cathy Park Hong, Rosa Alcalá, Natalie Diaz, Juliana Spahr, Kate Durbin, M. NourbeSe Philip, Robin Coste Lewis, Claudia Rankine, Leslie Jamison, and Maggie Nelson.

Texts:

Harryette Mullen, *Sleeping with the Dictionary* 978-0520231436

Cathy Park Hong, *Dance Dance Revolution* 978-0393333114

Rosa Alcalá, *Undocumentaries* 978-1848610729

Natalie Diaz, *My Brother Was an Aztec* 978-1556593833

Juliana Spahr, *The Transformation* 978-1891190261

M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!* 978-0819571694

Robin Coste Lewis, *Voyage of the Sable Venus* 978-1101875438

Claudia Rankine, *Citizen* 978-1555976903

Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts* 978-1555977351

PDFs of additional readings on course website

Learning Goals:

- Identify formal trends and concerns in experimental writing by women poets in the 21st-century
- Understand the relationships between writers and their cultural, political, and aesthetic contexts
- Articulate, enact, and apply feminist, critical race, and postcolonial critiques and politics of texts
- Develop close reading skills particularly attuned to form
- Develop argumentation skills based on close reading

Assignments and Grading:

- Paper 1 (6-7) pages: 25%
- Paper 2 (6-7) pages: 25%
- Presentation: 10%
- Reading Responses: 20%
- Participation: 20%

You will receive separate handouts that include guidelines for each of your papers.

Reading Responses: You are required to upload a 500-word reading response on the course website on Moodle **SEVEN TIMES** throughout the semester. Your responses may be on any of the material that we are reading that week (NOT on something we've read already discussed in class). You may submit your responses any week you'd like. I will often use reading responses as a jumping off point for class discussion, and will likely share responses in class. In your response, you may identify the major issues and concerns of a text and/or do close readings. **YOUR RESPONSE SHOULD BE ANALYTICAL.** Please end each response with at least one question; this may be a question that you have about the text or a question that you think will spur class discussion. Your responses are due at **7pm on the Sunday** before class. Late responses will not be allowed.

Submission Instructions:

1. Write your response in Word (or whatever other program you use). Make sure your name is on the top of the page.
2. Save it as a .doc, .docx, or PDF and label it: "Last Name Week #" for example: "Ardam 1."
3. Log on to Moodle, click on the course webpage, and click on the relevant week of class. If you're uploading a response for week 2, click on the "reading response" assignment under "Topic 2."
4. Upload your file.
5. Click on "Save Changes," then "Submit for grading."

Presentation: You will sign up for a presentation during the second week of classes. Your presentation will be 10-15 minutes long. You will receive a separate handout that include guidelines for your presentations.

Participation: This is a very small class and its success depends on active dialogue between students. Please come to class fully prepared to discuss the material. If you have trouble speaking in class, you might want to consider bringing prepared questions and/or comments with you. You cannot participate in class if you are not actually in class. More than one unexcused absence will have a negative effect on your participation grade.

Office Hours: I will hold walk-in office hours on Mondays from 4-6 and Thursdays from 12-4. I am also available at other times by appointment. I will hold extra office hours during the week before papers are due.

Paper Policy: Papers are due via the course website by the time and date marked on the syllabus. You may submit your paper as a Word document (.doc or .docx) or as a PDF. If you send me a corrupted file or a file that I cannot open, your paper will count as late until I receive a workable file. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for each late day. I will return your papers to you via the course website. I may grant extensions in extenuating circumstances; when in doubt, come and talk to me.

Format of Papers: All papers should include your name, my name, the class title and number, and date. They should be formatted in size 12 font, with 1 inch margins. They must include a Works Cited page.

Email Policy: Please feel free to contact me via email at jwardam@colby.edu with questions or concerns throughout the semester. I will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week; my email responses may take longer over the weekend. I will not respond to any questions about papers 24 hours before each of the papers is due, nor will I read entire drafts of your paper. If you have long or complicated questions, I suggest that you meet with me during office hours. Meeting in person is usually much more productive than exchanging emails.

Electronics Policy: Please silence your electronic devices during class. In the interest of encouraging attentive, focused, and open class discussions, **laptops, tablets, kindles, etc. will NOT be allowed in class.** You will not need them. If you need to use one of these devices because of a disability, please speak with me.

Academic Honesty: Honesty, integrity, and personal responsibility are cornerstones of a Colby education and provide the foundation for scholarly inquiry, intellectual discourse, and an open and welcoming campus community. These values are articulated in the Colby Affirmation and are central to this course. Students are expected to demonstrate academic honesty in all aspects of this course. Any violations of academic honesty will be referred to the Coordinator of Academic Integrity; sanctions may include suspension or expulsion.

