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ARLT 101g
Section 35450
Fall 2014, T Th 2-3:20 PM
Montgomery Ross Fisher 340
Section Leader: V. Khanna

Female Trouble: A Century of Bad Behavior

What can a girl do if the love she wants is immoral, illegal, or just plain bad? This class explores a century of women—and “women”—in the United States whose desires force them to “go wild” and rebel against expectations of proper conduct. Some are free spirits weighed down by a conservative society, and others resist an expected promiscuity. Some are slaves of passion, and others are warriors of gender. Our heroines range from scheming socialites of the Gilded Age to punk rockers of the 1980s, and from a hardboiled femme fatale of 1940s Los Angeles to a depressed Angeleno swinger starlet of the 1960s. She may be a little girl who was raised by wolves or a male spy who goes undercover as a beautiful woman. Whoever she is, love, desire, and identity put her at odds with “civilized” constraints.

Please be advised that our class is concerned by definition with behavior that was or is considered inappropriate due to sexuality, violence, or other improprieties—and so students may find class materials challenging or offensive. Students are asked to consider this material and their reactions critically. You will never be asked to approve or accept inappropriate behavior, but you will be asked to consider it.

Required Texts

You are expected to buy or otherwise have a physical copy of the nine books below in bold.

Fiction

John Luther Long	“Madame Butterfly”	1898
Gertrude Stein	Three Lives	1909
Edith Wharton	The Custom of the Country	1913
James M. Cain	Double Indemnity	1935
Truman Capote	Breakfast at Tiffany’s	1958
Joan Didion	Play It As It Lays	1970
Mary Gaitskill	Bad Behavior	1988
Sandra Cisneros	“Never Marry a Mexican”	1991
ZZ Packer	“Brownies”	2003
Lucy Russell	“St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves”	2007

Graphic Novels

Alison Bechdel	The Essential Dykes To Watch Out For	1987-2002
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Drama

Illica & Giacosa/Puccini	Madame Butterfly libretto	1904
David Henry Hwang	M. Butterfly	1988

Please note that computers are not allowed in class, so you will need physical copies of the texts. Exams will be open book, but you will need a physical rather than an electronic copy of the text. I suggest that you buy the editions ordered for the bookstore, so we will all be on the same page. ISBNs are available on the schedule of classes. Some material will be available on Blackboard, and students should print these.

Course Requirements

- Thoughtful reading of the material by the due date listed on the syllabus.
- Class attendance and participation.
- In-class midterm and final
- 3 papers: one close reading, one experiential, one analytical

This class includes discussion sections to be led by a lecturer in the English Department, Vandanna Khanna, who will be responsible for the grading for this course. Professor Khanna will announce her office hours.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance and Absence

Students are expected to attend both lecture and section on time, and absences and tardiness will be factored into semester grades. Absences due to religious holidays or illness are excused only if the section leader is notified in advance. An exception will also be made for students who join the class late or otherwise miss the first class.

Five absences from lecture and section, combined, is cause for failing the class. This is also true for students who are taking the class pass/fail. Excessive lateness is equivalent to absence, as is consistently not bringing required books and texts to class.

In all cases, students are responsible for all missed work. I encourage you to exchange contact information with other students and if not, to seek it out through Blackboard.

Electronic Devices

Computers, phones, and other electronic devices may not be used in lecture. Class texts may not be read off of laptops or phones. This rule will be strictly enforced. Those who require their computers for reasons of disability can find directions below.

Exams

There will be a midterm and final, both in class. For both, you will need to identify passages and write short essays. For both, you may use your books but not your notes. These details may change if our class requires it.

Extra Credit

There is none.

Grades

There are 1000 possible points that may be earned in this class, distributed as follows:

First Paper (close reading): 100 points
 Second paper (experiential): 200 points
 Final paper (analytical): 200 points
 Midterm: 100 points
 Final: 200 points
 Participation: 200 points

Letter grades on papers and assignments will be converted as follows:

A+ = 99 A = 95 A- = 92 B+ = 89 B = 85 B- = 82 C+ = 79 C = 75 C- = 72 D+ = 69 D = 65 F = 0

These will be adjusted by the points possible for each assignment. For an assignment worth 100 points, a B will earn 85 points; for an assignment worth 200 points, 170 points.

