Texas A&M University
Core Curriculum
Initial Request for a Course Addition to the Fall 2014 Core Curriculum

Foundational Component Area: Language, Philosophy and Culture

In the box below, describe how this course meets the Foundational Component Area description for Language, Philosophy and Culture. Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.

How does the proposed course specifically address the Foundational Component Area definition above?

ENGL/WGST 374: In this course, we will explore the complex historical and biographical contexts in which various texts by women have been and are being produced. We will look at such issues as the struggle between personal fulfillment and societal obligation, the relationship between marriage and wider economic conditions, patriarchy and domination. How have women writers approached these issues? Do novels by women critically revise, or uncritically accept, what we might call a male-oriented or masculinist take on questions of female appetite and desire, for example? How do race and class impact how women relate to cultural issues, and how does the dominant culture position women? This course will ultimately reveal how wider social forces shape the philosophical outlooks and aesthetic sensibilities of women writers of different historical periods and racial and ethnic origins, and ultimately, help students develop an appreciation for what the study of literature of groups that may be different from theirs can teach us about ourselves and our shared humanity. Material from this course will include written texts and such visual representations as photographs, illustrations, films, or theatrical performances.

Core Objectives

Describe how the proposed course develops the required core objectives below by indicating how each learning objective will be addressed, what specific strategies will be used for each objective and how student learning of each objective will be evaluated.

Critical Thinking (to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information):

Critical Thinking Skills (CTS): The course will enhance critical thinking skills through consistent reading and class discussion of key ideas in women’s writings about the relationship between gender and cultural issues. The evaluation of critical thinking skills will be based on exams and class participation and may include written work. Exams will be designed to allow students to demonstrate their ability to evaluate and synthesize key ideas from the assigned reading. Class room discussion will focus on helping students better understand the nuances and complexities of women’s writings about the relationship between gender and cultural issues.

Communication (to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication):
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Communication Skills (CS): The course enhances communication skills through small and large group discussion and writing about ideas, issues, questions, and themes central to course reading and visual texts. The course will help students learn how to develop a greater understanding of women's writers that may involve guided writing assignments in which they will receive feedback, exams in which students will be expected to effectively convey key ideas from the course succinctly and clearly, and class room discussion in which students will learn how to express questions and thoughts about the subtleties of each text under examination. Material from this course will include written texts and such visual representations as photographs, illustrations, films, or theatrical performances.

Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities):

Social Responsibility (SR): The course enhances social responsibility by providing students with a cross cultural understanding of how history, region, and broader social forces have shaped the distinctive literary traditions of women's writings about gender. The evaluation of social responsibility will be based upon an end-of-the-semester short writing assignment in which students will be asked to reflect upon how their knowledge of literatures from previous historical periods and cultures outside of their own has changed in light of the new information that they now possess. Students will be expected to demonstrate how key insights from the course have helped broaden their understanding of how history, culture, and philosophical outlooks have shaped the literary traditions of women's writings.

Personal Responsibility (to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making):

Personal Responsibility (PR): The course will enhance personal responsibility through engagement with moral and thorny ethical issues that arise in class readings. The course material throughout the semester will offer students an opportunity to reflect upon personal responsibility through such topics as the struggle between personal fulfillment and societal obligation, the relationship between marriage and wider economic conditions, patriarchy and domination, and problems related to eating disorders. Students will explore these topics through group discussion, writing assignments, and exams.

Please be aware that instructors should be prepared to submit samples/examples of student work as part of the future course recertification process.