

# Women in World Literature: The Short Story Form

Spring 2012  
TR 1:00pm-2:15pm  
Sycamore Hall 106

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Office Hours: TR 2:30pm-4:00pm

CMLT C340-23224



Welcome to CMLT C340: Women in World Literature! This course will explore a variety of short stories written by women over the last two centuries. In particular, we will attend to the limitations and advantages of short fiction and how these features intersect with issues of marginality, empowerment, and resistance. After a survey of texts from across the globe, we will read several contemporary short story cycles, examining how these collections challenge the formal limitations of the short story.

## REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Kate Figes, Ed. The Penguin Book of International Women's Stories. Penguin.
2. Sarah Orne Jewett. The Country of the Pointed Firs. Signet Classics.
3. Isabel Allende. The Stories of Eva Luna. Scribner.
4. Gloria Naylor. The Women of Brewster Place. Penguin.
5. Edwidge Danticat. Krik? Krak! Vintage Contemporaries.
6. Gita Mehta. A River Sutra. Vintage International.

All other texts will be posted on Oncourse. I expect that you complete all readings in advance and bring an annotated copy of your text to class.

## 「 COURSE POLICIES 」

### PARTICIPATION AND PREPARATION:

You are expected to seriously prepare for and participate in class discussions. Your participation grade will reflect both the quantity and quality of your comments in class.

### **CLASS CONDUCT:**

While you are in class I hold you to professional forms of conduct. Text messaging, falling asleep, doing homework for another class, reading the newspaper, or being otherwise disengaged or disruptive is unprofessional and will lower your participation grade.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

You may have 3 unexcused absences without penalty. After that, 3% will be deducted from your final grade for each unexcused absence. Absences can be excused in the case of:

- **Illness**, provided I am notified within 24 hours of the class missed. For more than 2 consecutive days of absence I require a note from the IU Health Center or other healthcare provider.
- **Major family matters** (such as weddings or funerals). For weddings I require at least 2 weeks notice in advance.
- **Religious observances**, provided I am notified at least 2 weeks in advance.

### **LATE WORK:**

Even if you cannot make it to class, make every effort to get your work in on time. You or someone you trust can drop off hard copies of your assignments in my mailbox (in Ballantine 901, open M-F 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).

If you are unable to complete your work on time due to illness or other circumstances, you must contact me in a timely manner if you wish to arrange make-up work or an extension. I reserve the right to refuse late work or an extension if I determine that your reason for missing the deadline is not adequate.

### **PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

At IUB, plagiarism is considered a violation of academic integrity and can result in automatic failure of the course (see the Code of Student Conduct for more information:

<http://www.iu.edu/~code/code/responsibilities/academic/index.shtml>.) Plagiarism occurs when you represent someone else's work as your own work in the following ways:

- having someone write your paper for you or turning in someone else's work
- purchasing someone else's work and using it as your own
- simply copying and pasting published information into your paper
- deliberately using sources without attributing them.

Our course will teach you ways of integrating the ideas of other writers and documenting the source of those ideas, but please ask if you ever have any questions about plagiarism.

## 「 ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION 」

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

All assignments and response questions are due at the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned. For major papers, please bring a hard copy to class. Response questions will be completed on Oncourse (under "Assignments 2"). You will choose when these are due: I only ask that you post an analytical response (~300 words) *before* the text is discussed in class.

### **GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

Essay 1 (3-4 pages)	150 points
Essay 2 (4-5 pages)	200 points

Essay 3 (5-6 pages)	250 points
Presentation	200 points
Response Questions (4 x 25 points)	100 points
Attendance and Participation	100 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

**GRADING:**

The final grade distribution is as follows:

1000-930 points (A)	899-870 points (B+)	799-770 points (C+)	699-600 (D)
929-900 points (A-)	869-830 points (B)	769-730 points (C)	599 and below (F)
	829-800 points (B-)	729-700 points (C-)	

Please keep in the mind that at Indiana University, an “A” indicates exemplary work and means you have mastered the concepts of the assignment. A “B” indicates very good work in which you have not only met all of the assignment requirements, but you have also met them at a level above expectations. A “C” indicates that you have sufficiently completed the assignment. A “D” indicates that you have failed to execute some portion of the assignment properly and need help with the assignment. And an “F” indicates that you either did not understand or did not follow through with the assignment.

**「 RESOURCES 」**

**OFFICE HOURS:**

My office hours are scheduled specifically for you, and I encourage you to stop by with any questions or concerns. No appointment is necessary. If you cannot make it to office hours, email is the best method to get in touch with me with a simple question or to set up another meeting time. I will do my best to get back to you within 48 hours, but please do not wait until the last minute to contact me. If I have not responded to an email about an assignment by the time that the assignment is due, it is by no means an excuse for turning the assignment in late.