Your final numerical scores will be converted to a letter equivalent thus:

A = 94 - 100 A- = 90 - 93.9 B+ = 87 - 89.9 B = 84 - 86.9
 B- = 80 - 83.9 C+ = 77 - 79.9 C = 74 - 76.9 C- = 70 - 73.9
 D+ = 67 - 69.9 D = 64 - 66.9 D- = 60 - 63.9 F = below 60

Office Hours

My office hours are posted on the first page of the course outline, and your section leader's will be announced. I hope that you will come by with any general or particular questions about the class. Please feel free. You may make an appointment by email if you want to reserve a specific time, but this is not necessary. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, we will make other arrangements.

Papers

Course requirements include three papers: one 2-3 pages, one 4-5 pages, and one 6-7 pages. The first paper will be a position paper based on close readings of any of the texts that we read before the paper is due. The second will be an experiential paper, and the third will be an analytical paper where you use more than one text in support of your claim. All papers should be double-spaced, with 12-pt Times New Roman font. MLA format is preferred, with in-text citations.

Late papers are not accepted as a rule; you are better off turning off an "eh" paper on time than a wonderful paper late. Please read that sentence again. See your section leader for the specific policy concerning late work. Your section leader will also decide the specifics of when and how papers should be turned in.

Position Paper with Close Reading (2-3 pages)

While the brevity of this paper may seem appealing, be warned that shorter papers are often more difficult to write than are longer ones: in only three pages you must immediately state your claim and concisely, yet convincingly, support it with well-chosen evidence and penetrating analysis. Position papers should identify a critical, interesting issue in the text and make a claim—that is, argue an opinion—about it. You should present an original reading rather than one borrowed from a literary critic or a classmate.

Your evidence should primarily come from close reading: from specifics of the text itself. Please note that arguments and textual specifics covered in class may only be used as supporting evidence: They may not compose your claim.

Your paper will be graded primarily in terms of the strength of your close reading: by how well you use the text for the purpose of making a point. You may make whatever claim you want, but you may only use details of the text itself to prove your point. Everything that you say must be proven with a concrete, specific example from the text. We will discuss this in lecture and section.

Experiential Paper (4-5 pages)

For this assignment, you will relate a narrative of inappropriate behavior in terms of gender (not necessarily your own) from your personal experience and then reflect upon it. You are welcome to interpret the theme of the class broadly: All that is required is that someone (you or someone you know) breaks a set of rules of appropriate gender behavior, and that you analyze the experience. By this point in the semester, we will have discussed many different and contradictory sets of rules for appropriate behavior; you no doubt have experienced a great number of different expectations yourself. Whatever you do, the incident or theory must be created or related specifically for this assignment. In other words, while the content of the story does not in any way need to be "new," the writing of it does. Complexity is your friend here, and while the tendency will be to shape your story to fit a preconceived thesis, you are almost certainly better off with the messiness and incoherence of reality.

Again, your paper will be graded primarily in terms of the strength of your close reading, though in this case you are reading a real-life event. While you may reference the class texts, this is not required, though it might be useful to add heft and depth to your essay. A thesis *is* required: You can't just tell a story. Instead, the story must have a point—though the point may be subtle, and indirectly stated.

Analytical Paper (6-7 pages)

The final paper is one of those dreaded papers for which you are not provided much direction but nonetheless is important to your final grade. All I ask is that you analyze "female trouble" in more than one of our class texts (unless you get permission to do otherwise). Your paper will be graded in terms of the strength of its close reading and the strength and interest of its claim.

Participation

Class participation is a full fifth of your grade, and students should not expect to do well in class if they do not speak, regardless of the grade they receive on other assignments. Students should expect to speak regularly in section. I will occasionally call on students in lecture. The section leader and I will both keep track of participation.

