Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies 3320
Feminist Disability Theory and American Women’s Life Writing
Fall 2013
Time and Location: Online!
Instructor: Ally Day
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday By Appointment
Office Location: Online Skype/G-Chat (Arranged in Advance via email)
Contact: day.345@osu.edu

Accommodation of students with Disabilities:
Students who have verification from Disability Services are responsible for contacting the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. The Office for Disability Services (150 Pomerene Hall; 614-292-3307) verifies the need for accommodations and assists in the development of accommodation strategies.

Guiding Questions for 3320
- What is disability? What is impairment?
- How does gender, sexuality, race, class, and citizenship affect one’s experience of disability and impairment?
- How does women’s life writing affect our understandings of disability and impairment?
- How does impairment and/or disability disrupt the autobiographical pact?
- How do women living with disability disrupt ideas of the American liberal subject and citizenship?

Learning Objectives:
At the end of this semester, students will be able to:
- Conceptualize distinctions between disability and impairment as they have been understood through Disability Studies.
- Apply an intersectional feminist analysis to Disability Studies’ distinction between disability and impairment.
- Have a brief history of life writing, women’s role in life writing, and people with disability’s role in life writing.
- Apply an intersectional feminist analysis to women’s disability life writing, reading both women’s life writing and critical analysis of this life writing.
- Analyze constructions of American citizenship and how women’s disability life writing reflects/disrupts/resists that construction.
**Attendance Policy:**

Each student is allowed **one free absence** over the duration of the quarter. For each absence beyond that, except in extenuating circumstances, the student’s attendance and participation grade will be dropped 5 pts. See more for online requirements under attendance and participation.

**Course Requirements:**

**Key Assignments:**
- Attendance and Participation: 20%
- 8 Critical Responses (1 pg writing reflections): 20%
- Paper 1: 20%
- Paper 2: 20%
- Student Autobiographical Presentation/Paper: 20%

**Class Participation and Attendance (20%)**

**Class Participation/Attendance (20%):** What makes a literature-based class truly dynamic is the quality of its discussions. Though there will be some small lectures during the quarter, most classes will be discussion based, with an emphasis on dialogue and sharing of perspectives, ideas, and interpretations. It is expected that you will be an active and informed participant in all class discussions and that you will have read assigned texts by the dates indicated on the syllabus.

**But what does class participation look like online?**

Every week you are required to participate in **two ways:** you must post questions on the assigned reading and you must respond to your classmates’ questions on the assigned reading. Each class date, you have 24 hour period to complete your posting.

If your last name is A-L, on Day One of the week you will post questions, putting the shorter articles on conversation with the autobiography. If you last name is M-Z, you are required to respond to questions, drawing on examples from our readings.

On Day 2, M-Z will post questions and A-L will respond.

If you fail to post questions or responses **within the 24 hour period of the date on the syllabus**, you will be marked absent for the day. If you do post a question or response but you do not reference course materials adequately, you will receive half attendance for the day.

I will also post Lecture Guidelines, power points and internet links with relevant information for each class period, helping us make connections between texts from class period to class period. You are expected to draw on this material in your discussion posts (questions or responses) as well as your writing assignments. I recommend that you read
the Lecture Guidelines before your begin your discussion posts. If you rarely draw on the Lecture Guidelines, your attendance and participation grade will reflect that.

Critical Responses and Writing Exercises (20%)

Eight times during the quarter, you will be asked to write a critical analysis or complete a writing exercise that responds to a prompt about our texts. These writings are meant to help you keep up with the reading as well as assist in the development of your critical writing skills. They may also work as a place for you to jump-start a creative writing project. I will post critical responses within the Lecture Guidelines for that day. CR’s are due the DAY FOLLOWING THE LECTURE by 3 pm in the Carmen dropbox (so if the lecture and discussion postings are due in the 24 hour period of Monday, the CR’s are due Tuesday at 3 p.m.). You are only allowed to make up missed critical responses in extenuating circumstances, however you can miss one and still receive an A on your critical responses overall. Although these responses will not be assigned a letter grade, they will account for 15% of your final grade. Full credit will be given only to responses in which you demonstrate that you have read the material and articulate a coherent analysis of it. The following scale will be used to determine this portion of your grade:
8 responses = 100; 7 = 92; 6 = 82; 5 = 72; 4 = 60; 3 = 48; 2 = 33; 1 = 18; 0 = 0

Student Autobiographical Presentation/Paper (20%)
Since we are reading so much of other women’s life writing this quarter, this is your chance to be creative yourself. This paper can take the form of a creative nonfiction essay (5-7 pages), an autobiographical short story (fictionalizing an experience of your own) (5-7 pages), autobiographical screenplay (10 pages), a short radio essay (5 minutes), a short video essay (5 minutes), or a collection (5 poems with an artist statement) of autobiographical poetry. You’ll have a chance to present these to your classmates during the final week of class.

