
LIT 4386: British and American Literature by Women

CRN 20314, Section 521, 3 Credit Hours

COURSE SYLLABUS Spring 2026

Wednesdays, 2-4:45 p.m., SMC B335 **SARASOTA campus**

Dr. Valerie Lipscomb, (941) 359-4718 (this office phone rings to my cell)

vlipscom@usf.edu (Canvas email is easiest)

Office: C258, office hours before class and by appt.

Welcome!

I will do everything I can to help you reach your academic goals. Please don't hesitate to call, email, or make an appointment for a meeting in person or on Teams.

University Course Description

Here's the official description from USF's course inventory: Survey of women's literary tradition in England and America from the seventeenth century to the present. Thematic focus includes self, marriage, sexuality, madness, and generations. Writing intensive.

Course Prerequisites

ENC 1102 Minimum grade C-

Course Overview

While we will survey Anglophone works by female authors, our section focus will be women and the body. How have women represented the female body? How has gender shaped understanding of the body? How have women violated taboos and challenged norms by portraying the female body? To consider these questions, students will read works by significant authors in a variety of genres. Students should improve their abilities to understand, appreciate, and analyze literature in its cultural context, as well as persuasively communicate verbally and in writing their ideas regarding trends and specific works. To achieve these goals, students will analyze the assigned literature individually as well as in groups, through discussion and in writing assignments. Moreover, students will improve their research, critical thinking, and leadership skills by helping lead class.

Student Learning Outcomes

Courses in the literary studies concentration at USF work toward students' demonstrating the ability to:

Think critically in written assignments that formulate clear thesis statements supported by relevant and sufficient evidence.

Communicate their ideas clearly and effectively in assignments that indicate proficiency with the

conventions of college writing.

Conduct research in literary studies by identifying suitable primary and secondary sources and incorporating them into their writing as appropriate.

Evaluate representations of class, gender, race, sexuality, or other aspects of human identity and community in one or more texts.

Explain how one or more texts adheres to or deviates from the prevailing conventions of the period in literary history in which it first appeared.

Analyze texts using terms and concepts fundamental to literary studies as a discipline, such as aesthetics, form, or genre.

Required Text: *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, editors. 3rd edition. ISBN: 9780393930153 Please check carefully; you must use this edition. Other reading assignments will be available in Canvas.

How to Succeed in this Course (according to previous students): Complete all readings before coming to every class; be prepared to discuss the readings in depth and to make connections between materials and classes. As you prepare, mark up each assigned reading with questions, comments, observations, and be sure to bring your marked-up copy to class. Class participation, whether in full-class discussion or online, is absolutely essential. Take constant and complete class notes during our discussions, as what we discuss becomes the material on your midterm and final exams. If you must miss a class, ask the smartest, most conscientious classmates you can find to share their notes.

Academic Continuity: If the university switches to remote instruction, we will plan to conduct class via live, synchronous sessions using Microsoft Teams. Links will be made available in Canvas. Please note, then, that reliable access to Canvas and Teams will be essential to the course.

Communication: You'll find course announcements in Canvas, and I tend to email through Canvas if the info is time-sensitive. Please check your university email regularly.

Major Assignments

Research paper: A major paper researching a work from the syllabus and meeting the student learning outcomes, topic to be chosen in consultation with the instructor. Scope will be 2,500-3,000 words, citing a minimum of four sources.

Essay exams: At both midterm and finals, an essay exam covering the major topics of the class.

Class leadership: Research a work from the syllabus, then lead class for about 10 minutes on a topic based on your research.

Grading: In borderline cases for final course grades, I consider improvement shown during the semester. For each assignment, students who earn A grades will have demonstrated conspicuous excellence; those who earn Bs will have displayed superior skills; Cs are for competent performance; Ds for poor performance; and Fs for unacceptable work. For participation grades, the standard for a C is to attend class, complete all assignments on time, contribute to group work, and make a substantial contribution to full-class discussion once a week in person or online. The superior quality/quantity of the

participation may then merit a higher grade. Except for in-class exams, graded materials are submitted electronically through Canvas. Feedback and scores will be available primarily on the course Canvas site.

Grading Scale (%)	
93-100	A
90 – 92	A-
87 – 89	B+
83 – 86	B
80 – 82	B-
77 – 79	C+
73 – 76	C
70 – 72	C-
67 – 69	D+
63 – 66	D
60 – 62	D-
0 – 59	F

Grade Categories and Weights

Assessment	Percent of Final Grade
Midterm Exam	20% (100 pts)
Major Paper: Researched Analytical Essay	20% (100 pts)
Final Exam	20% (100 pts)
Leadership Project	20% (100 pts)
Participation, Short Assignments, Attendance	20% (100 pts)

Course Schedule. Note: The schedule is subject to revision according to our progress.
Rely only on the details provided in the Canvas calendar.

