

Women Novelists

Eng Lit 1704

Marianne Novy (517A C of L; mnovy@pitt.edu; 412-624-6516)

The novel has been associated with women since its beginnings; with women authors, with women characters, and with the development of an emotional interior life that our culture assigns especially to women. While the form has been associated with presuppositions about the plots available for women's lives, women novelists have often played with those presuppositions and rewritten those plots, and our readings will show the interplay between traditions and innovations. Three of the themes on which we will focus are the marriage plot and its revisions in a time when possibilities for women are different, strategies of story-telling, and representations of difference—class, ethnic, racial, religious, sexual, etc. Our readings will include classic British literature, modernist experimental works, and a cluster of late 20th century fiction.

Students should have completed their GW requirement, and must have satisfied the general education requirement of an approved first course in literature.

Requirements for this course include two papers (5-6 pages each), regular and attentive class participation, and leading class discussion on one novel as part of a group. Each paper and the exam counts for 25% of the grade, leading a class discussion counts for 15%, and class participation counts for 10%. (You may supplement this part of your grade by giving me written comments on the novels, in journal entry form which could be sent by e-mail, in addition to your papers.)

Syllabus:

January 7 Introduction

I. The British Tradition and Variations

- 9,14,16 Austen, Pride and Prejudice—the classic marriage novel?
21-30 Bronte, Jane Eyre—romance and realism
February 4-6 Rhys, Wide Sargasso Sea—rewriting Jane Eyre
11-20 Eliot, Daniel Deronda—two outsiders grow up; marriage goes wrong
25-27 Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway—looking back in midlife
27 First paper due (5-6 pages)

Spring Break

II. Many Americas

- March 11-13 Hurston, Their Eyes were Watching God—a Black woman looks back
18-20 Atwood, Handmaid's Tale—struggling against a totalitarian society
25-27 Kingsolver, Bean Trees--an alternative family and its politics
- April 1-3 Anshaw, Aquamarine—is she in a lesbian, married, or unmarried couple?
8-10 Morrison, Jazz—a troubled Black marriage
15-17 Jen, Mona in the Promised Land—a Chinese-American girl grows up
17 Final paper due (5-6 pages)
TBA Final essay exam

Read the assigned text before class and bring your book. Always discuss your paper topic with me in advance. Give credit to your sources used (including websites) and proofread. Plagiarism or other cheating will result in a zero score for the exam or paper, in compliance with the University Policy on Academic Integrity.

This course is cross-listed with Women's Studies.

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Service, 216 William Pitt Union (412-624-7890) as early as possible.

Adoption Literature

EngLit 1772

Marianne Novy (517A C of L; mnovy@pitt.edu; 412-624-6516)

This course will examine how literature has portrayed adoption, adoptees, adoptive parents, and birth parents. Though adoption varies widely in different historical periods, its portrayal often involves similar conflicts between heredity and nurture, similar debates about how to define “parents” and “family.” We will analyze textual treatments of such conflicts and other issues, and show how adoption literature involves questions about identity, “self,” community, class, ethnicity, nation, gender, and sexuality. We will also consider representations of adoption in autobiography and children’s literature, and related material from popular culture, film, video, and ethnographic and historical research.

- January 7 Introduction
- 9 Shakespeare, Winter’s Tale; fairy tale paradigm shown in Perdita’s story
- 14-16 George Eliot, Silas Marner; what is a father?
- 14 One-page paper on some aspect of adoption in WT or SM due
- 21-23 Barbara Kingsolver, Bean Trees; what is a mother?
Possible presentation: Berebitsky chapter in relation to BT
- 28-30 Kingsolver, Pigs in Heaven; what does a cross-cultural adoptee need?
Possible presentation: Melosh or Fagan in relation to PH
- 28 One-page paper on some aspect of adoption in BT or PH due
- February 4-6 Jeanette Winterson, Oranges are not the Only Fruit; dysfunction
Possible presentation: Wegar chapter in relation to Oranges
- 11-13 Edward Albee, The American Dream; dysfunctional adoption II
Possible presentation: Modell chapter in relation to Albee
- 13 Midterm paper due; 7-8 pages on some aspect of adoption in one or two of the works on the syllabus thus far; could expand on earlier paper
- 18-20 Jackie Kay, The Adoption Papers; Interview w Kay in Imagining Adoption
Possible presentation: Patton, Melosh, or Satz chapter in relation to Kay
- 25-27 B.J Lifton, Twice Born; adoptee search memoir
Possible presentation: Carp, Modell, or Melosh in relation to Lifton

Spring Break!

