

Jacquelyn Ardam, Visiting Assistant Professor
jwardam@colby.edu

Class: Mon-Thurs, 1:00-3:00pm, Miller 319
OH: Tues, 11-1:00pm, or by appt, Miller 218

**EN 297:
Race, Gender, and Experimental Women's Writing**



This course explores the issues of race and gender in experimental work by women writers. We will anchor our understanding of experimental writing in Gertrude Stein's early works and then focus on poetry by women of color in the 21st century. We will pay particular attention to the intersections of otherness and poetic forms and consider the ways that formal experiments challenge normative understandings of gender, race, sexuality, and the 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 do race and gender intersect in the 20th and 21st centuries? How does lived experience affect literary representations of women of color? How do current experimental writers of color understand their relationship to tradition? How are political oppression and literary experimentation linked?

Texts:

Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives and Tender Buttons*, 978-0451528728

Harryette Mullen, *Recyclopedia*, 978-1555974565

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

Layli Long Soldier, *Whereas*, 978-1555977672

Bhanu Kapil, *Humanimal*, 978-0932716705

Mónica de la Torre, *Public Domain*, 978-1931824309

Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*, 978-1555976903

Learning Goals:

In this course, students will:

- Identify formal trends and concerns in experimental writing by women poets in the 20th and 21st centuries
- Understand the relationships between writers and their cultural, political, and aesthetic contexts
- Articulate, enact, and apply the 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
- Synthesize course material in a final concept map of the course

Assignments and Grading:

- Stein imitation: 10%
- Stein and Mullen assignment: 20%
- Long Solider or Lewis assignment: 20%
- Concept map: 25%
- Participation: 25%

You will receive separate handouts that include guidelines for all of your assignments.

Lateness Policy: Assignments are due via Moodle 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 assignment will count as late until I receive a workable file. Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a grade (A to A-) for each late day. I may grant extensions in extenuating circumstances; when in doubt, come and talk to me.

Participation: This is a small class and its success depends on active dialogue between students. Please come to class fully prepared to discuss the material and to engage with the materials. 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 Tuesdays from 11:00-1:00pm. I am also available at other times by appointment.

Format of Papers: All assignments 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 term. 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. Laptops, tablets, kindles, etc. will be allowed in class, but if I see using them for purposes unrelated to class discussions, I will ask you to put them away.

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) or the Director of the Gender and Sexual Diversity Program, Emily Schusterbauer (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/>.

Reading Schedule

Week 1

Tues 1/8: Gertrude Stein, "If I Told Him: A Completed Portrait of Picasso"

Weds 1/9: Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons*

Thurs 1/10: Gertrude Stein, "Melanctha" from *Three Lives*

Week 2

Sunday 1/13: Stein imitation due via Moodle, 5pm

Mon 1/14: Michael North, "Modernism's African Mask: The Stein-Picasso Collaboration"

Harryette Mullen, "Poetry and Identity"

Cathy Park Hong, "Delusions of Whiteness in the Avant-Garde"

Tues 1/15: Harryette Mullen, *Trimmings*

Weds 1/16: Harryette Mullen, *Trimmings*

Thurs 1/17: M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!*

Week 3

Sunday 1/20: Mullen and Stein assignment due via Moodle, 5pm

Mon 1/21: Robin Coste Lewis, *Voyage of the Sable Venus*

Tues 1/22: Robin Coste Lewis, *Voyage of the Sable Venus*

Weds 1/23: Layli Long Soldier, *Whereas*

Thurs 1/24: Layli Long Soldier, *Whereas*

Week 4

Sunday 1/27: Lewis or Long Soldier assignment due via Moodle, 5pm

Mon 1/28: Bhanu Kapil, *Humanimal*

Tues 1/29: Mónica de la Torre, *Public Domain*

Weds 1/30: Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*

Thurs 1/31: Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*

Friday, 2/1: Concept map due via Moodle, 5pm