

M.A. Humanities-CS 280
WHY WOMEN WRITERS AND QUEENS?
Summer 2013



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“Some books are to be tasted, others to be
swallowed, and some few to be chewed and
digested.” F. Bacon

“Can we ever have too much of a good
thing?”
M. Cervantes

I. Description: “Why Women Writers and Queens?” will analyze how women have portrayed themselves and how they have been portrayed along centuries. Journeying through several countries, this course will offer the opportunity to understand different cultures and the contributions of some of their women’s writers. This course will provide snapshots or windows to explore mainly women’s dreams, concerns, and achievements through a variety of readings that will range from very ancient poems to recent memoirs. Why early women writers didn’t dare to sign their texts? What adventurous and courageous women authors have written to change the society around them? How some women authors have immersed themselves in societies foreign to their own? Why have women been the focus of so many writers, and how they have portrayed them? These are some of the questions that we’ll answer. *This class will meet in class from 8 to 2pm. The rest will be online or a cultural field trip.

II. Outcomes. At the end of the semester you

1. Will have an understanding of the evolution of selected women’s writings.
2. Will be able to understand the lives of some women’s authors and how they intertwine with their texts.
3. Will be able to interpret the texts through different techniques that will facilitate a deeper understanding of the texts.
4. Will be immersed in some cultures and times, through different cultural aspects, and events that occurred during the years the texts were written or during the years surrounding their publications.
5. Will have enjoyed the usage of language, figures of speech, expressions, vocabulary, and the importance of a well selected word or group of words, and use of metaphors to enhance effective communication with images.
6. Will have comprehended some obvious and also some hidden connections between the texts and their cultures and countries.
7. Will be able to see the relevance of the selected texts in today’s lives and times.

III. Required Texts:

1. *The Rice Sprout Song* by E. Chang. University of California Press, 1998
2. *Sab* by Gertrudis Gomez de Avellaneda. Texas Panamerican Series, 1993 – in English
3. *Encounters with Chinese Writers* by A. Dillard. Wesleyan University Press, 1984
4. *Come and Tell me How you Live* by Agatha Christie Mallowan, Harper Collins, 1946
5. *Paula* by I. Allende. Harper Collins, 2002
6. *The Women who fell from the Sky: An American Woman’s Adventures in the Oldest City on Earth* by Jennifer Steil. Crown Publishing- Random House, 2011
7. *My life in France* by J.Child. Random House, 2009
8. *The Good Earth* by Pearl Buck, 1958

IV. Grading system:

1. Attendance, preparation and participation 20%
2. Presentations and quizzes 15%
3. Paper 1 (5 pages)
Paper 2 (5 pages)
Paper 3 (15 pages) 25%
9. Midterm 20%
10. Final 20%

V. Grading scale:

1. 96 to 100	A+	6. 80 to 84	B-
2. 95-	A	7. 76 to 79	C+
3. 90 to 94	A-	8. 75	C
4. 86 to 89	B+	9. 70-74	C-
5. 85	B	10. 60-69	D
		11. 59 or less	F

VI. Attendance - Class Work – Late Class Work:

Attendance is required. It is very important to be in class every meeting day from 8am. to 2pm. The final grade will be lowered by any unexcused absence. An excused absence is a documented illness. Two tardiness or more will lower your grade.

If you miss class, you are still responsible for turning in your assignments and preparing for your next class meeting.

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class. If you turn your assignment late, a few hours, a day or more your grade will be reduced. Quizzes cannot be made up.

VII. Mount St. Mary’s College Policies:

- Academic Integrity/Plagiarism and guidelines pages 39-40-41. A paper with plagiarism will receive a failing grade or a failing grade for the course.
- Academic Freedom: See Student Handbook 104
- Learning Disabilities: See MSMC Catalog

VIII. Course: Resources and detailed explanations on quizzes, presentations, exams, and papers will be added in Angel.

WEEK 1– May 18, 2013- Saturday from 8 am. to 2pm.

- Introductions: professor, course, and class
- Women Writers and Queens? Why?
- Ideal or misogynous models: examples from the Bible and *Thousand and One Nights*
- East and West: Early poems. Read, “Chinese women and Trobairits: Sing and Sign” by M. Reguant for next class (Angel).
- Christine de Pizan
- Diagnosis essays on connection with the main topic of the class and expectations (40’ in class)
- *A Women who Fell from the Sky* by Jennifer Steil– Come to class having read the book and bring five quotes to comment and discuss.
- Questions for poems and *The Women who Fell from the Sky*. Students prepare answers for next class.
- Every week: Watch documentaries or movies related to the topics covered.

WEEK 2– June 1, 2013 –Saturday from 8 am. to 2pm.

- Common topics and women’s concerns (continuation)
- Who could write and why? Santa Teresa de Jesus and Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz. Discuss questions and prepare women readers in *Don Quixote*
- Isabella of Castille, Catherine of Medicis, Catherine of Aragon, Elizabeth I
- Presentations and quiz
- *Come Tell me How you Live*
- First five page paper due.

WEEK 3– June 22, 2013 – Saturday from 8 am to 2pm.

- Some invisible connections
- Authors’ lives in their texts
- “In defense of women,” Feijoo- Mencken-
- Preparation for next week readings.
- Main characters: *Anna Karenina*, *La Regenta*, *Madame Bovary*,...
- *Sab*
- MIDTERM

WEEK 4– July 13, 2013 – Saturday from 8am. to 2pm.

- Invisible connections (continuation)
- *Martha of the Lowlands* by A. Guimera
- Double minorities
- *Paula*
- Preparation questions/answers for next class.
- Second five page paper due

WEEK 5– July 27, 2013

- *The Rice Sprout Song* or *The Good Earth*
- *My Life in France*
- Feasts and celebrations and lack of them
- Work on final papers

WEEK 6– August 10, 2013

- *Encounters with Chinese Writers*
- Conclusion
- Presentations of projects/papers
- Final papers due
- Final exam
- Final reflections ☺