March 11-13 Jane Anderson, The Baby Dance; adoption and economics today

- 13 Molly Shanley, author of Making Babies, Making Families will join us;
Consider BD in relation to contemporary ethical issues
- 18-20 Margaret Moorman, Waiting to Forget: birth mother memoir
Possible presentation: Solinger, Modell, or Melosh in relation to Moorman
- 25-27 L. M. Montgomery, Anne of Green Gables; adoption in children's lit;
Possible presentation: Crockett chapter in relation to Montgomery
- April 1-3 Chang-Rae Lee, A Gesture Life; older and younger adoptees
Chang-Rae Lee speaks April 3 in FFA at 8:15 pm
- 8-10 Ito and Cervin, ed. Ghost at Heart's Edge
- 15-17 Presentation of summaries and discussion of final papers
- 15-18 Final papers due (7-8 pages on adoption-related topic to be approved by instructor)
- TBA Final essay exam

Regular attendance and participation will be expected. Students will write two long papers and two short papers each and a final essay exam, and do one class presentation during the term as well as presenting a summary of a final paper the last week.

Approximate weight will be 25% for each long paper and the exam, 15% for the presentation, 5% for the one-page writing assignments, and 5% for extra class participation. The class presentation will be evaluation on the basis of clarity, analysis, interest to the class, and, if appropriate, evidence of planning with other group members (most of the presentations will be done as part of a group).

Late work will be graded down one fraction for each class that elapses between deadline and time of submission. In other words, A work submitted at the next class becomes A-; at the following class it becomes B+. More than three absences may also result in lowering of the grade. The instructor will have the discretion of making an exception to these policies for serious medical reasons.

Plagiarism or other cheating will result in a zero score for the exam or paper, in compliance with the University Policy on Academic Integrity.

If you have an disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union (412-624-7890) as early as possible in the term.

Eng L 2649

Literature of Adoption (also listed with Women's Studies)

W 2-5

Marianne Novy (517A; mnovy@pitt.edu; office hrs Tuesday 2-3 or by apt)

Novelists have long used plots involving characters who adopt, were adopted, or gave up children to be adopted. These plots may involve searches for identity, interrogations of the meaning of family, critiques of secrecy, social inequalities and child-rearing practices, and many other themes. Recently many memoirs and films have also dealt with adoption, and in particular with the cross-cultural encounter and conflict involved in transracial and transnational adoption. More recent novelists have also turned to this theme, and sometimes have been influenced by its portrayal in memoirs. This course will study changing and varied representations of adoption in fiction by novelists from Dickens and Eliot to Gish Jen, Ann Patchett, and Lorrie Moore, as well as films by transracial adoptees such as Deann Borshay Liem (who will visit), and memoirs by authors such as Lifton, Saffian, Moorman (birth mother), Trenka (adoptee from Korea), and Rothman (transracially adoptive mother, who will also visit).

Course requirements:

- 1) Either a term paper of c. 16 pages or two shorter papers of c. 8 pages on an issue related to the literary, film, legal and/or philosophical representation of adoption
- 2) By March 15, class presentation leading to discussion on either a required or a suggested reading. Suggested readings are starred on the syllabus; see also an additional reading list to be circulated
- 3) Weekly participation with short comments in class listserv
- 4) Regular and informed attendance and participation in class discussion

Syllabus:

Jan 5 George Eliot, Silas Marner; Charles Chesnutt, "Her Virginia Mammy." Meanings of heredity and identity in each; openness vs. secrecy; idealization of adoption in SM. Recommended: Jerng, Claiming Others introduction, which provides theoretical and historical discussion of adoption in relation to identity, race, nation; *Novy, "Reading from an Adopted Position," first chapter of Reading Adoption

12 Charles Dickens, Bleak House (focusing on Esther and Lady Dedlock): stigma, the good adoptee

19 George Eliot, Daniel Deronda (focusing on Daniel and Al-Charisi); identity and nation

26 Edith Wharton, Summer; struggle for independence; stigma in 20th c US
Elizabeth Samuels, "The Idea of Adoption: An Inquiry into the History of Adult Adoptee Access to Birth Records, 53 Rutgers L. Rev. 367-437 (2001)." Attitudes toward adoption in the US in the early 20th century; secrecy and openness

- 20 Gish Jen, The Love Wife (novel; adoption from China)
*Jerng, "Making Family 'Look Like Real,'" 209-227, 231-44
*Cynthia Callahan, Kin of Another Kind, from Ch. 6
*Margaret Homans, "Origins, Searches, and Identity: Narratives of Adoption from China"
- 27 Presentations of your final papers: 7-10 minutes apiece
- 29 Final papers due in my mailbox by time office closes—3 pm?

