

ENG 315: WOMEN WRITERS' CULTURES: WOMEN/LAW/LITERATURE

CRN 26406

MEETINGS T/Th 2:15-3:45pm
Via Zoom (link on Canvas)

DR. FAITH BARTER

SHE/HER/HERS

Dept. of English
320 PLC

**BEST WAY TO
REACH ME**



Email: fbarter@uoregon.edu or email through
Canvas (allow 48 hrs for responses)

Office Hours: T/Th 12:00pm-1:30pm via Zoom
Sign up at <https://dr-barter.youcanbook.me/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an analysis and critique of women's position(s) in patriarchal society through the lenses of law and literature. Together, we will explore the role of law in maintaining and perpetuating oppressive systems and structures; we will also examine women-created literary works that register and/or resist white supremacist patriarchy. In our work, we will focus on ways that women have been excluded from full participation in the social, political, legal, and economic spheres of the societies in which they have lived; we will simultaneously focus on efforts to achieve liberation, autonomy, and equality. We will be particularly attentive to intersections of gender with categories like race, class, ability, and sexuality, and to better understand interlocking structural constraints, we will focus specifically on works by and about Black women. We will read legal documents such as judicial opinions and statutes, as well as works of literary fiction and poetry, and we will read scholarship by experts working on content relevant to our course. We will practice using legal research methodologies in addition to humanities-oriented research and writing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

01

Arrive at a deeper historical, legal, cultural, and literary understanding of the relationship between literature and law and the ways that each discursive mode has both oppressive and liberating potential

03

Refine the following skills through regular, rigorous writing practice: literary and legal close reading skills, critical thinking, critical argumentation skills, legal historical analysis, and legal research methodologies.

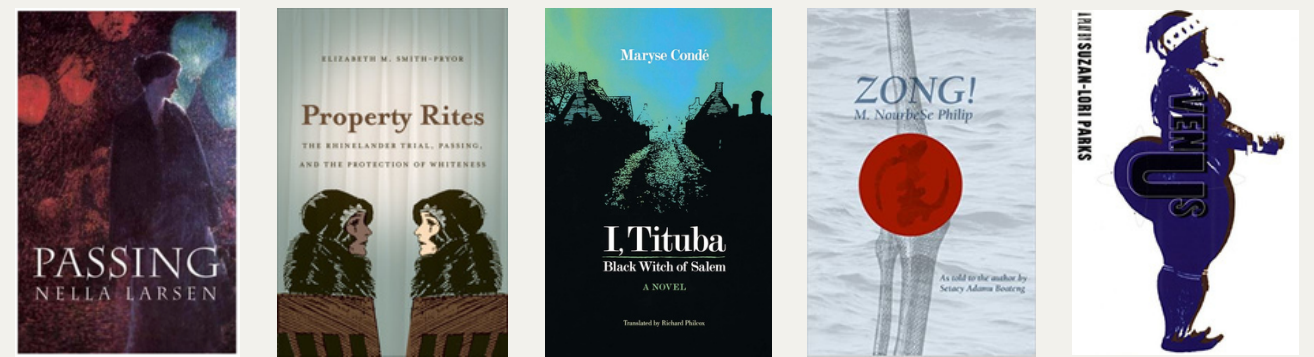
02

Generate a deeper knowledge of feminist traditions in literature and law, with particular attention to Black feminisms

04

Identify other places in which to use the skills and the knowledge you acquire from the class—other coursework, daily life, personal reading, etc.

COURSE TEXTS

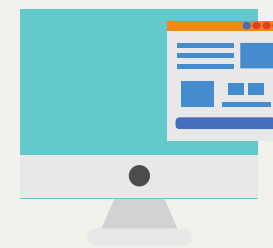


These five books are the only books you are required to purchase. They have been ordered via The Duck Store, but you are free to buy different editions or use other vendors. All other required readings will be posted to our course Canvas page. You will also be required to watch one documentary that is available on Amazon Prime Video.

Please note: There are a number of readings that will be provided to you via Canvas. If you have a hard time reading on screens or prefer hard copies, you are welcome to print those readings or buy your own copies from any vendor.