According to Colby (<http://web.colby.edu/farnham-writerscenter/academic-honesty/>), academic dishonesty includes more than just the purposeful submission of another's material as one's own without citation. Academic dishonesty also includes:

- **double-submitting**, or using the same work to meet assignments in two or more courses;
- **insufficient paraphrasing**, or representing someone else's language too closely as your own;
- **pirating ideas**, or using the thoughts, concepts, and analysis of someone else—even those of a friend or roommate in casual conversation—as your own;
- **incomplete citation**, or failing to include all necessary elements of documentation in your citations (for example, omitting either in-text citations or a Works Cited pages when both are required);
- **under-documentation**, or combining several sources into a single one.

For more, see page 9 of your student handbook on "Academic Honesty" (<http://www.colby.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Colby-College-Student-Handbook-2-16.pdf>). If you have any questions about plagiarism, don't hesitate to contact me! I am happy to talk through any concerns you may have about academic honesty.

Athletic Participation: While Colby College is supportive of athletic participation by its students, academics takes priority over athletics. Both NCAA and Colby rules prohibit missing class for practices. In the case of overlapping commitments between class and athletic competitions, you must meet with me as soon as possible to discuss these overlaps. You may request permission to miss class and make up the missed work, but I have the final authority either to grant or to withhold permission.

Religious Holidays: Colby College is supportive of the religious practices of its students, faculty, and staff. The College is committed to ensuring that all students are able to observe their religious beliefs without academic penalty. If you observe a religious holiday that will impact your work in this course, please see me at the beginning of the term. We will then work to find a reasonable accommodation that will allow you to complete the academic work.

Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Statement: Colby College prohibits and will not tolerate sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination of any kind. Colby is legally obligated to investigate sexual misconduct (including, but not limited to sexual assault and sexual harassment).

If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact Colby Counseling Services ([207-859-4490](tel:207-859-4490)) or the Director of the Gender and Sexual Diversity Program, Emily Schusterbauer ([207-859-4093](tel:207-859-4093)).

Students should be aware that faculty members are considered responsible employees; as such, if you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a faculty member, they have an obligation to report it to Colby's Title IX Coordinator. "Disclosure" may include communication in-person, via email/phone/text, or through class assignments.

To learn more about sexual misconduct or report an incident, visit <http://www.colby.edu/sexualviolence/>.

Schedule of Readings

NB: Selections marked with * are available on course website

Week 1:

Wednesday, Feb 1: Introductions

Week 2:

Monday Feb 6: Harryette Mullen, *Sleeping with the Dictionary* (1-43)

Wednesday Feb 8: Harryette Mullen, *Sleeping with the Dictionary* (44-85)

Week 3:

Monday Feb 13: Cathy Park Hong, *Dance Dance Revolution* (1-68)

Wednesday Feb 15: Cathy Park Hong, *Dance Dance Revolution* (69-120)

Week 4:

Monday Feb 20: Rosa Alcalá, *Undocumentaries* (1-52)

Wednesday Feb 22: Rosa Alcalá, *Undocumentaries* (53-84)

Week 5:

Monday Feb 27: Natalie Diaz, *My Brother was an Aztec* (1-68)

Wednesday March 1: Natalie Diaz, *My Brother was an Aztec* (69-103)

Week 6:

Monday March 6: Juliana Spahr, *The Transformation* (1-133 & afterword)

Wednesday March 8: Juliana Spahr, *The Transformation* (134-223)

Week 7:

Wednesday March 13: Juliana Spahr, *The Transformation*

Wednesday March 15: selections from Kate Durbin, *E! Entertainment**

Week 8:

Monday March 20: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

Wednesday March 22: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

Week 9:

Monday March 27: M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!*

Wednesday March 29: M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!*

*****PAPER #1 DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 31 @ NOON*****

Week 10:

Monday April 3: Robin Coste Lewis, *Voyage of the Sable Venus and Other Poems* (33-116)

Wednesday April 5: Robin Coste Lewis, *Voyage of the Sable Venus and Other Poems* (1-32)

Week 11:

Monday April 10: Robin Coste Lewis, *Voyage of the Sable Venus and Other Poems* (117-137)

Wednesday April 12: Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*

Week 12:

Monday April 17: Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*

Wednesday April 19: Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*

Week 13:

Monday April 24: Leslie Jamison, "The Empathy Exams"*

Wednesday April 26: Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts* (1-47)

Week 14:

Monday May 1: Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts* (48-111)

Wednesday May 3: Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts* (112-143)

*****PAPER #2 DUE FRIDAY, MAY 12 @ NOON*****