Week 1: Introduction. Jackie Kay.

2. Literature of the 19th Century, Jane Austen, Mary Shelley.

3. Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Margaret Fuller.

4. Harriet Beecher Stowe, Harriet Jacobs.

5. Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre.

6. Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossetti.

7. Midterm exam. Midterm participation evaluation due.

8. Turn-of-the-Century Lit., Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Constance Fenimore Woolson.

9. Early 20th century Lit, Edith Wharton, Virginia Woolf.
(spring break)
10. H.D., Zora Neale Hurston, Dorothy Parker.
11. Later 20th Century Lit., Gwendolyn Brooks, Cynthia Ozick. Paper topic due.
12. Caryl Churchill, Margaret Atwood. Paper draft due.
13. Eavan Boland, Joyce Carol Oates. Paper due April 19.
14. Jamaica Kincaid, Sandra Cisneros.
15. Margaret Edson.
16. Final exam.

Policies

USF has a set of **central policies** related to student recording class sessions, academic integrity and grievances, student accessibility services, academic disruption, religious observances, academic continuity, food insecurity, and sexual harassment that **apply to all courses at USF**. Be sure to review these online: usf.edu/provost/faculty-success/resources-policies-forms/core-syllabus-policy-statements.aspx

Late Work: Deadlines are a fact of life; meeting them gives you good experience for your future profession. Communicating with me about your individual situation is essential. For an excused absence, we will work together to determine a makeup schedule. **All unexcused late assignments are assessed a letter-grade penalty.**

Grades of "Incomplete": The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. An "I" grade may be awarded to a student only when a small portion of the student's work is incomplete and only when the student is otherwise earning a passing grade. The time limit for removing the "I" is to be set by the instructor of the course. For undergraduate students, this time limit may not exceed two academic semesters, whether or not the student is in residence, and/or graduation, whichever comes first. For graduate students, this time limit may not exceed one academic semester. "I" grades not removed by the end of the time limit will be changed to "IF" or "IU," whichever is appropriate.

Final Examination: The final exam is scheduled according to university policy.

Email: I am most likely to communicate with you through the email tool in Canvas or a course announcement. If you email me, expect a response within 24 hours during the business week. Be sure to use the Canvas email tool or to double-check my email address, as there are incorrect email addresses for me floating around the system.

Canvas: This course uses USF's learning management system (LMS), Canvas. Canvas will be used to submit and assess assignments as well as for class communication; be sure to check the course site and your university email at least three times a week. If you have technical difficulties in Canvas, you can find access to the Canvas guides and video resources in the "Canvas Help" page on the homepage of your Canvas course. You can also contact the help desk by calling 813-974-1222 in Tampa or emailing help@usf.edu.
[IT website for the Tampa campus.](#)
[IT website for the St. Pete campus.](#)
[IT website for the Sarasota-Manatee campus.](#)

Device Usage: Students are invited to bring their laptops to class, contingent on restricting laptop use to taking notes and accessing Canvas. No cell phones during class, unless you consult me first,

except for the legal use specified here: “Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal, educational use. A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussion (except when incidental to and incorporated within a class lecture), clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the USF Student Conduct Code (<https://usf.app.box.com/v/usfregulation60021>).”

Attendance: Under normal circumstances, attendance is mandatory. Because this discussion-based course relies on student involvement, your participation is absolutely essential to success. The key is to communicate with me about your individual situation. If you know about an absence in advance, so should I. We will work together if a make-up schedule becomes necessary. If you don’t feel well, please contact me and stay home. Unexcused absences will significantly affect your participation grade. Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by side-talking, arriving late, etc., will consult with me and may suffer a reduction in their participation grades.

