

Self & Other in Literature:

Femme Narrative & Queer Textuality

First-Year Inquiry Writing Seminar

Fall 2017

Jesse Rice-Evans, Adjunct Lecturer

jriceevans@ccny.cuny.edu

T/R 2:00-3:15/3:30-4:45, North Academic Center

City College of New York



Genre is facing an identity crisis; digital and multimodal writing “dis-compose” classic forms of academic writing and reading, while a new era of identity “dis-composes” cultural narratives. Femme writers are subverting paradigms of communication and genre by working with language and narrative in new ways, as queer biography and autobiography mark an important turn in contemporary literature and poetics away from a male-dominant gaze towards a kaleidoscopic perspective on femme embodiments, embodiment theory, gender, disability, race and racialized bodies. The confluences of these (often mutable) identities, offer readers new opportunities for storytelling and theorizing about writing. These forms also make space for feminine arts: reclamations of hysteria, emotionality, and the naming of practices such as *textual masculinity* and *emotional labor* correlate with new cultural trends towards identity models of social justice.

This course explores the significance of this “women’s work,” contemporary cultural politics, and rhetorics of self and other in literature.

Course Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view
- 2) Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions

- 3) Articulate how meaning is created in the arts or communications and how experience is interpreted and conveyed
 - 4) Use appropriate technologies to conduct research and to communicate
 - 5) Demonstrate knowledge of the skills involved in the creative process
-

Literary Texts:

Heroines by Kate Zambreno

Fierce Femmes & Notorious Liars by Kai Thom Hang

Pain Woman Takes Your Keys by Sonja Huber

When the Sick Rule the World by Dodie Bellamy

Bone Confetti by Muriel Leung

Citizen by Claudia Rankine

Theory Texts:

excerpts from *Illness as Metaphor* by Susan Sontag

“When the First Voice You Hear is Not Your Own” by Jacqueline Jones Royster

“From Analysis to Design: Visual Communication in the Teaching of Writing” by Diana George

“Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class” by James Berlin

“The Cognition of Discovery: Defining a Rhetorical Problem” by Linda Flower and John R. Hayes

Visual Texts:

Lemonade (visual album) by Beyoncé

[Questions Non Trans People Are Too Afraid To Ask | BuzzFeed](#)

[What happens when you have a disease doctors can't diagnose | Jennifer Brea | TED](#)

[Brujas - Princess Nokia](#)

[From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation | Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor | TEDxBaltimore](#)

[Transgender Rights: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver \(HBO\)](#)

[“How to Spot a Fake Disability” by Annie Elaine \(YouTube\)](#)

[Disability Identity and Language by Annie Elaine \(YouTube\)](#)

[Mykki Blanco feat. Jean Deaux - "Loner"](#)

Digital Texts:

my body — a Wunderkammer by [Shelley Jackson](#)

“[Sick Woman Theory](#)” by Joanna Hedva

[Self & Other Spotify Playlist](#)

Topics:

8/29 What’s a Text? - memes/macros response; how do we read texts? collaborative reading strategies list

9/12 “Burden of Authenticity”: Hall, Fanon, *Heroines*

9/26 Textual Hierarchies: Binaries, Textuality/Orality, Gender

10/3 -ness: Embodied Identities

10/10 Black-ness → *Citizen*; #BLM

10/17 Woman-ness → *Heroines*; *my body — a Wunderkammer*

10/24 Ill-ness → *Sick Woman Theory*; *Pain Woman...*; *When the Sick...*

11/7 Trans-ness → *Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars*

11/14 Queer-ness → *Bone Confetti*

11/14 Voice: signature voice, creative remix

11/28 Collaboration: Propose a Collaboration between 2 artists you admire; why?

12/5 Portfolios

12/12 Presentations

Assignments

Literacy Narrative: students will compose a short (500-750 word) autobiographical piece of digital writing (using Tumblr) that situates themselves and their identities in the context of the textual world: what biases do students bring to textual interactions? what unique points of view might students bring? what expertise do students already have re: particular types of media and why/how?

Summary & Response Assignment: students will select a text from the first 4 weeks and read in relationship to a text in another medium; students will discuss functions of media and multimodality; what different functions do these genres serve?; the goal here is to facilitate a

conversation between/among texts in varying mediums and to articulate how identity, self, and other, is created through rhetorical devices; how do the rhetorical canons appear in non-/alphabetic text?; to demonstrate how these relationships manifest using specific examples from texts in our class as well as your own outside research. 1000-1500 words, Tumblr site or other web platform.

Research Project on Textual Artifact: students will choose a textual artifact from **one or two** of the categories we've discussed (visual, aural, literary, theoretical, etc./others?) and work to dis-compose and complicate various attributes of their chosen text in connection to larger cultural motifs/icons/signs; 1500-2000-word essay & multimodal component (Tumblr, Storify, YouTube, etc.); at least 5 scholarly sources/2 "everyday" sources; here, students must argue a coherent, specific claim (a thesis) using textual evidence and independent analysis. ~1500 words.

Reflective Annotated Bibliography: students will use library, database, and information technology skills to develop interactive bibliographies for their own research projects for the topic & composition sections of this course; students will critically reflect upon these texts and evaluate their usefulness, bias, rhetorical efficacy, and limitations in relationship to their own research.

