

First-Year Writing:
Women's Bodies in Contemporary US Culture
General Education 111E, Spring 2010
BMC 109
MWF 11:50-12:45

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Since the social movements of the 1960s, American women have become increasingly visible in public enterprises such as politics, business, medicine, and scholarship. And yet female bodies continue to be imagined as both intensely sexual and mysteriously repulsive. Where do we learn these lessons about female biology and femininity, and what do they lead us to believe? By researching and writing about the ways in which contemporary US culture constructs our knowledge of women's bodies, students will develop greater facility with the process of crafting strong academic writing. We will discuss and practice strategies for crafting academic topics and research questions, performing primary and secondary research, drafting diverse types of writing (informal responses, long and short essays, and essay test responses), and improving your work through global revision, editing and proofreading.

texts

Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*, 6th edition
Lex Williford and Michael Martone (editors), *The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction*, 2nd edition

projects and grading

20% participation (including quiz scores, practice essay test questions, and other in-class work)
20% blog
10% personal narrative (4-5 pp.)
15% literary analysis (5-6 pp.)
10% qualitative research report (4-6 pp.)
25% revised and expanded qualitative research report (8-12 pp.) making meaningful use of at least 4 scholarly sources

A note on our readings: This course requires you to read scholarly articles from a variety of disciplines (along with short stories and brief how-to pieces on research and writing). Although it may be tempting to focus exclusively on these scholarly articles' content—the facts and/or arguments they present—that sort of reading will not serve you best here. Think of them as:

- models for your own writing, to facilitate discussions of what should be emulated and what could be improved in each reading,
- examples of writing in the academic disciplines, to facilitate discussions of how academic writing works and how it varies from discipline to discipline (in other words, how to tell what kinds of writing and evidence are required in a particular scholarly field),
- *and* informative and thought-provoking readings, to help us write and speak knowledgeably about contemporary representations of women's bodies.

For that reason, be sure to pay attention not only to *what the author argues and reports* (content) but also to *how he or she expresses and supports that argument* (form / structure / style). Come to class ready to state the reading's thesis and describe the techniques it uses as a piece of writing.

Quizzes, participation, and attendance: We will often have brief quizzes on reading assignments. Missed quizzes cannot generally be ‘made up’ if you’re late or absent. Quiz scores, along with two practice essay tests, form the basis of your participation grade. In the ideal case, consistently enthusiastic and insightful participation adds 6 points to the final quiz average. Common deductions include: 1 point per 5-10 minutes of tardiness, 3 points per absence, 2 points per day when a blog entry is late, and 2 points per missing page when a workshop draft fails to meet the length requirement (or fails to exist). If you are hospitalized, face a serious long-term illness, experience a family emergency, or otherwise find yourself dealing with particular adversity, please let me know *as soon as possible* so that I can help you succeed in our course.

Academic integrity: Because this course focuses on writing, we will discuss and practice attribution, citation, and appropriate uses of quotation, paraphrase, and summary—skills that will help you avoid accidental plagiarism in all of your classes. If at any point you are at all uncertain about an academic honesty issue, feel free to ask me! I will pursue the most severe sanctions possible if you choose to behave unethically by plagiarizing or cheating.

Please familiarize yourself with St. Olaf’s Honor Code (online at <<http://www.stolaf.edu/stulife/thebook/academic/honor.html>>) and plagiarism policy (at <<http://www.stolaf.edu/stulife/thebook/academic/integrity.html>>).

Students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Ruth Bolstad (bolstadr@stolaf.edu) or Connie Ford (ford@stolaf.edu) in the Academic Support Center (x3288) located in the Modular Village. If you already have documentation on file with Student Disability Services in the Academic Support Center, remember to present your letters to me within the first two weeks of class.

The Writing Place: Peer tutors in the Writing Place offer help with any stage of the writing process. Walk-in tutoring is available Monday-Thursday 8AM-10PM, Friday 8AM-6PM, and Sunday 1-10PM. The Writing Place is located in The Den in Rolvaag, next to the computer lab.

My office hours: Make an appointment or drop by to discuss questions, concerns, drafts, ideas, etc.—however large or small. Bring your work-in-progress with you when possible.

calendar

February

- 8 course introduction
- 10 “Renowned Hoo-Ha Doctor Wins Nobel Prize For Medical Advancements Down There”:
<http://www.theonion.com/content/news/renowned_hoo_ha_doctor_wins_nobel>
Gina Kolata, “The Myth, the Math, the Sex”:
<<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/12/weekinreview/12kolata.html>>
personal narrative assignment overview/introduction
- 12 Virginia Braun & Celia Kitzinger, “‘Snatch,’ ‘Hole,’ or ‘Honey-Pot’? Semantic Categories and the Problem of Nonspecificity in Female Genital Slang” (*The Journal of Sex Research* 38.2, May 2001: pp. 146-158: access online through the library’s electronic journals): *Please bring a copy to class.*
- 15 Steinar Kvale, “Introduction to Interview Research” (on physical reserve in Rolvaag)
Martin Brett Davies, “Studying a Small Sample” (on physical reserve in Rolvaag)
qualitative research report and blog assignment overviews/introductions
in-class discussion of analysis
- 17 in-class work toward the qualitative research project: topic development
- 19 Nancy Mairs, “Carnal Acts” (on e-reserve): *Please bring a copy to class.*
- 22 *A Writer’s Reference* 34-5, on transitions
Bring the Mairs essay again.
in-class discussion of paragraphing, transitions, introductions, and conclusions
Post your first weekly blog entry by 11PM on Tuesday and comment by Thursday’s class.
- 24 Karen Gocsik, “Writing the Academic Paper: What Is an Academic Paper?”:
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/ac_paper/what.shtml>
on quoting effectively: <<http://www.hamilton.edu/writing/quotations.html>>
- 26 in-class work on study design: guiding question and population