Academic Integrity: All individual work must be your own and must be done specifically for this class. You are encouraged to seek info and advice from others, just as professionals do, but you must do your own research, writing, etc. Material taken from another source must be properly cited in MLA style. (I recommend using the *Pocket Style Manual*.) You will submit major assignments to Turnitin to assess possible plagiarism. This course assumes you have studied plagiarism; see me if you are in doubt as to what constitutes it or whether you are citing a source correctly. I’m happy to help you with documentation issues before you hand in an assignment to be graded. The [USF Policy on Academic Integrity](#) specifies that students may not use websites that enable cheating, such as by uploading or downloading material for this purpose. This does apply specifically to Chegg.com and CourseHero.com – almost any use of these websites (including uploading proprietary materials) constitutes a violation of the academic integrity policy. In this course, turnitin.com will be utilized. Turnitin is an automated system which instructors may use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. After the assignment is processed, as instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author’s work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process visit <http://www.turnitin.com>. If any essay is turned in on paper, it is due at turnitin.com the same day.

Generative AI: The purpose of this policy is to foster a dynamic learning environment that encourages technological adaptation, innovative thinking, and the ethical use of AI resources in academic endeavors. 1. Definition of Generative AI Tools: Generative AI tools refer to any artificial intelligence-powered software, program or application that can generate content, including but not limited to text, visuals, music, and other creative outputs. Examples of these tools include AI text generators, AI content rewriters, AI graphic generators, etc. 2. Permitted Use: The use of generative AI tools is permitted for course-related assignment submissions such as presentations. They are not to be used in exams or to substitute for a student’s analysis or evaluation. Students must responsibly use these tools, adhering to the guidelines outlined in this policy. 3. Student

Responsibility: Students are responsible for appropriately using generative AI tools in their work. This includes: **1. Citing all AI-generated content used in their submissions**. 2. Demonstrating a deep understanding of the subject matter that does not rely on AI-generated content. Cross-reference claims and statements with original sources and providing appropriate citations are expected. 3. **Using AI tools as a supplemental resource (i.e., as an editor), not as the primary means of completing assignments**. 4. Understanding that generative AI tools, while powerful, are not infallible and can produce misinformation or inaccurate results. Students are responsible for the accuracy of their submissions and must cross-verify the information produced by these tools with reliable sources. 4. Violation Consequences: Misuse of AI tools, including use of AI that undermines the student learning objectives of the course or assignment, failing to cite AI-generated content, relying too heavily on AI for work completion, or submitting inaccurate information generated by AI tools will be subject to academic penalties. Consequences may range from a reduction in an individual assignment grade to larger academic sanctions per USF policy, depending on the severity of the violation (USF Regulation 3.027). 5. Exceptions: When there are specific assignments where any use of AI tools is not appropriate, these will be clearly marked in the assignment guidelines. Students must adhere to these specific instructions. 6. Questions and Clarifications: If students are unsure whether a tool they wish to use qualifies as a generative AI tool, or if they have questions regarding the allowable use of such tools, they should consult with the course instructor before using it.

Campus Free Expression: It is fundamental to the University of South Florida's mission to support an environment where divergent ideas, theories, and philosophies can be openly exchanged and critically evaluated. Consistent with these principles, this course may involve discussion of ideas that you find uncomfortable, disagreeable, or even offensive. In the instructional setting, ideas are intended to be presented in an objective manner and not as an endorsement of what you should personally believe. "Objective" means that the idea(s) presented can be tested by critical peer review and rigorous debate, and that the idea(s) is supported by credible research. In this course you may be asked to engage with complex ideas and to demonstrate an understanding of the ideas. Understanding and engaging with an idea does not require you to believe it or to agree with it.

Health and Wellness: Your health is a priority at the University of South Florida. We encourage members of our community to look out for each another and to reach out for help if someone is in need. If you or someone you know is in distress, please make a referral at www.usf.edu/sos so that the Student Outreach & Support can contact and provide helpful resources to the student in distress. A 24-hour licensed mental healthcare professional, offered through the counseling center, is available by phone at 813-974-2831, option 3. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, please dial 9-1-1.

Title IX Policy: Title IX provides federal protections for discrimination based on sex, which includes discrimination based on pregnancy, sexual harassment, and interpersonal violence. In an effort to provide support and equal access, **USF has designated all faculty (TA, Adjunct, etc.) as Responsible Employees, who are required to report any disclosures of sexual harassment, sexual violence, relationship violence or stalking.** The Title IX Office makes every effort, when safe to do so, to reach out and provide resources and accommodations, and to discuss possible options for resolution. Anyone wishing to make a Title IX report or seeking accommodations may do so online, in person, via phone, or email to the Title IX Office. For information about Title IX or for a full list of resources please visit: <https://www.usf.edu/title-ix/gethelp/resources.aspx>. *If you are unsure what to do, please contact Victim Advocacy – a confidential resource that can review all your options – at 813-974-5756 or va@admin.usf.edu.*