REQUIRED TECH



Computer/Tablet



Internet Access
for Zoom and
Canvas



Suggested:
Headphones

ACCESSIBILITY

The Accessible Education Center (uoaec@uoregon.edu) handles requests for accommodation of disabilities. I and the University want this class to be an inclusive learning environment. Please notify me as soon as possible if aspects of the course are creating barriers to your participation or if you need to share an accommodations letter from the AEC.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Take handwritten notes during Zoom sessions and while you read for class

Take care of your emotional, physical, and mental health

Seek help with concepts during class meetings, in office hours, or via Canvas

Put important dates in your calendar and keep track of your assignments & submissions

COURSE FORMAT

We will have class meetings during the scheduled time as live, synchronous Zoom sessions. Our class meetings will be a combination of large group discussion, small group activities, and structured "practice time" and "writing time" for upcoming assignments. There is no attendance policy, but it will be difficult for you to do well in the course if you are not attending class regularly. Zoom sessions will not be recorded. If you miss a class, please arrange to get notes from a classmate.

ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGNMENT

1

CLOSE READING POSTS (8 TOTAL)

In lieu of reading quizzes, we will use the Canvas Discussion Board to practice close reading skills before class each day in Weeks 2-9. Posts are due by noon the day of class. You must complete 10 posts in total, meaning you can opt out 6 times. If you submit a late post, it should be on a passage that we did not already discuss in class.

PERSONAL ESSAY ON LAW

In Week 3, you will submit a brief (3-4 page) personal essay in which you reflect on an encounter you have had with law or law enforcement.

ASSIGNMENT

2

ASSIGNMENT

3

SUPREME COURT RESEARCH PACKET

In Week 6, you will submit a research packet on a recent (past 15 years) Supreme Court case. Your packet will include case briefs for the existing opinion and two underlying cases, as well as a proposal for the basis on which you would dissent.

FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

In Week 8, you will submit a proposal and tentative outline/work plan for your final project.

ASSIGNMENT

4

ASSIGNMENT

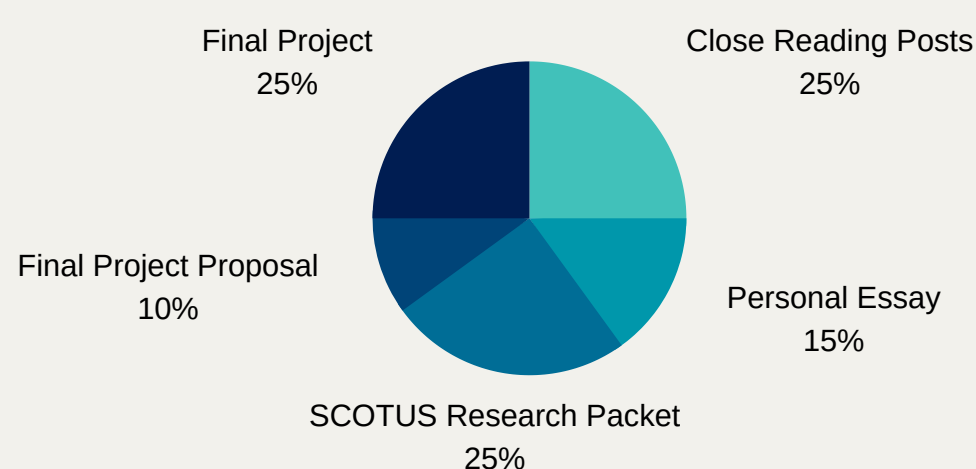
5

FINAL PROJECT

Your final project will be on a topic and in a format of your choice but should be the equivalent of a 6-8 page paper and should be clearly connected to our course materials.

