

Syllabus for Gender and Language (Eng. 3315)

Section 2069 (TTh 10:50); Irby 312

Melchior: Spring, 2006

Office: Irby 317C; Phone: 450-5127

Email: bonniem@uca.edu

Website: <http://faculty.uca.edu/~bonniem>

Office Hours: MWF 11-12; 1-2

TTh 1-3 (if no meetings)

Required Textbooks:

Romaine, Suzanne: *Communicating Gender* (1999)

Hansberry, Lorraine. *Raisin in the Sun*.

Churchill, Caryl. *Top Girls* (Methuen, 1994)

Provided xeroxes: Lindsey's "Men and Masculinity" and McDougall's poetry

Grading:

Quizzes, journals, pre-writing for papers, participation in class discussion, attendance: 50-150 pts.

2 oral presentations 50 pts. each (2-3 page written component, typed and double-spaced); 2 @25 pts ea.
= 150 pts.

2 debates, 25 pts. each = 50 pts.

1 paper (6-7 pages, typed and double-spaced) 150 pts.

Final examination 100 pts.

Attendance Policy: 1-2 absences = +5 pts.; 5-6 absences= minus 5 pts. each; over 6 = minus 10 pts. each.

Quizzes and Journals: Both quizzes and journals will be 10 pts. each. Quizzes will be mainly true/false over important points in the chapters. Journals, when assigned, are intended to help develop your thinking skills by getting you actively involved, taking initiative in a stress-free environment (because they can be informal and unpolished). They should be placed on my desk at the beginning of the period. Any journal turned in after the beginning of the period will count as late. Label each journal page with author, abbreviated title, and date, so that you'll be able to refer back and know what you're looking at. Write in ink or type on 8 x 11 paper, and don't write on the back of the paper; if you end up with too much for one page, use a second sheet.

Answer the question on the syllabus, supporting your point with specifics. Feel free to ask questions raised by the reading and make objections. I'll try to answer back, as if we're having a conversation.

Discussion Question: On a 3x5 card write out a question related to that day's reading that you would like the class to discuss and bring it to class. (Often, I'll collect them; sometimes I'll just ask.) The question should be something that will help us explore in more depth issues related to that reading. I'll call on people to ask what the question is and we'll discuss it. Not having a question will affect your discussion points negatively.

Weekly Syllabus (reading assignments and papers are due on the date listed)

Week I (Jan. 17-19)

T Romaine, Chapter 1 ("Doing Gender"), pp. 1-28.

Th Oral presentation on #5, p.29

Week II (Jan. 24-26)

T Chapter 2 ("Boys Will Be Boys"), 31-61

Th Oral Presentation on #1 or #2, pp. 61-2.

Week III (Jan. 31-Feb. 2)

T Chapter 3 ("What's Gender Got to Do With Grammar"), 65-88

Th Chapter 4 ("English— A Man-Made Language"), 91-117

Week IV (Feb. 7-9)

- T Chapter 5 (“What’s in a Name”), 121-48
- Th Oral Presentation, #3 or #4, p. 118, and #2, p. 148.

Week V (Feb. 14-16)

- T Chapter 6 (“Gendered Talk”), 151-84, **and** Chapter 7 (“Learning How to Talk Like a Lady”), 189-218.
- Th Oral presentations on #1 and #2, p. 219.

Week VI (Feb. 21-23)

- T In-class Debate on #4, p. 219
- Th Chapter 8 (“Different Words, Different Worlds”), 221-48
- Oral Presentation on #1 or #2, p. 248.