If class participation fills you with dread, please come see me or your section leader. I sympathize. Nonetheless, class participation is an essential skill, and I do require it.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the submission of any material under your own name that you did not create by yourself. Plagiarism is not only poor form but also academically criminal. Passing off

someone else's words or ideas as your own is the theft of someone's intellectual property. These are the general rules:

- You must give credit in your paper for ideas that are not your own—whether you directly quote or paraphrase—unless the information is considered common knowledge. Any direct quotes, paraphrases, or summaries, including those found on the internet, including Wikipedia, must be cited.
- A paper you have used for another class anywhere is not eligible for submission, even with minor revisions.

Plagiarism will result in automatic failure of the assignment and possible failure of the course.

Policies and Procedures for the University at Large

Academic Integrity: USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://scampus.usc.edu/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Student Behavior: Deportment that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.

Students with Disabilities: Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible.

Syllabus

There are 28 classes over 14 weeks. Our reading averages out to about a hundred standard pages a week, so please plan accordingly. Please note that the following schedule may and probably will change. You are responsible for keeping track of these changes, which will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.

Page numbers are for the edition ordered by the bookstore, which is accessible by the schedule of classes. When possible, I have listed chapters, parts, and books as well.

DB: Download from Blackboard

Week 1

8.26 Introduction. Syllabus. Hegemony. Ideology.
DB: Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (excerpt)

8.28 DB: "Madame Butterfly" (Luther Long)

Week 2

9.2 *The Custom of the Country*

9.4 *The Custom of the Country*

Week 3

9.9 *The Custom of the Country*

9.11 *The Custom of the Country*

Week 4

9.16 *The Custom of the Country*

9.18 *Three Lives*: "The Good Anna"

Week 5 **Paper 1 due this week in section**

9.23 *Three Lives*: "Melanctha"
DB: Richard Wright: "Why I chose 'Melanctha'"
DB: Sonia Saldivar-Hull: "Racism in 'Melanctha'"

9.25 *Three Lives*: "The Gentle Lena"

Week 6

9.30 *Double Indemnity* 1-60

10.2 *Double Indemnity* 61-111

Week 7 **Midterm this week in section**

10.7 *Breakfast at Tiffany's* 1-60

10.9 *Breakfast at Tiffany's* 61-111

Week 8

- 10.14 *Play It As It Lays* 3-51
- 10.16 *Play It As It Lays* 52-100

Week 9

- 10.21 *Play It As It Lays* 101-149
- 10.23 *Play It As It Lays* 150-214

Week 10**Paper 2 due this week in section**

- 10.28 *Essential Dykes To Watch Out For*
As this book is a collection of comic strips, I am asking you to read more pages than usual. I will give you a list of what pages to pay special attention to. You should expect to finish the book by 11.6.
- 10.30 *Essential Dykes To Watch Out For*

Week 11

- 11.4 *Essential Dykes To Watch Out For*
- 11.6 *Essential Dykes To Watch Out For*

Week 12

- 11.11 *Bad Behavior*: "Secretary," "A Romantic Weekend," "Something Nice"
- 11.13 *Bad Behavior*: "Trying to Be," "Connection," "Other Factors"

Week 13

- 11.18 **Girls Gone Wild week!**
DB: "Brownies"
DB: "Never Marry a Mexican"
DB: "St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves"
- 11.20 *Madame Butterfly* libretto.
Review "Madam Butterfly" [John Luther Long]
DB: "Un bel di"
DB: "Ancora un passo"
DB: "Madam Butterfly"
DB: "Death of Butterfly"

Week 14

- 11.24 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (excerpt)
M. Butterfly Act I

11.26 Thanksgiving Vacation: No class

Week 15

12.2 *M. Butterfly* Act II

You may want to watch the movie of *M. Butterfly*, but keep in mind that it is quite different than the play—and you are responsible for knowing the play.

12.4 *M Butterfly* Act III

The final paper is due at the start of the final exam.

Final Exam Friday, December 12 2-4 p.m.