Full assignment details and rubrics are on Canvas

GRADING



AVERAGE	GRADE
93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
63-66%	D
60-62%	D-
0-59%	F

COURSE POLICIES

THE STATE OF THE WORLD

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge upfront that this academic term poses specific challenges, some of which we may not even yet anticipate. Our immediate context includes Covid, ongoing state-sanctioned anti-Black violence, and a particularly divisive transfer of power in our federal government. This context means that we may be meeting and working through conditions that encompass physical and mental stress or crisis, economic crisis, family and childcare responsibilities, unstable or chaotic living conditions, and more. These conditions are likely to be in flux, and they will require all of us to extend compassion, grace, and flexibility to each other. Please know that I want you to succeed in this class, but I also want you to stay as safe, healthy, and secure as you possibly can. I am working hard to make the class space accommodating, flexible, and generous while maintaining the rigor and content coverage that you need and deserve, and/but I will modify and adjust as needed. If you find that you need additional support, please reach out to me. I will never ask you to divulge more information than you are comfortable sharing, but I will do whatever I can to lead with generosity and flexibility.

CONTENT



This course will examine texts that document, describe, and grapple with issues of racial and sexual violence. The material may be graphic, and class discussions will frequently take up issues that many people consider controversial. Please consider whether this content will be disturbing or triggering to a degree that will interfere with your learning in the course. If so, I will be happy to help you select an alternative course.

LANGUAGE

The functionality and integrity of our classroom space, even and maybe especially on Zoom, depend on the care we give to our language. We should strive for generosity with each other, allowing for the possibility of mistakes and disagreement but remaining accountable for our own language. Mindful of the ways that language itself can do harm, there are a few important bright-line rules. First, respect is mandatory; hate speech is prohibited. Second, absolutely no one in this course will use the N-word, even if it appears in a text we are reading. You need not pretend like you don't see it; instead, merely say "N" or express it in writing as "N*****." For a more thorough discussion of why I have adopted this policy in every classroom, please refer to Dr. Koritha Mitchell's excellent podcast on the subject: <https://soundcloud.com/c19podcast/nword>. Finally, please take some time to read "Writing About Slavery," the document curated by Dr. Gabrielle Foreman and available on the Canvas site. We will discuss this document in class. I encourage you to adopt its practices wherever possible.

ZOOM BEST PRACTICES

I recognize that none of us expected to be in each other's homes for class. You may see a cat in my space, and please do not worry if you have children, housemates, family members, or pets who make a cameo in yours. You can help make Zoom less awkward for all of us by leaving your camera on whenever possible. I know you may need to turn it off sometimes, but having cameras on goes a long way in establishing trust and engagement. Please leave your microphone on mute when you are not speaking. You are welcome to use the chat function in Zoom to participate in class discussion in addition to turning on your microphone to speak.

MESSAGING ME

Whether emailing me or messaging me through Canvas, please allow 48 hours for responses. Please consult the syllabus and the Canvas site for information contained there *before* contacting me. I do not respond to emails over the weekend. Treat emails as professional communications. You may address me as Dr. Barter or Professor Barter. I frequently communicate through Canvas announcements. Make sure you check your UO email and Canvas dashboard every day.

PARTICIPATION

I do not have an attendance or participation policy this term. However, I will ask you to complete a self-evaluation of your participation at the end of the quarter. In instances of sustained and excellent in-class participation, I may apply bonus points to your final grade at my discretion.

DUE DATES & EXTENSIONS

Assignments are due by the date/time listed in the syllabus. I know that sometimes things happen that interfere with your ability to complete assignments. You have 7 days of "credit" to use at your discretion, no questions asked, to submit an assignment after it is due. To use your credit, simply email me to let me know that you're using x days of credit. Otherwise, late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day that they are late; assignments will not be accepted more than one week past the due date except with prior permission in extreme circumstances. See Canvas for full details on the credit policy.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic dishonesty in any form undermines your integrity, mine, and that of this course. If you have particular questions or concerns about an issue of academic honesty, please contact me. I take very seriously our shared obligation to academic integrity, and all of your work in this class--including informal writing and annotations--should be entirely your own.

Check Canvas for more details and for extra credit opportunities/policies.