Early presentations:

If your presentation is on a required reading, it should largely be a matter of leading class discussion on it, or on an aspect of it, if it is book-length; if on an optional reading, prepare a talk of no more than 5 minutes to present it, aiming at provoking class discussion of the material. In either event, discuss your plans with me in advance, and give me a few notes or questions to indicate the emphasis you plan, no later than 10 am on the day of class, by email. Also include your bibliography if you do any extra research (not required for most topics) The discussion you plan for should be no more than ten minutes total, including your presentation/questions (often the class will stretch it out, but don't plan a set of questions or make an initial presentation that is structured to take longer). You should consult with others if any are leading discussions on the same day.

Listserv:

For logistical reasons, this will not be on the Courseweb discussion board but on a Mailman list I put together; I will give you the address. Your comment should be at least a paragraph on one or more of the readings to be discussed. Do not put it on an attachment. Include your name. I hope there will be a dialogue among the comments about the readings before class which we can continue within it. Read one another's comments and feel free to engage with others in your own. Print out your own comment and bring it to class. Submit comments (which could be just a long paragraph) by 8 pm the night before class.

Courseweb and other readings:

Readings of less than book length listed on the syllabus will be on Courseweb. Others are in the Book Center. The readings on the syllabus without an asterisk are required. It is a good idea to print out the readings you do and bring them to class so that you will have them to discuss specific passages. Some of you may want to buy Jerng's Claiming Others since much of it is recommended and/or my Reading Adoption, which discusses the novels we are reading by Dickens and Eliot (and, briefly, Lee). Both of these should be available at the bookstore soon. I will circulate a list of other adoption-related readings, and as you explore for your papers, let me know about material you would like to add to it, so that by the end we will have a longer class-generated list.

out of your account when you have finished. (For the full E-mail Communication Policy, go to www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html.)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

- Codes of Student Conduct and Faculty Conduct within the School of Arts and Sciences can be found at <http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html>.
- The English Department website informational page about plagiarism and procedures for addressing a suspected case of plagiarism:
 - <http://www.english.pitt.edu/resources/plagiarism.html>
- The Literature Program's "Avoiding Plagiarism" site:
http://www.englishlit.pitt.edu/lit_plagiarism.html

OTHER RESOURCES

This English Department webpage lists a range of important Pitt resources including contact information for the Writing Center and the Counseling Center:
http://www.english.pitt.edu/undergraduate/undergrad_resources.html

Adoption and Culture---Eng L 2647

Tuesday, 2-5 pm

Marianne Novy, mnovy@pitt.edu; office 517A; hrs 1-2 T, 2-3W, and by appt.

In recent years, an increasing number of adoptees, adoptive parents, and birth parents have been writing memoirs. More historians and anthropologists have been analyzing practices related to adoption and their places in culture and across cultures, and the benefits of many of these practices have become subjects of debate. Adoption as an institution in itself raises questions about meanings of family, identity, and parenthood, as well as, often, about political and economic inequities. Transnational and transracial adoptions also raise questions about how individuals and families navigate between cultures. This course will read memoirs from a range of perspectives together with ethnographic, theoretical and historical analyses and a few of the many fictional works that portray adoption. We begin with some memoirs particularly self-conscious about narrative.

Everyone should make a brief presentation by October 7, on either a required reading or a related topic or reading (suggestions will be given). If on the required reading, the presenter will prepare a few questions and lead part of class discussion; if on a related topic, the presenter will prepare to speak for no more than 5 minutes; the talk should aim at provoking class discussion of the material presented. Consult with me on your topic in advance, as also for the final paper and the midterm paper or draft of final. The papers should deal with some example (s) of the representation of adoption, broadly defined.

We will have a class list-serv. Everyone is required to submit a comment on one or more of the readings every week by 10 am the day of class.

If you would like an accommodation for a disability, notify me and Disability Resources and Services (412-648-7890/412-383-7355TTY) as soon as possible.