Paper Assignments (40%):

Paper # 1 (20%) 3-4 pages: A writing prompt will be handed out for this paper. An optional draft of paper # 1 may be turned into me on the date noted on the syllabus.

Paper # 2 (20%) 5-7 pages: Suggested topics will be handed out for this, although you do have the option of creating your own topic that must be approved by me prior to the due date.

All papers are expected to be typed, double-spaced, with 12 point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. All papers must adhere to the standard MLA research paper format and should include in-text citations as well as a Works Cited page. You must have a definite thesis supported by specific details from the text(s) in an organized argument. Your thesis statement must be underlined. Your papers should not merely repeat class discussion or consist of plot summaries or descriptions; your papers should argue a thesis
from a definite position about the literary texts we are covering. Papers are to be submitted to the appropriate folder in the Carmen drop box by the time of the class meeting on the date that the papers are due.

Please note that assignments are due on the dates designated in the syllabus. If an emergency arises and you make arrangements with me ahead of time, I may agree to accept a late assignment. If I do not agree or if prior arrangements have not been made, you will receive a lowered grade for that assignment. Paper grades will be dropped by a half grade for each day that they are late. A computer malfunction is not an acceptable excuse for not turning a paper in on time.

**Academic Misconduct:**

All students are responsible for doing their own work and plagiarism will NOT be tolerated. As defined by University Rule 3335-31-02, plagiarism is “the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas.” Plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses that can be committed in an academic community; as such, it is the obligation of this department and its instructors to report all cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. After the report is filed, a hearing takes place and if the student is found guilty, the possible punishment ranges from failing the class to suspension or expulsion from the university. Although the existence of the Internet makes it relatively easy to plagiarize, it also makes it even easier for instructors to find evidence of plagiarism. It is obvious to most teachers when a student turns in work that is not his or her own and plagiarism search engines make documenting the offense very simple.

Make sure to:
Always cite your sources (I can help with this) and ask questions before you turn in an assignment if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism
To preserve the integrity of OSU as an institution of higher learning, to maintain your own integrity, and to avoid jeopardizing your future, do not plagiarize!

**Resources**

**Your instructor:** Please feel free to contact me at any time over the course of the quarter if you are struggling with papers, course work, etc. I am willing to work with you. *Email is the best way to contact me.* I will do my best to respond to your email within 24-hours on weekdays, and by Sunday evening at the latest on weekends (beginning Friday evening).

**The OSU Writing Center:** OSU Writing Center consultants are an excellent resource for writers at any level or stage in the writing process. Take advantage of the free individual tutoring that you can receive there. The Writing Center is located in 485 Mendenhall Laboratory, on the south side of the oval. Phone: 614.688.4291
Website:http://ctsw.osu.edu/
Key Texts:
Kim Hall: Feminist Disability Studies
Meri Nana-Ama Danquah: Willow Weep for Me
Anne Fingers: Past Due
Susannah Kaysen: Girl, Interrupted
Audre Lorde: The Cancer Journals
Nancy Mairs: Waist High in the World
Lauren Slater: Lying
Lauren Slater: Love Works Like This

Supplemental (Excerpts will be on Carmen)
Chris Bell: Blackness and Disability: Cultural Examinations and Cultural Interventions
Thomas Couser: Signifying Bodies: Disability in Contemporary Life Writing
Lennard Davis, ed. The Disability Studies Reader, Second Ed.
hooks, bell, Sisters of the Yam
Tobin Siebers: Disability Theory
Worcester and Whatley: Women’s Health, 5th Ed.