COURSE SCHEDULE

AN ASTERISK (*) = A CLOSE READING DISCUSSION POST IS DUE THAT DAY

JAN. 5 **Week 1 - Introductions**
Before class: Read syllabus and Canvas site
After class: Make sure you've added all important dates to your calendar

JAN. 7 **Week 1 - What is law?**
Before class:
• Read excerpt from *Alchemy of Race and Rights* (on Canvas)

JAN. 12 **Week 2 - What is law (part 2)?***
Before class:
• Read excerpts from the Salem witch trials (on Canvas)

JAN. 14 **Week 2 - Re-visioning legal history***
Before class:
• Read first 1/3 of *I, Tituba*

JAN. 19 **Week 3 - Re-visioning legal history***
Before class:
• Read second 1/3 of *I, Tituba*

JAN. 21 **Week - Re-visioning legal history***
Before class:
• Read final 1/3 of *I, Tituba*

JAN. 26 **Week 4 - Litigating Race and Marriage***
Before class:
• Read *Property Rites*, Introduction and Chapter 1

JAN. 28 **Week 4 - Litigating Race and Marriage***
Before class:
• Read *Property Rites*, Chapters 3 and 7

As noted above, all class meetings will take place over Zoom.

Zoom meetings will NOT be recorded.

Start researching Supreme Court cases early - your research packet is due at the end of Week 6!

To do: (1) finish Supreme Court research packet and (2) start thinking about final projects!

FEB. 2 **Week 5 - Race, Marriage, and Ability***
Before class:
• Watch video (on Canvas) on the Racial Integrity Act of 1924
• Read *Buck v. Bell* and *Loving v. Virginia* (on Canvas)

FEB. 4 **Week 5 - Race, Marriage, Sexuality, and Sanity***
Before class:
• Read Part One of *Passing*

FEB. 9 **Week 6 - Race, Marriage, Sexuality, and Sanity***
Before class:
• Read Part Two of *Passing*

FEB. 11 **Week 6 - Race, Marriage, Sexuality, and Sanity***
Before class:
• Read Part Three of *Passing*

FEB. 16 **Week 7 - Black Feminisms and Law***
Before class:
• Read Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" (on Canvas)
• Read the Combahee River Collective Statement (on Canvas)

FEB. 18 **Week 7 - Intersectionality and Critical Race Theory***
Before class:
• Read "Demarginalizing the Intersections of Race and Sex" (on Canvas)

FEB. 23 **Week 8 - Experimenting with Form***
Before class:
• Read the first 1/2 of *Venus*

FEB. 25 **Week 8 - Experimenting with Form***
Before class:
• Read the second 1/2 of *Venus*

How many days are left in your 7-day extension credit? Use them wisely!

COURSE SCHEDULE CONTINUED

Start working on your final project!

- MAR. 2** Week 9 - Turning law into poetry*
- Before class:
- First, read the *Notanda* in *Zong!* (note: it is a section at the very end of the book)
 - Then, read as many poems as you can in *Zong!* (any section(s))
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- MAR. 4** Week 9 - Turning law into poetry*
- Before class:
- Read as many poems as you can in *Zong!* (any section(s))
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- MAR. 9** Week 10 - Trans identity in law and literature
- Before class:
- Read excerpt from *Black on Both Sides* (on Canvas)
 - Watch *Major!* (documentary, available on Amazon Prime Video)
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- MAR. 11** Week 10 - Reflections and Wrap-up
- Before class: Complete your participation self-evaluation on Canvas
-



Final project: Due Mar. 15 at 11:59pm

Check Canvas site for assignment details and rubric

IMPORTANT DUE DATES

CLOSE READINGS

FLEXIBLE! You are responsible for keeping track, but you must submit 10 total. If you submit more than 10, I will only count your 10 highest scores. Don't leave them all until the last minute - it is to your benefit to get feedback early.

PERSONAL ESSAY

Due by 8:00pm on Friday, January 22.

SUPREME COURT RESEARCH PACKET

Due by 8:00pm on Friday, February 12.

FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

Due by 8:00pm on Wednesday, February 24

FINAL PROJECT

Due by 11:59pm on Monday, Mar. 15

NOTE: In order for me to submit grades on time, if you plan to use any of the days in your "credit account," know that all finals and other outstanding assignments MUST be submitted to me by 11:59pm on March 20.

Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

I am so excited to read and learn with you this term!