

Instructor: Jacquelyn Ardam
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Class: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:00-11:50
Office Hours: Thursdays, 12:30-2:30, Humanities A95

Experimental Women's Writing **English M107B: Studies in Gender and Sexuality**

In this course, we will study experimental writing by (mostly) American women writers. We will anchor our understanding of experimental writing in Gertrude Stein's early works, and then focus the rest of the class on the literature of 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. We will read genre-bending texts that blur the lines between fiction and non-fiction, poetry and prose, and use these texts to explore gender, sexualities, and the racialized body. The following questions will guide our study: Is "woman" a fixed category? What do we mean by the designation of "women's writing"? What makes a text "experimental"? What is the relationship between genre and gender? How might hybrid forms of literature open up non-binaristic ways of thinking about gender and sexuality? Where and how does race fit into the matrix of gender and sexuality?

Texts:

Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives* (978-0486280592)
Lyn Hejinian, *My Life and My Life in the Nineties* (978-0819573513)
Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée* (978-0520261297)
Ana Castillo, *The Mixquiahuala Letters* (978-0385420136)
Harryette Mullen, *Sleeping with the Dictionary* (978-0520231436)
Maggie Nelson, *Jane: A Murder* (978-1932360714)
Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (978-0618871711)
Juliana Spahr, *The Transformation* (978-1891190261)
M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!* (978-0819571694)
Claudia Rankine: *Citizen* (978-1555976903)

Assignments and Grading:

Paper 1: 25%
Paper 2: 40%
Reading Responses: 15%
Participation: 20%

You will receive a separate handout that includes guidelines for each of your papers.

Reading Responses: You are required to upload a 500-word reading response on the class website (<http://ccle.ucla.edu/>) **five times** throughout the quarter. You may submit your responses any week you'd like. I will often use reading responses as a jumping off point for lectures, and will likely share students responses in class. In your response, you may raise questions about a text, identify major issues and concerns, and do close readings. Your posts are due at **5pm** on the **Monday** before class. Late responses will not be allowed by the course website.

Participation: This class will consist of both lectures and discussions, 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.

While UCLA has no official attendance policy, you cannot participate in class if you are not actually in class. Even one or two absences will have a negative effect on your participation grade. If you are unable to attend class, please email me ahead of time. If I do not hear from you before class with a legitimate explanation of your absence, you will lose all participation credit for the day.

Office Hours: I will hold office hours on Thursdays from 12:30-2:30 in Humanities A95. While I am happy to help you brainstorm, office hours are most beneficial when you have a purpose in mind, so please come prepared with several specific questions or ideas that you'd like to discuss. If you are not available to meet during my normal office hours, I am happy to make alternate arrangements to meet with you.

Format and Presentation 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.

Paper Policy: Papers are due **VIA EMAIL** 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, and will not be accepted if they are more than five working days late. I will return your papers to you via email as well.

Email Policy: Please feel free to contact me via email at jardam@ucla.edu with questions or concerns throughout the quarter. I will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week. I will not respond to emails 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 will NOT be allowed in class**. You will not need them.

Plagiarism: The UCLA Dean of Students defines plagiarism as "the presentation of another's words or ideas as if they were one's own, including but not limited to: submitting, as your own, through purchase or otherwise, part of or an entire work produced verbatim by someone else, paraphrasing ideas, data, or writing without properly acknowledging the source, and unauthorized transfer and use of another person's computer file as your own."

Please visit <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/integrity.html> for more information, or come to see me during office hours if you have any concerns about how to prevent plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense, and any instances will be reported to the Dean of Students and may result in dismissal from UCLA.

Schedule of Readings

Week 0:

Thursday, 9/24: First class, introductions

Week 1:

Tuesday, 9/29: Gertrude Stein, "Melanctha" (from *Three Lives*)

Thursday, 10/1: Gertrude Stein, "Melanctha" (from *Three Lives*)

Week 2:

Tuesday, 10/6: Lyn Hejinian, *My Life* (1-100)

Thursday, 10/8: Lyn Hejinian, *My Life in the Nineties* (101-141)

Week 3:

Tuesday, 10/13: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee* (1-89)

Thursday, 10/15: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee* (90-180)

Week 4:

Tuesday, 10/20: Ana Castillo: *The Mixquiahuala Letters* ("For the Conformist," "For the Cynic")

Thursday, 10/22: Ana Castillo: *The Mixquiahuala Letters* ("For the Quixotic")

Week 5:

Tuesday, 10/27: Harryette Mullen, *Sleeping with the Dictionary* (1-53)

Thursday, 10/29: Harryette Mullen, *Sleeping with the Dictionary* (54-85)

Week 6:

Tuesday, 11/3: Maggie Nelson, *Jane: A Murder* (1-132)

Thursday, 11/5: Maggie Nelson, *Jane: A Murder* (133-224)

Week 7

Tuesday, 11/10: Allison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (1-150)

Thursday, 11/12: Allison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (152-132)

Week 8

Tuesday, 11/17: Juliana Spahr, *The Transformation* (1-133 & afterword)

Thursday, 11/19: Juliana Spahr, *The Transformation* (134-223)

Week 9

Tuesday, 11/24: M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!*

Thursday 11/26: No class, Thanksgiving

Week 10:

Tuesday, 12/1: Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*

Thursday: 12/3: Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*