Syllabus:

1. Adoptees' memoirs from same-race domestic adoption

August 26 Betty Jean Lifton, Twice Born: Memoirs of an Adoptive Daughter:
One of the earliest such memoirs to receive wide publicity, and still
the most influential

Sept. 2 Sarah Saffian, Ithaka; Emily Hipchen, Coming Apart Together: Fragments
from an Adoption. In both of these the adoptee is found by birth parents.

9 A. M. Homes, The Mistress' Daughter (similar plot, different effect?)

2. Birthmothers' memoirs from same-race (mostly) domestic adoption

16 Margaret Moorman, Waiting to Forget

- 23 Ann Fessler, Girls Who Went Away (Sept. 22, 8 pm, Fessler will discuss her film in progress in Frick Fine Arts Auditorium; she will attend our class)

3. Adoptive parents: ethnography, essays

- 30 Judith Modell, Chapters 5 and 9 in Kinship with Strangers; Beizer, Bordo, Elfenbein/Watkins, Laird in Tulsa Studies 21, No. 2 (Oct. 1, the film Daddy and Papa, about gay adoptive fathers, will be shown at CMU, Danforth Room, University Center, followed by a panel of response by gay and lesbian adoptive parents on faculty/staff)

4. Domestic adoption in fiction

October 7 Maile Meloy, Liars and Saints (informal, secret adoption by relatives)

October 14 No class--Monday classes meet this day because of Fall break

October 16--either midterm paper (at least 8 pages) or draft of final paper due

5. Transnational adoption-(mostly Asian)

Oct. 21 Emily Prager, Wuhu Diary; Homans and Jardine from Tulsa Studies

28 Jane Jeong Trenka, Language of Blood; Asian selections in Outsiders Within

Nov. 4 Toby Volkman, ed. Cultures of Transnational Adoption

6. Transracial adoption (sociology, poetry, memoir, fiction)

Nov. 11 Barbara Katz Rothman, Weaving a Family; selections in Outsiders Within dealing with African-Americans and Native Americans; **final paper topic due**

18 Jackie Kay, Darling; she will visit our class (Jackie Kay will read at Duquesne November 17 at 7 and at Pitt November 18 at 8:30)

25 Catherine McKinley, The Book of Sarahs (transracial adoptee memoir)

Dec. 2 Gish Jen, The Love Wife (novel about Asian-American adoptive family)

Dec. 9 Presentations of final papers

Dec. 11 Final paper due (at least 16 pages if this is your only paper)

Eng Lit 617

Changing Families in Literature (29428)

Marianne Novy (mnovy@pitt.edu); 517A C of L

Tuesday/Thursday 2:30-3:45 206 C of L; office hours 1:45 to 2:30 Th and gladly by appointment

We will explore varying perspectives on changing family experiences by reading and discussing recent US memoirs, three novels, and three or four films. These works present families that are single-parent, mixed-race, adoptive, and/or involving a GLBTQ parent or a family separated by immigration. Our considerations will include the writers' and filmmakers' literary and cinematic presentations of selves and families as well as their social context. The authors will include Maxine Hong Kingston, Mei-ling Hopgood, James McBride, Esmeralda Santiago, Jesse Green, Noviolet Bulawayo, Cynthia Kadohata, Jacqueline Woodson, and Jennifer Finney Boylan. The first group of texts focuses on the issue of double or multiple identity in the family in terms of race, national background, and/or religion. Parents who are a same-sex couple occur in a few of these works and are the focus of our last group of texts, which also deal with growing up as gay or transgender. We will discuss the variety among families and what our texts show about problems families face and what their members' needs are.

Listed with Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

Meets GE Requirement for First Literature Course

Course Requirements

1. **Email comments:** (15 % of final grade) Paragraph-length comments on the assigned reading or film sent electronically to a class email list I will compile. Write at least five (one every third week on the average). This is your chance to get your specific interests into discussion and on the floor. Comments on readings should be sent before the class discussion of that section of the reading, with the exception of comments that specifically follow up issues raised in class discussions. Read one another's comments and occasionally refer to them respectfully in your own. When a film is shown in class an email comment before the next class will count.
2. **Participation** (15% of final grade): Students should come to all class meetings having read assigned texts and preparing themselves to talk about their reading. The class will be based largely on discussion. Take notes by hand, and not on a laptop or I-phone, because the possibilities for distraction are too overwhelming, and handwritten notes are remembered better. The participation grade will be a composite of the following: A) Contributions to general class discussion: Read each work assigned when assigned and speak thoughtfully about it in class. B) In pairs, students should present three or four questions to start discussion. Some questions could be preceded by a few sentences of explanation, or a specific quotation from the reading. Students should email them to me by the preceding midnight. C) Attendance: More than three absences may lead to a lower grade.
2. **Papers and revisions.** Two 5-page papers. 20% each. An 8-page revision of either paper, 30%

