

MOUNT ST. MARY'S COLLEGE  
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

**AMERICAN EXPERIENCE:**  
**A Comparative Study of Female Poets From China and America**

**ENGLISH 126**

FALL 2013  
M, W 3:00-4:30 Room \_\_\_\_\_

DR. DAVID LEESE  
Office: H211 Phone #310/954-4154  
Office hours: M, W 2:00—3:00; 6:10—6:30  
dleese@msmc.la.edu

**GOALS:**

- I. To learn how to experience literature more fully – by awakening our senses, our reasoning and our imagination. Literature is concerned with transmitting felt experience: it is an adventure. It is a discovery. The artist leads us there, he or she points to it, but his or her vision can only be created in our eyes.
- II. To learn to write with enthusiasm, passion and precision about your literary experience.
- III. To investigate how women find their voice within their culture. We will compare American and Chinese women poets and explore how social, cultural, religious and political forces shaped their art.

**TEXTS:**

1. Dickinson, Emily, *The Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ISBN: 0-345-47241-1. (This collection only) \$4.95.
2. Li Ch'ing-Chao, *Li Ch'ing-Chao, Complete poems*, ISBN: 978-0-8112-0745-4, \$10.95.
3. Plath, Sylvia, *Ariel: The Restored Edition*, ISBN: 978-0-06-073260-8, \$13.95.
4. Plath, Sylvia, *The Bell Jar*, ISBN: 978-0-06-114851-4, \$17.95.
5. Rexroth, Kenneth, *One Hundred More Poems from the Chinese Love and Turning Years*, ISBN: 978-08112-1279-7, \$13.95
6. Rexroth, Kenneth, *Women Poets of China*, ISBN: 978-0-8112-0821-5, \$12.95.
7. Rich, Adrienne, *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose*, ISBN: 0-393-96147-8, \$16.49.
8. Chang and Saussy, *Women Writers of Traditional China*, ISBN 0-8047-3231-0.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

August 28 Prepare to read a five minute personal statement: What has happened to me, "up until now"? Have read your group assignment from *Herself, An Author* (handout.) Be prepared for a quiz on your "*Herself*" material. Bring also *The Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*; read p. 1-78 for class discussion.

September 4 Present reports on you "*Herself*" readings. Bring *Emily Dickinson Poetry*. Re-read p. 1-78. Read p. 80-158.

September 11 Present reports on Emily Dickinson p. 1-158. Read Dickinson, p. 16-279.

September 18 Present reports on Emily Dickinson, p. 160-279.

#### HANDOUT ASSIGNMENTS

##### *Herself An Author*

I. Everyone: "My Thoughts on My Sixtieth Birthday", p. 161-165

II. Presentations: Autobiography of Gon Lirou

Group 1: p. 9-23, Life Phase 1

Group 2: p. 24-32, Life Phase 2

Group 3: p. 32-41, Life Phase 3

Group 4: p. 41-53, Life Phase 4

Group 5: p. 54-61, Literary Vocation of Concubines

Group 6: p. 62-73, Literary Agency in the Side Room and Concubines as Poet

Group 7: p. 73-84, Modes of Self-Production and The Feminine Subject in the Text

Group 8: Teach "My Thoughts on My Sixtieth Birthday"

September 23 Read *Women Poets of China*, p. 1-60. Prepare draft for first critical paper on Emily Dickinson.

September 25 **FIRST CRITICAL PAPER DUE, SEPTEMBER 25 AT 3:00 p.m.** No electronic submissions accepted. The paper must be a hard copy, presented at the beginning of class.

Use the handout on *Aristotle's Poetics* to assist you in preparing an original critical, five-page paper on Emily Dickinson. See handout on the *Poetics* and on "Paper Objectives."

**Note:** In this course **any** paper presented after the beginning of class (3:00 p.m.) on the due date will be penalized two full letter grades. For example a grade of "A" would be reduced to a "C" grade. No paper will be accepted after one week beyond the deadline and an "F" will be recorded as the paper grade. **This late policy applies to all further paper assignments.**

Bring *Women Poets of China* to class. Review p. 1-60.

September 30 Read *Women Poets of China*, p. 61-120. Review p. 1-60. Select eight poems and be prepared to discuss any one of your choices.

October 7 Read *Li Ch'ing-Chao*, p. 1-82. Read biography and be prepared for a quiz on her poetry and biography and on the poems from *Women Poets of China*. Read *Ariel*, by Sylvia Plath, p. 1-91.

October 14 Draft a Second Critical Paper.

October 16 **SECOND CRITICAL PAPER DUE, October 16 at 3:00 p.m.**

Submit a five-page literary analysis which compares two of Sylvia Plath's poems with two by a Chinese poet, selected from *Women Poets of China* or *Li Ch'ing-Chao*.

Use the terminology developed from our discussion of *Aristotle's Poetics*. The same deadline requirements and penalties apply.

- October 21 Read p. 1-126 *The Bell Jar*. Prepare typed notes to discuss Pluth's autobiographical novel in class. Bring also *Ariel* poems.
- October 28 Read p. 127-243. Bring both *The Bell Jar* and *Ariel* to class. Read p.17-34 and 52-99 from *Women Writers of Traditional China*.
- November 4 Re-read p17-34, 52-99 from *Women Writers of Traditional China*.
- November 11 Read Adrienne Rich's poetry (Norton Critical edition) p. 3-37; p. 48-55; p. 77-86. Be prepared to discuss in class and for a short quiz.
- November 18 Review Rich's poetry: p. 3-37; 48-55; 77-86. Read p. 124-130. Review *Women Poets of China* and bring text to class. Prepare paper topics.
- November 20 Read draft of Third Critical Paper in class.
- November 25 **THIRD CRITICAL PAPER DUE, October 25 at 3:00 p.m.** Submit a five-page literary analysis which compares any one Chinese female author with any female American author who we studied.
- This paper is worth 40% of your grade, so deliver your best!
- Paper is due on November 25 at 3:00 p.m. Same penalties and submission policies exist. No electronic submissions.
- Note: Two-letter grate late policy. No papers accepted after December 2.** See details enumerated for the First Critical Paper.
- December 2 See and discuss excerpts from *The Good Earth* and *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*.

**EVALUATION:**

Class Participation*	20%	(But failure in participation fails the class.)
Critical Essay #1	20%	Note late policy.
Critical Essay #2	20%	"
<u>Critical Essay #3</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>"</u>
TOTAL	100%	

\*Class participation: Class participation includes more than mere attendance, it involves active class discussion. Failure to provide evidence of participation in at least twenty-five class sessions is an automatic failure in the class. The penalty for plagiarism or using another's ideas as words without attribution will result in failure of this course.