English 443: Gender and Care in Modern US Poetry

Dates: Monday-Friday, June 6-July 8th, 1-2:40 p.m.

Location: ICC 213

Professor: Libbie Rifkin, pronouns she/her/hers.

Professor Contact Information: lsr@georgetown.edu and 202-577-3148 (for emergencies)

Virtual Office Hours:
Prof Rifkin: Monday, 4-5:30 p.m. and by appointment. Please connect via this link, or through the Zoom Conferencing link on the Canvas course.

In-Person Office Hours:
By appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class, we'll explore modern and contemporary American poetry through the lenses of gender and disability theory, particularly as they center the question of care. We'll examine the way a range of poets with and without disabilities take up critical questions in their work, including: how do we care for one another from childhood through aging? How are our relationships of care charged with the power dynamics of race, class, immigration status, and gender? Does the work of care conflict with or engender creativity in poetry? And how might disability, in the ways it compels us to understand ourselves through our vulnerability and our dependency on others, reframe such core American values as independence and rational individualism as well as key poetic ideals like genius?

Since much of the work of care (both familial and non-familial, unpaid and inadequately paid) has been assigned to women and femme-identified people, they will make up the bulk, though not the entirety, of our syllabus. We'll examine the writing lives of selected 20th and 21st century poets who played significant roles in shaping the literary fields in which they worked, and we'll think about poetic community as a form of care. We'll move chronologically and thematically, exploring conceptions of motherhood, (de)institutionalization, queer kinship, and interdependency from Emily Dickinson into Modernism, the post-War era, the Second Wave and Black Feminist movements, HIV/AIDS and queer community, to our immediate moment.

These issues are particularly salient right now in the midst of a global pandemic that has highlighted the deadly effects of systemic racism, ableism, and economic and environmental injustice.

ACCESSIBILITY

Universal design is an accessibility principle by which expanding access to a space (like a classroom) or a conversation (like a curriculum) benefits everyone. I am slowly and imperfectly working towards universal design in my courses, and at the same time, I understand that each student learns differently. If you are facing a barrier to access in my class, I invite you to talk with me about it by email or in my office hours. Also, if you have or think you might have a documented disability, please communicate your need for accommodations to the Academic Resource Center. Please go to http://guarc.georgetown.edu/disability/accommodations for further information. This statement was cribbed, with thanks, from the following site: start-anywhere.tumblr.com/post/108182739875/my-syllabus-accessibility-statement.

I am committed to creating a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). If your name or pronoun needs to be corrected, please let me know early in the semester so that I can make the appropriate changes to my records.

During the first 3 days of the semester, each student will be required to sign up for a 10 minute learning styles check-in over Zoom. We will discuss the course expectations and whether/how they may be adapted to suit individual needs (for instance alternatives to talking in class as a form of participation).

Student Note-takers
With an eye towards fulfilling one of the primary principles of universal design for learning, multiple means of representation, there will be a student note-taker for each class. A sign-up sheet will be posted on Canvas Collaborations after the first class. All students who are able should volunteer to take notes for one class during the semester. Students will take notes for the class in the Google doc entitled Class Notes found under in Collaborations.

COURSE READINGS

Only one required purchase this summer:
Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*

Lennard Davis, ed., *The Disability Studies Reader*, Fourth Edition (Lauinger free digital text)

Online Material: The rest of the reading will be either PDFs or web-based, both of which will be linked to the Canvas Module for which it is assigned.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Participation 40%: You are required to attend, prepare for, and actively participate in class discussions. Active participation can include active listening as well as considered contributions. We will break into small groups/pairs as often as possible to launch conversations. We will also use pre-conversation prompts as needed. You may also choose to share your thoughts with me in office hours.

In addition to these modes of participating, there will be Canvas Discussion Posts (CDPs). These posts are required, ungraded opportunities for you to informally but thoughtfully engage with

the course material and your peers in writing. I will offer brief comments on your CDPs.

Formal Papers 60%: You will have one 5-6 page thesis-driven paper with a theoretical and at least one poetic text, and 8-page final paper, based on your own thinking and about 3 critical/historical texts.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Module 1: Introduction: Gender and the Poetics of Care in the Time of Covid-19

Monday, June 6th:
Read in class: selections from *Open in Emergency*, CARE, "5 Reasons Why US Women and People of Color Are Especially Vulnerable to Covid-19", Rebel Sidney Black, "Pod Mapping for Mutual Aid",
Do in class: Start pod map

Module 2: Foundations in Disability Studies: The Social Model and Intersecting Identities

Tuesday, June 7th:
Watch before class: *Crip Camp* (link to Youtube of the film here)
Read before class: Tom Shakespeare, "The Social Model of Disability" (Disability Studies Reader DSR), Rosemary Garland-Thomson, "Becoming Disabled"

