

EN 389 Seminar: Gender in American Literature, 1890-1910
Cole / Spring 2004

Instructor: Jean Lee Cole (HU 230, x5440; jcole1@loyola.edu)

Office hours: MW 1-2, F 11-12 and by appointment

Class time/location: MW 11:00-12:15 am, SH 003

Required texts:

Wharton, *The House of Mirth*, New American Library (ISBN 0451527569)

Drieser, *Sister Carrie*, Signet (ISBN 0451527607)

Wister, *The Virginian*, Penguin USA (ISBN 0140390650)

James, *What Maisie Knew*, Oxford (ISBN 0192835912)

Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, Norton (ISBN 0393000486)

Crane, *Maggie* and other stories, Bantam (ISBN 0553213555)

Long/Eaton (edited by Honey & Cole), *Madame Butterfly and A Japanese Nightingale*, Rutgers (ISBN 0813530636)

Other readings in handouts and on reserve

Description of course and course objectives:

This course will examine how short stories and novels written from 1890-1910 addressed ideas about gender during a turbulent period in American social history. The turn into the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of the American feminist movement; at the same time, it saw a corresponding and escalating concern about American masculinity and virility. Through the lens of literary texts written by a variety of authors, we will study specific issues such as the “New Woman,” the nature of “true” womanhood, divorce, fin-de-siècle decadence and efforts to live the “strenuous life,” changing sex roles, same-sex relationships, and miscegenation. By the end of the course, students should have a basic understanding of gender in American literature from 1890-1910, in-depth knowledge of a specific author or a subtopic within the field, and an understanding of how to conduct research on this period using both primary and secondary sources.

Course requirements: As with any English course, you will be expected to read all assignments carefully and to be prepared to discuss them in class. Because of this course’s seminar format, the discussion and research components will be emphasized through the incorporation of formal and informal presentations and web-based discussion boards, in addition to classroom discussion. With the help of your colleagues, you will develop one idea raised in the course into a 15-page research paper due at the end of the semester.

Written assignments: The major assignment of the semester is the 15-page seminar paper (30% of total grade). Preliminary exercises that will help you establish and develop your topic include a paper proposal (or abstract) and preliminary bibliography (10%) and an annotated bibliography (10%).

In addition to the assignments centered around the research paper, you will also present 1 “report/response” essay to the class (10%), where you will discuss an outside text and how it relates to the course material, and two 2-3 page reports on primary sources (10% each).

The “course involvement” grade (20%) incorporates participation in class discussion, quantity and quality of discussion board postings, attendance, and general attitude/enthusiasm/collegiality. Meeting with me during my office hours can only enhance this portion of your grade.

Summary of course grade:

Report/response:	10%
Time Capsule I—magazines	10%
Time Capsule II—HEARTH	10%
Paper proposal	10%
Annotated bibliography	10%
Seminar paper	30%
Course involvement	20%

Grades will be determined using the following point values:

A 95%	B 85%	C 75%	D 65%
A- 92%	B- 82%	C- 72%	D- 62%
B+ 88%	C+ 78%	D+ 68%	F 0-59%

Attendance and late policy: You may miss class twice without penalty. More absences, as well as tardies, will have an adverse effect on your course involvement grade. Papers and other written assignments will be considered late 5 minutes after class begins on the day it is due. Late assignments will be graded down $\frac{1}{3}$ of a grade (e.g., from a B to a B-) for each day they are late, including weekends. If you need to be granted an extension, please see me in advance; I will not grant extensions on the day that an assignment is due. **Important:** Technological excuses (e.g., “my disk got corrupted,” “the printer wasn’t working”) will **not**, as a rule, be accepted.

Academic integrity: The English department regards plagiarism and other forms of cheating as the antithesis of scholarship, learning, collegiality, and responsible citizenship. The department defines plagiarism as any unacknowledged use of another’s words or ideas. This definition applies to non-print media, including the Internet, as well as to books, magazines, journals, newspapers, or other print media. To monitor the use of non-print media, the department subscribes to an electronic retrieval and detection service.

