

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN LITERATURE AND LIFE

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"A number of articles detailed the obstacles women face in starting or growing their businesses. These included 1) attitudes, perceptions (self and others'), and socialization of women; 2) child, dependent, household care; 3) access to capital 4) education and training; and 5) CEO or Board experience"¹

Reading fictional accounts representing both the domestic and the entrepreneurial world in 19th and 20th century America, students will analyze the variety of historic, cultural, and psychological forces that have propelled women to move away from or between an exclusively private domestic world and the public world where they own and manage their own businesses. We will explore the ways that gender ideology and performance inhibit and/or enhance the opportunities and the lives these women create for themselves. During the second part of the semester, students will research American and/or international women entrepreneurs and explore the real life issues that inform the fictions and gender theories they have been studying.

Texts:

Cristina Garcia, *Dreaming in Cuban*

Ruth Sidel, *On Her Own: Growing Up in the Shadow of the American Dream* (available in the WGS Office)

Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*

Electronic readings and handouts. You must print out all electronic handouts and bring them to class on the day assigned.

Course Requirements

- **Four Writing Assignments:** **40%**
 - **Sept. 8: Interview/Character sketch**
 - **Oct. 18: Analysis/Argument**
 - **Nov. 1: Revised sketch with analysis**
 - **Dec. 1: Final research project**
- **Three Oral Presentations** **30%**
- **A Reading/Writing/Study Group**—you will join a small group of students and discuss and analyze course materials, prepare in-class presentations, brainstorm, draft, and revise your writing, and describe and reflect upon your intellectual journey during the semester. Plan on meeting informally with your group at least once a week outside of class.

¹ *Women Entrepreneurs, Their Ventures, and the Venture Capital Industry: An Annotated Bibliography*, Eds. Elizabeth J. Gatewood, Nancy M. Carter, Candida G. Brush, Patricia G. Greene, Myra M. Hart, (Stockholm: ESBRI, 2003), 21.

You may have your meetings in the WGS Library/Lounge, C1, or at another location.

- **Portfolio:** Good writers are most often interested and thoughtful readers and creators. You will maintain a reader's/writer's portfolio in which you explore the readings, ask critical questions, assess your goals and progress at WFU, wonder about women, work, and entrepreneurship, and keep copies of drafts of essays and presentations. Write an entry for every reading assignment and bring these to class to share, but also compose entries regarding class discussion, your own research, or your changing ideas. Each entry should be at least 125 words and should not be mere description. Try to analyze, question, develop, and construct new thoughts. Look for links among readings and discussions. At mid and end-term, your portfolio will be assessed, but bring it to all classes for discussion and review. **15%**
- **Attendance and class participation are required and count heavily in the grade.** Your grade will be affected if you have more than 3 unexcused absences; each unexcused absence lowers your grade. If you miss more than 6 classes, you will be unlikely to pass the course. Inform me during the first week of class if you will have more than 3 excused absences this semester. Students are responsible to make up all work associated with excused absences. **15%**

If a disability prohibits you from participation in any of the course requirements, please notify me during the first week of classes.

Academic Responsibilities

As you join our community of scholars, you must realize that your participation and your academic integrity are essential to this course. Come to every class, having read the assigned texts, and be prepared to initiate questions and respond to the readings and your cohorts.

All written work is to be proofed and submitted in both hard and electronic copy (unless otherwise stated). All students must strive to master the conventions and practices used in academic writing, including standard usage of grammar and punctuation and proper documentation. The online text, *Academic Writing at Wake Forest*, will guide you as you write, edit, and document your essays: http://www.wfu.edu/Academic-departments/english/courses/writing_guide.htm

Late assignments are generally not accepted, but if you have a problem, notify me in advance of the due date; I will make individual arrangements. Plagiarism and cheating are not tolerated; failure to document the words or ideas of others will result in a zero grade and a report will be sent to the Honor Council.

Tentative Class Schedule

Student Interviews

Aug. 25	Introductions and interviews
Aug. 27	Interviews (continued)

Strange Texts from the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

- Aug. 30 Mary Wilkins Freeman, “A New England Nun” and “Louisa”
http://home.comcast.net/~mewf_short_stories/NewEnglandNun.htm
http://home.comcast.net/~mewf_short_stories/Louisa.htm
- Sept. 1 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “If I Were a Man”
http://occawlonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/divine5e/chapter19/medialib/primarysources5_19_1.html
Gerda Learner, “The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson, 1800-1840”
- Sept. 3 - 6 Sarah Orne Jewett, “Tom’s Husband” and “A White Heron”
<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=JewToms.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=1&division=div1>
<http://www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/gcarr/19cUSWW/SOJ/AWH.html>
- Sept. 8* Character sketch due (3-4 pages) Writing Lessons—an in-class discussion
- Sept. 10 Two Perspectives: Virginia Woolf, “Professions for Women” and Catharine Beecher, “The Profession of a Woman”
<http://www.sfu.ca/~scheel/english340/Professions.htm>
<http://search.eb.com/women/pri/Q00177.html>

Women, Work, and Entrepreneurship in the Late 20th-Early 21st Centuries

- Sept. 13 Introduction to Entrepreneurship
- Sept. 15 Elizabeth Gatewood, Director of the University Office of Entrepreneurship and Liberal Arts:
Read Ruth Sidel, Intro. to *On Her Own*, pp. 1-11.
- Sept. 17-22 Group presentations, Sidel, Chapters 1-3
- Sept. 24 Sidel, Chapter 7, “The Real World of Woman’s Work”
Discussion: Students will choose critical problems on women, work, and entrepreneurship

Life Stories of Women Entrepreneurs

- Sept. 27-Oct. 13 Readings from *Kitchen Table Entrepreneurs: How Eleven Women Escaped Poverty and Became Their Own Bosses*, Eds. Martha Shirk and Anna S. Wadia and *Women Entrepreneurs Only: Twelve Women Entrepreneurs Tell the Stories of Their Successes*, Ed. Gregory K. Ericksen
- Oct. 15 Holiday

Oct. 18 Analysis/Argument Paper: Analyze a 21st century challenge to women entrepreneurs

Field and Library Research Projects

Oct. 20-Nov.8 Daily schedule to be announced

Oct. 27 Elizabeth Gatewood, guest speaker, The Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs

Nov. 1 Analysis and Revision of Character Sketch due

**Late 20th Century Fictional Representations of Women Entrepreneurs:
Fact or Fiction**

Nov. 10-17 Garcia, *Dreaming in Cuban*

Nov. 19-22 Research presentations

Nov. 24-26 Holiday

Nov. 29-Dec. 3 Walker, *The Color Purple* and Final Project