This course will serve as a brief introduction to American literature and culture from its beginnings to the present through the lens of gender. Among the questions we'll confront are: How has the role of women writers shifted over the course of the past two centuries? How have representations of sex and sexuality developed and transformed? How does literature react to, and help to shape, the changing roles that both men and women have occupied through the course of American history? We'll be assessing these questions against the backdrop of larger movements in American literary history—allegory, realism, modernism, and postmodernism—with an eye toward developing the core skills of literary analysis, critical thinking, and argument-based writing. Our primary texts will predominantly come from the genre of the short story—with occasional forays into poetry, the novel, and graphic narrative—and will be supplemented by secondary readings from major theorists of feminism, gender, and sexuality. We'll also be keeping “gender journals” throughout the semester as a way to relate our studies directly to your individual experiences at Dickinson, in Carlisle, and through the wider world. Our primary goal for the course is to cultivate the skill of close reading through a combination of class discussion, weekly writing and reading assignments, and a series of short written analyses.

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**Schedule:**

[M] = Readings available on course Moodle site

[W] = Collected in Candace Ward (ed.) *Great Short Stories*

**Week One: Beginnings and Close Reading**

**Aug 30** Course syllabus, expectations, and policies

**Sept 2** Anne Bradstreet, “The Author to Her Book,” “The Prologue” [M]

“Reading Poems” [M]
**Week Two: Declaring Independence**  
Sept 6  Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle” [M]  
Sept 9  Catharine Maria Sedgwick, “Cacoethes Scribendi”[M]  

***Assignment #1 due***  
Selected Correspondence of Abigail and John Adams [M]

**Week Three: Separate Spheres**  
Sept 13/16  Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown” and “The Birth-mark” [M]

**Week Four: The Male Gothic**  
Sept 20/23  Edgar Allan Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher” [M]  
Herman Melville, “The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids” [M]

**Week Five: Realism (Men)**  
Sept 27/30  Bret Harte, “The Outcasts of Poker Flats” [M]  
Mark Twain, Selections from *Huckleberry Finn* [M]  
Ambrose Bierce, “One of the Missing” [M]

**Week Six: Realism (Women)**  
Images of 19th-Century Labor [M]

**Week Seven: Hysteria (Experienced and Examined)**  
Oct 14  ***Midterm Examination***

**Fall Pause, no class Oct 18**

**Weeks Eight and Nine: The “New” Woman**  
Oct 21/25/28  Kate Chopin, *The Awakening***Assignment #2 due, Oct. 28***  
Amelia Barr, “Discontented Women” [M]

**Week Ten: Domestic Revolts I**  
Nov 1/4  Mary Wilkins Freeman, “The Revolt of ‘Mother’” [M]; “A New England Nun” [W]  
Sarah Orne Jewett, “A White Heron” [W]

**Week Eleven: Domestic Revolts II**  
Nov 8  Susan Glaspell, “A Jury of Her Peers” [W]  
Nov 11  Willa Cather, “Paul’s Case” [W]

**Week Twelve: Modernisms**  
Zora Neale Hurston, “Sweat” [W]  
Mina Loy, “Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots” [M]

**Week Thirteen: The Female Gothic**  
Nov 22  Flannery O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find” [M]  
**Thanksgiving Break, no class Nov 25**

Week Fourteen: Race and Representation
Nov 29/Dec 2 Alice Walker, “Everyday Use” [M]
    Toni Morrison, “Recitatif” [M]

Week Fifteen: Picturing Sexuality
Dec 6/9 Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

Dec 16 Exam due date ***Final Papers due at 2:00***
    **NO ASSIGNMENTS ACCEPTED AFTER 2:00 on December 16th**

**REQUIREMENTS:**
    — PUNCTUAL ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGED PARTICIPATION
    — TIMELY AND THOUGHTFUL COMPLETION OF READING ASSIGNMENTS
    — COMPLETION OF ALL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (DUE SEPT 9, OCT 28, DEC 16,
      INCLUDING WEEKLY GENDER JOURNALS
    — STRAIGHTFORWARD 50-MINUTE MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMS

**GRADING:**
    WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS—60% (ASSIGNMENT #1—5%, ASSIGNMENT #2—20%
    ASSIGNMENT #3—35%); CLASS PARTICIPATION—20%; MIDTERM EXAM—10%; FINAL
    EXAM—10%

**LATE PAPER POLICY:** With the extraordinary and rare exception for medical or
emergency reasons, late papers will receive a failing grade. Failure to turn in all
writing assignments by the date of the final will result in a failing grade for the
course. Exceptions will not be made.

**COURSE ATTENDANCE POLICY:** More than two unexcused absences will result in a
failing course participation grade. More than four unexcused absences will result in a
failing grade for the course. Excused absences for illness need to be accompanied by
an email from Health Services or your class dean. Excused absences for non-
academic reasons (job interviews, significant extracurricular commitments, etc.)
must be arranged with me well in advance of the scheduled date. Attendance is
measured not only by your physical presence, but by active contributions to course
discussion and weekly blackboard responses. Consistent, silent attendance will
receive a “C.”

**WRITING RESOURCES:** I strongly encourage students to take advantage of writing assistance
that is available on campus. The Writing Center is a tremendous (and free!) resource that can
help you at any stage of the writing process, from formulating a thesis to polishing a final
draft. Bear in mind that you will not be able to make last-minute appointments, so plan
ahead to take full advantage of these resources.
**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** taken from “The Dickinson College Plagiarism Policy”:
“...To plagiarize is to use without proper citation or acknowledgment the words, ideas or original research of another. [. . .] When one borrows facts which are not matters of general knowledge—including all statistics—one must indicate one's indebtedness in the text or footnote. When one borrows an idea or the logic of an agreement, one must acknowledge indebtedness either in a footnote or in the text. When in doubt—footnote [. . .] if you have questions, consult with your instructor.”

I am happy to discuss question about proper citation both during class time and privately during office hours, although no assignment for this course requires outside research.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES:** In full support of the Dickinson College policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be recommended for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester (except for unusual circumstances) so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Students are required to register with Academic Resource Services in the Advising Office located on the first floor of Biddle House (contact Marni Jones, ext. 1136 or jonesmar@dickinson.edu) to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** All available for purchase in the College Bookstore (if you purchase your books through other sources, please only purchase the same editions). A copy of all texts will be available at the Waidner-Spahr circulation desk.

- Candace Ward (ed.), *Great Short Stories by American Women* (Dover, 1996) ISBN#9780486287768

Overview of Writing Assignments (more detailed expectations will follow for each essay):

**Assignment #1: Close Reading Anne Bradstreet (2-3 pages—due September 9)**
This assignment asks you to respond to a single question about the poetry of Anne Bradstreet and whether or not it upsets conventional gender categories and stereotypes.

**Assignment #2: Confronting Critical Debates (3-5 pages—due October 28)**
This paper asks you to answer one of a series of questions that frame critical debates about the stories we’ve read in the first half of the semester.

**Assignment #3: Developing and Defending a Thesis (5-7 pages—due December 16)**
This assignment is open-ended, allowing you to develop and pursue a thesis about any text we’ve studied together during the second half of the semester.

**HAVING READ THE SYLLABUS COMPLETELY, PLEASE FILL OUT THE PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM AVAILABLE AT THE TOP OF THE MOODLE WEBSITE AND EMAIL IT TO ME DIRECTLY AT balld@dickinson.edu. THANK YOU AND WELCOME TO THE CLASS!**