Portfolio & Reflective Letter: students will showcase their learning in a digital format, which collect their written work from throughout the semester, including a curated selection of in-class freewrites, and will provide concrete evidence from their own writing demonstrating their engagement with the goals of our course. We will spend a whole class period addressing the genre of reflective portfolio letters, so don't worry if this doesn't make sense yet.

Peer Review Groups

Group work is mandatory and regular in this class. Students will collaborate to workshop drafts of written assignments throughout the semester. It is imperative that you attend class in order to maximize your group time, and you will be scored on your own revisions, as well as on feedback from the other members of your group.

Blackboard Discussions & In-Class Writing

Blackboard will give us the opportunity to get conversations going about our readings. We'll also be using class time to loosen up our writerly selves, including a brief freewrite at the beginning of each full-class meeting. Come up to me and say "communication is vulnerability" for a few extra points on your participation grade for actually reading the syllabus!

Creative Autobiography

Using *Heroines*, our journals, and our literacy narratives as our primary models, we'll construct our own brief creative biographies of our self, of the identities we've explored this semester. This assignment is intentionally freeform, and I'm hoping you'll embrace the opportunity to be creative.

Presentation

Our final few class days will be spent listening to and sharing our discoveries throughout the process of writing about identity in both creative and academic contexts. This presentation will not exceed 5 minutes and will contain a multimodal feature: a video, an interactive component, a #hashtag, or any number of other options.

Peer Reviews and Self-Assessments

For each essay assignment, you'll be asked to use the criteria listed in the assignments to review your peers' essays as well as your own. Your goal here is to create a positive, supportive learning environment. While we are all learning to write (no matter how good we already are), we are also expert readers. The fact that you may struggle to produce a particular kind of essay doesn't mean that you can't evaluate another student's essay. On the contrary, reading someone else's work can not only assist that writer but it can also give you insight into your own writing.

Grading

In-class writings & BB discussion posts - 12.5%

Peer evaluation & group work - 15%

Literacy narrative - 12.5%

Summary & response assignment - 12.5%

Research project on textual artifact(s) - 12.5%

Creative autobiography - 10%

Multimodal presentation - 5%

Portfolio & reflective letter - 30%

Resources

Blackboard

Fear not! BB can actually be great. We're using it to discuss our often complex readings, which will occur once a week throughout most of the semester (see calendar below for details).

The Writing Center

The CCNY Writing Center offers a supportive learning environment where students can have one-on-one tutoring sessions with writing consultants. It is a great resource for you to obtain extra help as you write and revise your papers. They DO NOT proofread your papers, but offer assistance on improving certain aspects of them. They also offer ESL tutoring. To set up an appointment or semester-long sessions, contact them in person at the Writing Center, which is located in the NAC, 3rd floor plaza or call (212) 650-8104.

Gateway Advising Center, NAC 1/220

Students without a declared major can receive academic advising, especially if you have questions about your course of study, core requirements, etc.

AccessAbility Center Tutoring Services, NAC 1/218

Provides one-on-one tutoring and workshops to all registered students with learning or physical disabilities.

SEEK Peer Academic Learning Center, NAC 4/224

Phone: 212-650-5786; email: seekpals@ccny.cuny.edu

Offers counseling and peer tutoring for students in need of academic and financial support who have registered for the SEEK Program.

Course Policies

What's Up with FIQWS?

Ms. Stella and I are collaborating to bring you these courses. This means that we communicate regularly and collaborate on grades, assignments, and your overall performance in the courses; we *strongly* recommend that you give each section of this course your full attention.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will have 10% deducted *if the assignment is submitted within 24 hours of the due date*. After this 24-window, up to 48 hours after the deadline, assignments will have 20% deducted. ***Assignments will not be accepted after 48 hours after the deadline.*** Technological foibles are not an excuse for lateness. Plan ahead.

Digital Stuff

I am OK with you using devices in class, but please know that small-group work requires your full attention, as does creating your own writing, both of which will be primary focuses of this course. If I find that your device distracts you from engaging with these tasks, I reserve the right to revoke this privilege.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is copying and using other people's words without proper acknowledgment or citation as it is indicated in the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity. You are expected to read, understand, and adhere to this policy.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class session of this course and to be on time. Consistent absences, late arrivals, and early departures will have a negative impact on what you get out of this course. If you have special circumstances, please contact me. I'm happy to work with you to help you complete this course.

Food & Drink

Please, no food in class. You may bring a drink, but you are expected to clean up after yourself.

Student Code of Conduct

All student members of the College community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates mutual respect for the rights and personal/academic well-being of others,

preserves the integrity of the social and academic environment, and supports the mission of the College. The College has an inherent right to address behavior that impedes, obstructs, or threatens the maintenance of order and attainment of the aforementioned goals by violating the standards of conduct set forth in the University student conduct policies noted below as well as other policies that may be established by the respective Schools, Global Sites, and administrative offices of the University. The goals of the CCNY Community Standards are:

- To promote an environment that supports the overall mission of the University
- To protect the University community from disruption and harm
- To encourage appropriate standards of individual and group behavior
- To foster ethical values and civic virtues
- To foster personal learning and growth while at the same time holding individuals and groups accountable to the standards of expectations established by the Code of Conduct