It is the student’s responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid it in all assignments. Students should familiarize themselves with the statement on “Intellectual Honesty” in the Loyola Undergraduate Catalogue (pp. 67-68), as well as with the section “Citing Sources; Avoiding Plagiarism” (pp 82-93, R5) in Diana Hacker’s *A Writer’s Reference*, the English-department handbook. Anyone having questions or uncertainties about plagiarism should consult with the instructor before submitting any assignment. Neither ignorance of the definition of plagiarism nor the lack of the intention to deceive constitutes an acceptable defense in matters of scholarly dishonesty.

This course is covered by the Loyola College Honor Code. Any students guilty of plagiarizing or cheating on any assignment will fail the course regardless of their grades on other assignments or activities, and may be subject to further sanctions as stipulated in the Loyola College Honor Code. For more information on the Code, see the statement in the “Community Standards Handbook.”

Paper formats: All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, using a 12-point, readable typeface (please—no “special” fonts). Give your paper a meaningful title and be sure that your name appears on the first page. Some assignments will also need to be turned in to the course website in MS Word format.

More on the assignments

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Discussion board postings (counts as part of the 20% course involvement grade). To give you a space to discuss issues we did not have time to get to in class—or to continue class discussions—I have set up a discussion forum in Blackboard. I would like for you to post once a week (or more) to the discussion board, and to read others' posts (you only need read the ones that interest you). To interest others in reading your posts, give them a meaningful (dare I say enticing? thought-provoking?) header/subject line—don't just title your post with the name of a novel or author. Your postings will be evaluated for their frequency, quality of analysis, ability to provoke responses, and consideration of others' perspectives/arguments.

Report/response (10% of the course grade, due 9/16–11/13). Once during the semester, you will report on an outside text (see attached list and schedule). Most of the texts I have assigned are secondary sources, but a few are primary sources (note publication date). I have specified one chapter from each of the texts for you to focus on, but you should also get a sense of the scope and argument of the whole book, by skimming chapters, reading the preface/introduction, conclusion, etc. You will present your findings to the class by reading or extemporizing from your written report, which should follow this format:

- **At the top:** Your name, date of the presentation, and a complete bibliographic citation to the book, following MLA format.
- **Abstract:** a 1-paragraph summary of the entire book, including its overall argument, its organizational scheme (what subjects do the various chapters address? what historical period does it cover? etc.), and its disciplinary focus (primary or secondary source? history? sociology? psychology? literary criticism? etc.). Your abstract should be as concise as possible—aim for half a page or less.
- **Apparatus and applicability:** a 1-2 sentence note on the scholarly apparatus and the applicability of the text—i.e., does the book contain a useful bibliography? Are the endnotes helpful? What other authors are dealt with at any length?
- **Response:** a 2-page response to the chapter which includes: a 1-paragraph summary of the specific chapter you have been assigned, and a discussion that may address any (but probably not all) of the following questions: Is the argument valid? How does it illuminate the literary text? Does it corroborate or contradict literary representations of gender in the time period? Would you recommend it as a source for the seminar paper (and if so, in what capacity)?

Your report will be graded on the clarity and conciseness of the summaries, the insightfulness of your analysis, and its ability to provoke class discussion. **Note:** the best responses will apply the outside text in some specific way to the reading assignment for the day—perhaps by applying the author's argument to a specific passage from the literary text. Doing this will give your colleagues a jumping-off point for discussion.

You will need to sign up for your report text/date by **Wed., Jan. 21**. The sign-up sheet is on my office door. All of the texts in the list will be on 3-day reserve in the library; I also have personal copies of some of the texts that I will be happy to lend to you. You will turn in a paper copy during class, and an electronic copy via e-mail.