Wednesday, June 8th:
Read: Douglas Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History" (DSR), TL Lewis, "Ableism 2020,"
Do before class: Canvas Discussion Post (CDP) 1

Module 3: Feminist Ethics and Crises of Care

Thursday, June 9th:
Read: Eva Kittay, "Relationships of Dependency and Equality" (PDF), Stacy Clifford Simplican, "Care, Disability, and Violence" (PDF)
Do: CDP 2

Friday, June 10th:
Read: Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Chapters 1-2 from *Forced to Care: Coercion and Caregiving in America* (PDF)
Listen: Ai-jen Poo, "The most vulnerable workers are being hit the hardest"

Module 4: "Infection in the Sentence"?: Emily Dickinson in the Attic and in Intimate Community

June 13th:
Read: Emily Dickinson's Life, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "Infection in the Sentence: The Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship" (Canvas), 258, 280, 303, 508, 613, 657, 1072 (Canvas) 260
Do: CDP 3, poem annotation

June 14th:
Read: "Sue, Dear Sue, Sweet Sue, Sister," from Martha Nell Smith, *Rowing in Eden* (PDF), Emily Dickinson Writing a Poem

Module 5: Disabled Modernism in the Shadow of the Asylum
June 15th:
Read: Rosemarie Garland Thomson, "Eugenics" and Licia Carlson, "Institutions" (PDF), Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper," William Carlos Williams, "To Elsie," Charlotte Mew, "Ken" and "On the Asylum Road"

June 16th:
Read: Angela Weld Grimke, "Fragment," Gertrude Stein, from *Tender Buttons* (PDF)
Do: Stein Making Sense exercise on Canvas, Collaborations

Module 6: Audre Lorde: We Were Different
June 17th:
https://alp.org/about/audre (Links to an external site.)
Read: Lorde, *Zami*, (read through Chapter 11)
Reading and Discussion Questions (be prepared to discuss in class):
1. Reread "Fragment" (Links to an external site.) by Angelina Weld Grimke, an unpublished poem from the 1920s found in her papers. How might we read *Zami* as an answer to Grimke's call? How might we begin to read the literary historical relationship between Lorde and Grimke in terms of care?
2. Read the "Dedication," "Acknowledgements" and "Prologue" of *Zami* together. How do they situate Lorde's biomythography both within and as a poetics of care?
3. Based on your reading of the first 1/3 of the book, how would you define biomythography?
4. How does Lorde map Carriacou and Harlem onto one another? Pick 2 passages from Chapters 1-11 to discuss in this regard.
5. Close read "How I Became a Poet." How did Lorde become a poet?

June 20th:
Read: *Zami* (through Chapter 22), Selected poems (tba)
Do: CDP 4

Module 7: Lorde and the Question of Self Care
June 21st:
Read: Finish *Zami*
***Zami* discussion questions:**
1. The book begins and ends with an invocation to Afrekete/ How do you understand this figure? What role does she play in Lorde's biomythography?

2. Think about the care relationship between Kitty and Audre--where does it fall on the transparency/opacity spectrum?

3. Choose a passage from the last third of the book that relates to the notion of "home" (or perhaps "house" as in "house of difference). How has this idea changed over the course of the book?

4. Explore Lorde's representation of her body. What are the connections she draws between being "fat, Black, nearly blind, and ambidextrous"?

June 22:
Read: from *A Burst of Light* (PDF), Jordan Kisner, "The Politics of Conspicuous Displays of Self Care," (Links to an external site.)
Do: CDP 5
If possible, take a look at this article (Links to an external site.) about COVID-19, racism, and health disparities among Black people

Module 8 Healing Justice, Disability Justice, and the Roots of Intersectionality
June 23:
Read: Selections from Barbara Smith and the Combahee River Collective , and This Bridge Called My Back (PDF).

June 24th:
Read: Mia Mingus, "Access Intimacy, Interdependence, and Disability Justice," (Links to an external site.) Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinhana "A Modest Proposal for A Fair Trade Emotional Labor Economy" (Links to an external site.)
Watch: Sins Invalid: *An Unshamed Claim to Beauty* (ShareStream Pick-n-Play)
Do: CDP 6

Module 9: Brother to Brother: Black Gay Community in the Time of HIV/AIDS
June 27th: PAPER 1 DUE
Watch: Marlon Riggs, *Tongues Untied*

June 28th:
Read: from Joe Beam, ed., *In the Life* and Essex Hemphill, ed. *Brother to Brother* (PDF)

Module 10: Sylvia Plath: Mad Motherhood in the Age of Psychoanalysis
June 29th:
Read: Two Views of Plath's Life and Career, Betty Friedan, "The Problem That Has No Name" (PDF), "Metaphors," "Morning Song," "Tulips," "Lady Lazarus," "Daddy"
Do: CDP 7