Week VII (Feb.28-Mar. 2):

- T Read Lindsey’s “Men and Masculinity,” pp. 221-45 (from *Gender Roles*, 2004). (Xerox supplied)
- Th Read *Raisin in the Sun*, Introduction and Act I

Week VIII (Mar. 7-9)

- T Finish *Raisin in the Sun*; journal due
- Th Oral Presentations on *Raisin in the Sun* (How this play relates to points from “Men and Masculinity”)

Week IX (Mar. 14-16)

- T Read Chapter 9 (“Advertising Gender”), 251-88.
- Th Oral Presentations, #1 and #3, pp. 288-9

Spring Break

Week X (Mar. 28-30)

- T Proposal for paper due
- Th Read Chapter 10 (“Language Reform”), 291-317
- In-class debate

Week XI (Apr. 4-6)

- T Read poems by Jo McDougall
- Journal due (and we will view a video of the poems)

- Th Draft of paper due
- Bring *Top Girls* to class: In-class reading and video

Week XII (Apr. 11-13)

- T Read *Top Girls*, Acts I-II
- Th Read *Top Girls*, Act III— journal due on one of the following:
 1. What minor character seems to indicate a kind of choice that helps us understand the nature of the choice that Marlene or Joyce has made? Pick a passage (minor character speaking) and explain how it does so.
 2. Look at the “argument” that Marlene and Joyce have at the end. What lines indicate the ways in which each feels her choice is limiting (and why)?

3. Does Marlene fit a masculine or feminine gender role? Find specifics that support what you say. (Imagine, for example, how “normal” the story would be if Marlene were Angie’s father and Joyce her mother.) If Marlene is “masculine,” what does her story tell about the choices available to men?
4. What environment did these sisters grow up in and how did that limit their choices? What economic/political beliefs does each have, and how do these relate to their choices? (Look particularly at the “Hitler” passage).
5. At the end, Joyce says, “What about Angie? Marlene answers that she’ll be all right, and Joyce says no she won’t (p. 66 or p. 86), although in the earlier act Marlene said “she won’t make it.” Find evidence from earlier in the play as to who is right in her assessment. What does the doubling of Angie and Dull Gret contribute? (Consider what attracts Angie to Marlene-- p. 110 and 113).

(In-class Group Work for *Top Girls* Oral Presentations)

Week XIII (Apr. 18-20)

T See video; draft of paper due

Th *Top Girls* Oral Presentations (25 points): you must be in class Wed. to do the work and in class Friday to do the presentation in order to get this credit.

Week XIV (Apr. 25-27)

T Paper due: Oral presentations of Papers

Th Oral Presentations of Papers

Final Examination

Sign up for two oral presentations (no more than three people per presentation)

1. #5 (greeting cards), p. 29 (Th 1/19)
2. #1 or #2 (nursery rhymes or fairy tales). Th 1/26.
3. #3 or #4 (library catalogue words or creation story), p. 118, and #2 (words for men and women), p. 148. Th 2/9
4. #1 (Nancy Drew/Hardy Boys) and #2 (TV ads for children’s toys), p. 219. Th 2/16.
5. #1 or #2 (essential features of words like *date rape* and *sexual harassment*), p. 248. 2/23
6. *Raisin in the Sun* Th 3/9.
7. #1 and #3 (gender roles in ads), p. 288-9. Th 3/16

Research Paper Topics:

1. Names: Forms of address (e.g. “Hi, Girl”) are often socially required and always socially loaded (indicating closeness, status, power). However, the function of the label depends on context and general social practice (see Holmes, pp. 69-94). Study forms of address for a given group.
2. Look at newspaper coverage of political candidates to see if there is a difference in kinds of details reported about males vs. females (details about looks? details about private vs. public life?). (See Lakoff in Holmes, 161-77).
3. Study gender differences in nursery rhymes (see #1, p. 61) or fairy tales (see #2, p. 62).
4. Study gender stereotyping in TV advertising of children’s toys (see 32, p. 219)
5. Study gender differences in children’s books of different eras.
6. Study gender stereotyping in popular video games aimed at boys vs. girls.
7. Study gender differences concerning preferences and descriptions in “personals” columns of newspapers (or on-line services). See # 1, p. 28.
8. Study gender stereotyping in the advertising in magazines (choosing magazines that target the same socio-economic class with comparable interests. (See #1 and #3, p. 288-9)