Time Capsules (due Wed., Jan. 21, and Monday, March 8; each worth 10% of your course grade). For each of these assignments, you will be given a primary source (that is, a source from the 1890-1910 time period) and one or two secondary sources. After perusing these materials, you will write a 2-3 page essay describing the primary source and discussing how it supports or complicates the view of gender relations presented in secondary source(s). It should follow this format:

- **At the top:** your name and a complete bibliographical citation of the primary source (no citation needed for secondary source readings) in MLA format.
- **Description of source:** As with the abstract section of the report/response, this description should describe the entire magazine or book in a concise paragraph. What kind of magazine/book is it? Who, would you say, is its target audience? How is it organized, and what are its notable features (e.g., illustrations, advertisements, etc.)? What can you say about the author(s) (try Googling it/them, or looking it/them up in a historical or literary database)?
- **Analysis:** Discuss how the primary source addresses the ideas presented in the secondary source reading(s). Your report should not simply summarize the secondary reading, but should remain focused on the primary source. Since the sources you will be assigned are quite long (an entire issue of a magazine, in the first assignment, and an entire book, in the second), you should focus your analysis on a specific idea or a small, representative section of the text. For example, in the first assignment on magazines, you might focus on one or two illustrations, a single article or story, or several advertisements; or you might choose several stories/illustrations that have to do with a specific idea addressed in the secondary reading. When referring to either the primary or secondary source, **please** use parenthetical page citations (following MLA format)—this will mean taking careful notes as you peruse the primary sources in particular.

Your report will be graded on the quality, depth, and originality of the analysis. As with the report/response, you will turn in a paper copy to me in class and an electronic copy via e-mail.

The Seminar Paper

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The assignment (worth 30% of your course grade):

In an essay in the range of 15 pages (excluding works cited list), you will present a single, coherent argument about some aspect of gender in American literature from 1890-1910, supported with literary analysis and research in primary and secondary sources. You may focus on a single writer, a single text, or a single theme as it applies to one or more texts. Your paper may address writers and texts of your choice—you are not restricted to those listed on the syllabus. However, it should focus on the **literary** treatment of gender during this period, rather than historical/sociological contexts or literary criticism of the given authors. Although the bulk of your research will concern these secondary issues, they should be incorporated *in the service of* your argument, rather than becoming the focus of your essay.

The essay, accompanied by a works cited list (in MLA format), will be due on **Thursday, May 6**, by 5 pm. Turn in a hard copy to my mailbox in the English dept. office (HUM 234) or to my office directly (HUM 230). E-mail me an electronic copy as well.

These preliminary assignments will help you get started on your paper and develop your ideas:

Paper abstract and preliminary bibliography (10% of course grade, **due Wed., 3/21**):

Your abstract will consist of a 1-paragraph (100-200 word) summary of what you plan to argue, describing the *specific* question or argument you plan to pursue in your paper; it should not simply describe your topic in general terms. It should also give an indication of your essay's proposed scope and tentative organization.

The preliminary bibliography should list all of the texts you plan to consult in developing your ideas (you need not have read them at this point). It should be divided into two parts: primary and secondary sources. You should list at least 2 primary, and 4 secondary, sources. Secondary sources should include journal articles and/or book chapters as well as entire books.

Your proposal will be graded based on the clarity and completeness of your abstract, the number of sources listed and their relevance to your argument, and the formatting of your bibliography. You will turn in a paper copy to me in class and an electronic copy via e-mail.

Revised abstract and annotated bibliography (10% of course grade, **due Wed., 4/14**):

By this point of the semester, you should have completed most of your research. And in the course of doing your research, your topic may very well have changed (let it!). If it has, write a new abstract. Then, for each source you have looked at—whether or not you plan to use it in your paper— type up a bibliographic citation and a 2-3 sentence summary of the article's/book's argument and its relevance to your paper. (I hope I am not belaboring the obvious by suggesting you develop these citations and summaries as you read each source, rather than trying to write them up all at once the night before it's due.) Your bibliography will be graded on completeness, clarity, and form. You will turn in paper and electronic copies.