

TITLE OF COURSE: **Women and Madness**NEW X**I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours of Course:**

A thematic study of the madwoman in autobiography, literature, drama, opera, and film. Various literary/cultural motifs of female madness ranging from Greek drama to contemporary writings will be examined. This course will fit into the curriculum in the following ways: 1) as a Women's Studies Minor course; 2) a World Literature option; 3) a Literature elective. 3 credit hours.

II. Prerequisite(s): EN140 and any 200-level literature course, except LI243**III. Purposes or Objectives of the Course:**

- B. To develop a comprehensive definition of the literary motif of *madness*.
- C. To achieve proficiency in identifying historic and contemporary realities/stereotypes of the madwoman.
- D. To develop a comprehensive definition of the contemporary *wild woman* literary motif, specifically as it relates to female sexual/creative energy and liberation/destruction cycles.

IV. Expectations of Students:

- A. To write a critical paper which demonstrates competency/understanding of a thematic issue relating to the madwoman motif in literature, drama, opera, or film.
 - 1. Undergraduates' papers will incorporate appropriate research and documentation. 6-8 pages.
 - B. Graduate students' papers will include research with an analysis of broader philosophical/modernist/postmodernist issues of madness in the 20th c: 12-15 pages.
- C. To demonstrate proficiency by two written examinations. (Ability to synthesize relevant information/quality and select appropriate textual references.)
- D. To prepare an oral presentation on either a *mad* literary figure or an area of madness such as Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD/DID). Undergraduates: 15 min. Graduates: 30 min.
- E. To keep a journal collection of cartoons, jokes, and other commentary which perpetuates the social stereotyping of women as crazy or insane.
- F. Graduate students will be required to research and write on broader issues of madness in relation to modernist/deconstructionist or feminist perspectives.

V. Course Content or Outline (Indicate number of class hours per unit or section):

- A. An overview of madness as a cultural phenomenon in Western culture:

- Industrialization, alienation, fragmentation, uncoupling/disconnection of self; the glorification of madness in Nietzsche, romantics, surrealists, poststructuralists; incarceration/decarceration treatments; liberation/destruction themes. Three Hours
- B. Dementia, hysteria, trances, somnambulism, various 20th c. disorders, such as MPD/DID, borderline personality, depression, etc., schizoid and schizophrenic personalities periodicals; *Girl, Interrupted*, Kaysen; *Renee's Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl*; *Sybil*, *Three Faces of Eve* Six hours
- C. Self-esteem issues such as self-loathing, anorexia, bulimia, cutting, scarification; prescription medications, litigation issues, insurance coverage; *Madness and Modernism*, Sass; *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Science of Memory*, Hacking. *Prozac Nation*, Wurtzel Six hours
- D. Myths, archetypes, goddesses, spiritual ties to nature, witchcraft, creativity; literary imagination; light/dark metaphors; creativity and madness; sexual reproductive energy; dance of death motif; *Electra/Salome*, Strauss; *Wild Women*, Hall; Greek drama, *Medea*, *Antigone* Six hours
- E. *Angel at My Table*, Frame; *The Bell Jar*, Plath; *The Four-Gated City*, Lessing; *'night, mother*, Norma; *Miss Julie*, Strindberg; *Hedda Gabler*, Ibsen Nine hours
- F. The Great Confinement, institutional conditions, incarceration/decarceration; *Frances*; *Camille Claudel*; *Nuts*; *Blue Sky* Nine hours
- G. Liberation/destruction cycles; discussions of Oral Presentations Six hours

VI. Textbook(s) and/or Other Required Materials or Equipment:

Required texts:

Frame, Janet. *Angel at My Table*. (Pbk)
 Hall Melissa Mia, ed. *Wild Women*. New York: Carroll and Graf, 1997.
 Kaysen, Susanna. *Girl, Interrupted*. New Book: Vintage, 1994.
 Lessing, Doris. *The Four-Gated City*. (Pbk)
 Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*. (Pbk)
 Wurtzel Elizabeth. *Prozac Nation*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.

Required films/operas:

Nuts
Frances
Camille Claudel
Three Faces of Eve
Electra/Salome

Reference texts (to be put on library reserve):

- Bennett, Paula. *My Life a Loaded Gun: Dickinson, Plath and Rich, Female Creativity*
- Estes, Clarissa Pinkola. *Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories about the Wild Woman Archetype*. New York: Ballantine, 1995.
- Felman, Shoshana. *Writing and Madness*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. & Gubar, Susan, eds. *Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- Hacking, Ian. *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory*.
- Kauffman, Sarah. Trans. By Catherine Porter. *The Enigma of Woman: Woman in Freud's Writings*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Sass, Louis A. *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in Light of Modern Art, Literature and Thought*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Shopwalker, Elaine. *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980*. New York: Penguin, 1985.

VII. Basis for Student Evaluation:

1. Active discussion, participation in class activities. (100 its.)
2. Journal. (100 its.)
3. Critical paper. (100 its.)
4. Mid-term exam. (100 its.)
5. Comprehensive final. (100 its.)
6. Oral presentations. (100 its.)

Total: 600 its.