23-5 James McBride, The Color of Water, memoir about growing up African-American with a white mother; papers to be returned with suggestions for revision, expansion; revision of at least 8 pages accepted at any time

March 1 Off and Running, documentary film about an African-American teenager adopted by two white mothers

2 lecture by Linda Seligmann (George Mason University), "The Circulation of Children through Transnational and Transracial Adoption: Filters, Fantasies, and Fragments." Come at 4 pm if you can to 4130 Posvar.

3 Prof Seligmann will visit our class for discussion of Off and Running

March 15-22 Jesse Green, The Velveteen Father, about a gay man's journey to fatherhood

March 24 no class—instructor at conference

March 29-31 Jacqueline Woodson, From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun, novel about a YA discovering his mother loves a woman of another race; decide on paper topic by now

April 5-11 Jennifer Finney Boylan, She's Not Here, memoir about (among other things) changing from a father to a mother

13 second paper due, 5 pages or more, on aspect of text from second half of course; papers to be returned by Apr. 20

18-20 class presentations—no more than 5 minutes each—could be from first or second paper

28 revision of first or second paper due, at least 8 pages

Diversity and Civility

This is only the second time this class has been taught at Pitt, and it may be that it is the second time that this exact subject matter has been taught anywhere. It is an exciting opportunity but also challenging. Our reading list gives us books written from points of view that may be new to many of us. This class may call upon patience and forbearance for many of us for different reasons. If you feel uncomfortable in the classroom environment and don't want to explain why in our regular discussion, communicate with me. Here are some further ground rules that I have borrowed from Professor Olson of Communications:

- You must respect diverse points of view. We can agree to disagree.

- You may not belittle or criticize personally another individual for holding a viewpoint different from your own.
- Your use of language and non-verbal communication should be respectful of others or groups.
- You need not represent any group, only yourself, although you may choose to represent a group.

Interdisciplinary Issues

This is a literature course and you will be expected to read the primary texts carefully and be able to back up your interpretations (in your papers and discussions) with specific quotations from the books as needed. While many perspectives may shed light on a novel or memoir, you still need to provide textual evidence to be convincing. While literary works are our main required texts, we are also contextualizing them in relation to social issues. Research for your papers and presentations may involve doing research in the social/historical context of your chosen reading (or film).

Course Policies:

- **Disability accommodations:** If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please contact me and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, www.drs.pitt.edu, as early as possible in the term, so that DRS can determine reasonable accommodations for this course.
- **Gender-Inclusive and Non-Sexist Language.** Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Just as sexist language excludes women's experiences, non-gender-inclusive language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Identities including trans, intersex, and genderqueer reflect personal descriptions, expressions, and experiences. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (for example, first year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind, etc.). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students, faculty, and staff may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.
- **Academic Integrity/Plagiarism:** You should give credit to every source you use, including web-based sources and friends. Use quotation marks and footnotes (or parenthetical or endnotes) when you are quoting exact words and footnotes (or parenthetical or endnotes) when you are paraphrasing. Not giving credit when you are using other people's words or following their ideas while paraphrasing their words is

- plagiarism, a serious offense for which the minimum penalty is an F on the paper. This includes using words that you have cut and pasted from the web, or buying a term paper.
- **Each student is issued a University e-mail address** (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address. To forward e-mail sent to your University account, go to <http://accounts.pitt.edu>, log into your account, click on Edit Forwarding Addresses, and follow the instructions on the page. Be sure to log out of your account when you have finished. (For the full E-mail Communication Policy, go to www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html.)

BACKGROUND ON INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

- Codes of Student Conduct and Faculty Conduct within the School of Arts and Sciences can be found at <http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html>.
- The English Department website informational page about plagiarism and procedures for addressing a suspected case of plagiarism:
<http://www.english.pitt.edu/resources/plagiarism.html>
- The Literature Program's "Avoiding Plagiarism" site:
http://www.englishlit.pitt.edu/lit_plagiarism.html

OTHER RESOURCES

This English Department webpage lists a range of important Pitt resources including contact information for the Writing Center and the Counseling Center:
http://www.english.pitt.edu/undergraduate/undergrad_resources.html

Many of you may find one or both of these helpful.