Class Schedule

Week 1

Day One 8/20:
Intro to the Course and Key Concepts
*Kim Hall “Reimagining Disability and Gender through Feminist Disability Studies: An Introduction” in Feminist Disability Studies
*Rosemary Garland-Thomsen “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory” in Feminist Disability Studies
*Susan Wendell: “Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability” in The Disability Studies Reader, Second Ed. (Carmen)

Day Two 8/22:
*Couser: “Disability, Life Narrative, and Representation” in The Disability Studies Reader, Second Ed. (Carmen)
*Tobin Siebers: “Cht 9: Disability and the Right to Have Rights” from Disability Theory (Carmen)
Week 2

Day One 8/27:
* Audre Lorde *The Cancer Journals*, Part 1 and 2

Day Two 8/29:
* Audre Lorde *The Cancer Journals*, Part 3
* Theri Alyce Pickens, “Pinning own the Phantasmagorical Discourse of Pain and the Rupture of Post-Humanism in Evelyne Accad’s *The Wounded Breast* and Audre Lorde’s *The Cancer Journals*” in *Blackness and Disability: Cultural Examinations and Cultural Interventions* (Carmen)

Week 3:

Day One 9/3:
* Nancy Mairs: *Waist High in the World* (1-84)
* Susannah Mintz: “auto/body/ography: fragments texts of Nancy Mairs” in *Unruly Bodies: Lie Writing By Women with Disabilities* (Carmen)

Day Two 9/5:
* Nancy Mairs: *Waist High in the World* (87-209)
* Siebers: Chapter 7 “A Sexual Culture for Disabled People” in *Disability Theory* (Carmen)
* In-Class Short Film: *Sex/Abled* (15 mins)

Week 4:

Day One 9/10:
In Class Film: Business of Being Born (90 mins)

Day Two 9/12:
* Anne Fingers: *Past Due* (1-86)
* “A Heritage of Ableist Rhetoric in American Feminism from the Eugenics Period” in *Feminist Disability Studies*

Week 5:

Day One 9/17:
* Anne Fingers: *Past Due* (87-144)

Optional Draft May Be Turned in for Paper 1
Day Two 9/19: Anne Fingers:
*Past Due (145-203)

**Week 6:**
Day One 9/24:
*Alison Kafer: “Debating Feminist Futures: Slippery Slopes, Cultural Anxiety, and the Case of Deaf Lesbians” in *Feminist Disability Studies*

Day Two 9/26:
Creative Writing Day One of Three  
Mid Term Paper DUE

**Week 7**
Day 1 10/1:
*Slater: Love Works Like This (1-91)*
*Elizabeth Donaldson: “Revisiting the Corpus of a Madwoman: Further Notes on a Feminist Disability Theory of Mental Illness” in *Feminist Disability Studies*

Day 2: 10/3 Slater:
*Love Works Like This (92-186)*

**Week 8:**
Day One 10/8:
*Danquah: Willow Weep for Me (15-94)*

Day Two 10/10:
*bell hooks: Sisters of the Yam—Intro, Chts 1, 4, 5,7 (Selection on Carmen)*

**Week 9:**
Day One 10/15:
*Debra Walker King: African Americans and the Culture of Pain, Chts 1 and 2* (*Carmen*)

Day Two 10/17:
*Danquah: Willow Weep for Me (101-168)*
*Debra Walker King: African Americans and the Culture of Pain, Cht 6, Conclusion* (*Carmen*)
**Week 10:**
Day One 10/22:
*Danquah: Willow Weep for Me (169-272)
*Anna Mallow: “‘When Black Women Start Going on Prozac…’: The Politics of Race, Gender and Emotional Distress in Meri Nana-Ama Danquah’s Willow Weep for Me” in Disability Studies Reader, Second Ed. (Carmen)

Day Two 10/24:
Creative Writing Day 2 of 3

**Week 11:**
Day One 10/29:
*Susannah Kaysen: Girl, Interrupted (1-82)

Day Two 10/31:
*Kaysen: Girl, Interrupted (83-169)

**Week 12:**
Day One 11/5:
*Slater: Lying (1-106)

Day Two 11/7:

*Couser: Ch 7, “Disability As Metaphor: What’s Wrong with Lying” in Signifying Bodies: Disability in Contemporary Life Writing (Carmen)
*Ellen Samuels: “Judith Butler’s Body Theory and the Question of Disability” in Feminist Disability Studies

**Week 13:**
Day One 11/12:
*Slater: Lying (107-221)

Day Two 11/14:
Creative Writing Day 3 of 3

**Week 14:**
Day One 11/19: Class Presentations

Day Two 11/21: Class Presentations, AUTobiography PROJECT DUE
FINALS WEEK: FINAL PAPERS DUE in Dropbox by 5pm TUESDAY December 3, 2013