June 30th:
Read: Annie Lloyd, When the Sexually Abusive Artist is a Woman (Links to an external site.), Plath, "The Surgeon at 2 am," (Links to an external site.) *The Bell Jar*, Chapter 15 (Links to an external site.)from *The Bell Jar*, Robert Lowell, "Waking in the Blue"

Module 11: Adrienne Rich: From Snapshots of a Daughter in Law to Lesbian Existence

July 1:
Read: Rich, from *A Change of World*, *Snapshots of A Daughter in Law*

July 5th: Final Paper Proposal Due
Read: Rich, *The Dream of A Common Language*, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (*ARPP*)

MODULE 12: Eileen Myles and Complex Care in the Downtown Art World
July 6th:
Read: Eileen Myles, "Chelsea Girls" (PDF)
Do: Collage (Canvas tool tba)

July 7th:
Do: Writing day

July 8th:
Writing day

July 9th:
Paper 2 Due

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students at Georgetown University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity. Although most Georgetown students conduct themselves in accordance with these standards, occasionally, there are students who violate the code of conduct. Cheating harms the University community in many ways. For example, honest students are frustrated by the unfairness of cheating that goes undetected and students who cheat can skew the grading curve in a class, resulting in lower grades for students who worked hard and did their own work.
Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are expected to fully adhere to the policies and procedures of Georgetown's Honor System and to take the Honor Code Pledge.

Honor Code Pledge

In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life I commit myself to respect and to uphold the Georgetown University honor system; to live out a commitment to integrity in all my words and actions; to be honest in every academic

endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together; to live out the ideals of Georgetown University I commit myself to be a person for others in my daily life, respectful of difference and disagreement; To care for this venerable campus and all of those with whom I share it; and to fulfill in all ways the trust placed in me to carry on the Georgetown tradition.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Georgetown recognizes that COVID-19 has a significant impact on everyone in the Georgetown community. Georgetown offers a variety of support services for students that can be accessed online and has put together this newsletter which aims to provide you with information about well-being resources and virtual meetings that can connect you with mental health professionals on and off campus during this time. Below are some resources available to you:

- Academic Resource Center
  202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services
  202-687-6985
- Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action (IDEAA)
  (202) 687-4798

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct

Georgetown University and its faculty are committed to supporting survivors and those impacted by sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, and stalking. Georgetown requires faculty members, unless otherwise designated as confidential, to report all disclosures of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator. If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a professor in or outside of the classroom (with the exception of disclosures in papers), that faculty member must report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. The coordinator, will, in turn, reach out to the student to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. [Please note that the student is not required to meet with the Title IX coordinator.].
Please note that University policy requires faculty to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct. Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include:

- Jen Schweer, MA, LPC, Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention (202) 687-0323 | jls242@georgetown.edu
- Erica Shirley, Trauma Specialist, Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS), (202) 687-6985 | els54@georgetown.edu

More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the Sexual Misconduct Website.

Title IX/Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. Specific adjustments will be handled on a case by case basis and will depend on medical needs and academic requirements. Students seeking a pregnancy adjustment or accommodation should follow the process laid out on the Title IX website.
Discrimination based on sex, including sexual misconduct and discrimination based on pregnancy or parenting status, subverts the University's mission and threatens permanent damage to the educational experience, careers, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

Georgetown Library

If you have a question for a librarian you can go to their "Ask Us" page where you will have the option to chat online, send an email, or schedule a Zoom appointment to discuss a research topic, develop a search strategy, or examine resources for projects and papers. Librarians offer an overview of and in-depth assistance with important resources for senior or master's theses, dissertations, papers and other types of research. This service is available to currently enrolled students who need assistance with Georgetown-assigned projects and papers. Please review the Services & Resources Guide for Online Students for additional information.

eResources

Students enrolled in courses have access to the University Library System's eResources, including 500+ research databases, 1.5+ million ebooks, and thousands of periodicals and other multimedia files (films, webinars, music, and images). You can access these resources through the Library's Homepage by using your NetID and password.

Learning Resources

Georgetown offers a host of learning resources to its students. Two that you might find particularly helpful in this course are the Writing Center and Refworks.
- The Writing Center offers peer tutoring by trained graduate and undergraduate students who can assist you at any point in the writing process. They help at any stage of your writing process, from brainstorming to revision. Tutors can offer

advice on thesis development, use of evidence, organization, flow, sentence structure, grammar, and more. The Writing Center will not proofread or edit papers; rather, they will help to improve your proofreading and editing skills to become a better writer. Appointments can be booked online through their website.

- Refworks is an online research management tool that aids in organizing, storing, and presenting citation sources for papers and projects.

Technical Support

All students have 24/7 access to Canvas technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including live chat and a support hotline at 855-338-2770. Use the 'Help' icon in the lower left of your Canvas window to view all available support and feedback options. If you're looking for help on a specific feature, check out the Canvas Student Guide.