March

- 1 Jill M. Wood *et al.*, “Is My Period Normal? How College-Aged Women Determine the Normality or Abnormality of Their Menstrual Cycles” (*Women and Health* 46.1, 2007: access online through the library’s electronic journals)
- 3 in-class discussion of wordiness and ‘the paramedic method’
- 5 Davies, “Qualitative Research Interviewing” (on physical reserve in Rolvaag)
Kvale, “Conducting an Interview” (on physical reserve in Rolvaag)
in-class development of our flexible interview guide or ‘script’
- 8 in-class discussion of research ethics and informed consent
personal narrative due
- 10 Elizabeth Arveda Kissling, “Marketing Menstruation” (on e-reserve)
- 12 *A Writer’s Reference* 418-26, on APA citation and academic honesty
Familiarize yourself with 426-46, 449, & 459, on the details of APA citation.
Bring *A Writer’s Reference* to class.
- 15 Kvale, “Transcribing Interviews” (on physical reserve in Rolvaag)

- in-class work on our interview script: moving from the shorter to the longer interview
Complete your first (30-minute) interview between 9 March and today's class.
- 17 Antonya Nelson, "Female Trouble" (*Scribner Anthology* 431-51): *Bring the book.*
 on close reading: <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/%7Ewricntr/documents/CloseReading.html>>
 literary analysis assignment overview/introduction
- 19 Gocsik, "Writing in the Humanities":
 <<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/humanities/write.shtml>>
 on writing about literature: <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/618/01/>>
 Gocsik, "Developing Your Thesis":
 <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/ac_paper/develop.shtml>
- 22 more on writing about literature and making arguments in the humanities
Post complete transcription and summary for the first interview by class today.
- 24 Jhumpa Lahiri, "A Temporary Matter" (*Scribner Anthology* 321-34): *Bring the book.*
 Choose a story for the literary analysis essay before today's class.
- 26 Familiarize yourself with *A Writer's Reference* 370-404, on MLA citation.
 Bring *A Writer's Reference* to class.
 on essay exams: <<http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/tips/inclassessay/>> and
 <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/printable/737/>>
Complete your second (1-hour) interview between 16 March and today's class.
- [29 March, 1, 2, & 5 April: Spring/Easter Break: No blog entries or comments *either* week.]
April
- 7 in class: practice essay test questions
- 9 *A Writer's Reference* 18-23, on revision/editing/proofreading
 read your workshop groupmates' stories by today's class
literary analysis full-length rough draft due for our in-class workshop
- 12 Janice McCabe, "Who are the Experts?: Medicalization in Teen Magazine Advice
 Columns" (on e-reserve)
 Explore the sex ed sites *Scarleteen & Sex, Etc.*: <www.scarleteen.com>, <www.sexetc.org>.
Post complete transcription and summary for the second interview by class today.
- 14 Bring a hard copy of the most updated version of your literary analysis draft to class today.
- 16 Davies, "Analysing Qualitative Data," pp. 187-96 (on physical reserve in Rolvaag): Skip the
 section "Interpretive Content Analysis of Complete Interviews" (pp. 189-91). Note that
 the techniques of #s 4, 5, and 6 on p. 192 are suggestions, not what you *must* do.
 Davies, "Writing Your Report," pp. 209-15 (on physical reserve in Rolvaag)
literary analysis due
- 19 Elaine J. Lawless, "Woman as Abject: Resisting Cultural and Religious Myths That
 Condone Violence against Women" (*Western Folklore* 62.4, Fall 2003: pp. 237-69:
 access online through the library's electronic journals): *Please bring a copy to class.*
- 21 continued discussion of Lawless
- 23 **qualitative research report (first/shorter version) full-length rough draft due** for our in-
 class workshop
- 26 Tim Havens, "Where Babies Really Come From ...":

- <<http://flowtv.org/?p=1099#printpreview>>
 Joyce Millman, “The Addictive Spectacle of Maternal Reality”:
 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/08/13/arts/television-radio-the-addictive-spectacle-of-maternal-reality.html>>
- 28 continued discussion of Havens, Millman, and media representations of childbirth
 30 library research: secondary research in the humanities and social sciences
qualitative research report (first/shorter version) due

May

- 3 Gail Markle, ““Can Women Have Sex Like a Man?”: Sexual Scripts in *Sex and the City*”
 (*Sexuality & Culture* 12.1, 2008, pp. 45–57: access online through the library’s electronic journals)
- 5 library research: advice and supported work time for the expanded research report
- 7 Sheila A. Smith & Deirdre M. Condit, “Marginalizing Women: Images of Pregnancy in *Williams Obstetrics*”:
 <<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=1595015&blobtype=pdf>>
 in-class work on paraphrasing
- 10 in-class review of APA citation
 tips for getting from 4-6 pages to 10-12 pages
 [We’ll wrap up the blog this week.]
- 12 Junot Díaz, “Nilda” (*Scribner Anthology* 144-51)
 Susan Minot, “Lust” (*Scribner Anthology* 405-12): *Bring the book.*
- 14 in class: second round of practice essay test questions
- 17 **qualitative research report (final/longer version) full-length rough draft due** for our in-class workshop
 [No blog entries or comments this week, of course.]

Friday, 21 May (2:00PM): qualitative research report (final/longer version) due