**WRITING TUTORIAL SERVICES:**

I highly encourage you to seek out additional readers for your writing at Writing Tutorial Services (WTS) in the Information Commons (1<sup>st</sup> floor) of Wells Library. The tutors there can provide you with valuable feedback at any stage of your writing process.

**SUPPORT SERVICES:**

Disability Services and The Adaptive Technologies divisions of the Office of Student Affairs can arrange for assistance, auxiliary aids, or related services if you think a temporary or permanent disability will prevent you from being a full participant in the class. Contact them at <http://www.dsa.indiana.edu> or 855-7578 with any individual concerns. Students with special needs must be registered with Disability Services before classroom accommodations can be provided.

## 「COURSE SCHEDULE」

You will be expected to complete all readings and assignments prior the class for which they are assigned. Please bring a copy of your text for each day. I reserve the right to make changes to assignments and due dates. I will announce any changes in class and on Oncourse.

Date	Reading/ Due in class
Tues., Jan. 10	Introduction to the semester
Thurs., Jan. 12	Ellen Burton Harrington, "Women Writers and the Outlaw Form of the Short Story"; Edith Wharton, "Roman Fever" and "Every Subject Must Contain within Itself Its Own Dimensions"
Tues., Jan. 17	Scott D. Emmert, "Naturalism and the Short Story Form"; Kate Chopin, "Desirée's Baby" and "The Story of an Hour"
Thurs., Jan. 19	Ama Ata Aidoo, "A Gift from Somewhere" (Penguin); Elizabeth Jolley, "Little Lewis Had a Lovely Sleep" (Penguin)
Tues., Jan. 24	Charles E. May, "The Nature of Knowledge in Short Fiction"; Tillie Olsen, "As I Stand Here Ironing" + Commentary
Thurs., Jan. 26	Julio Cortázar, "Some Aspects of the Short Story" and "A Continuity of Parks"; María Elena Llano, "In the Family" (Penguin)
Tues., Jan. 31	Margaret Atwood, "Hairball" (Penguin), "Happy Endings" and "Reading Blind"
Thurs., Feb. 2	Eileen Baldeshwiler, "The Lyric Short Story"; Anton Chekhov, "The Huntsman," "The Lady with the Dog," and "The Short Story"
Tues., Feb. 7	Virginia Woolf, "Kew Gardens" and Katherine Mansfield, "The Garden-Party" and Commentary
Thurs., Feb. 9	Ludmilla Petrushevskaya, "The Violin" (Penguin) and "Through a Field"; Annie Saumont, "Before" (Penguin); "; <b>Essay 1 Draft due</b>
Tues., Feb. 14	Sarah Orne Jewett, <u>The Country of the Pointed Firs</u> , Ch. 1-13
Thurs., Feb. 16	Sarah Orne Jewett, <u>The Country of the Pointed Firs</u> , Ch. 14-21; Elizabeth Ammons, "Going in Circles"
Tues., Feb. 21	Nadine Gordimer, "The Ultimate Safari" and "The Flash of Fireflies"; "Comrades" (Penguin); Mary West, "Portraits in Miniature"
Thurs., Feb. 23	Bi Shumin, "Broken Transformers" (Penguin); Mary Gaitskill, "Tiny, Smiling Daddy"; Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl" and Commentary; <b>Essay 1 Final due</b>
Tues., Feb. 28	Alphonse Daudet, "Seguin's Goat"; Ian Reid, "Destabilizing Frames for Story"; Angela Carter, "The Company of Wolves"
Thurs., Mar. 1	Angela Carter, "The Bloody Chamber" (Penguin); Salman Rushdie, "On Angela Carter's 'The Bloody Chamber'"
Tues., Mar. 6	Isabel Allende, <u>The Stories of Eva Luna</u> , pp. 1-78
Thurs., Mar. 8	Isabel Allende, <u>The Stories of Eva Luna</u> , pp. 79-147
Tues., Mar. 13	<i>Spring Break – class does not meet</i>
Thurs., Mar. 15	<i>Spring Break – class does not meet</i>
Tues., Mar. 20	Isabel Allende, <u>The Stories of Eva Luna</u> , pp. 148-296

Thurs., Mar. 22	Isabel Allende, <u>The Stories of Eva Luna</u> , pp. 297-331; Samuel Amago, "Isabel Allende and the Postmodern Narrative Tradition"; <b>Essay 2 due</b>
Tues., Mar. 27	Sandra Cisneros, "Woman Hollering Creek" (Penguin); Luisa Valenzuela, "Blue Water-man" (Penguin); Hanan Al Shaykh, "The Fun-fair" (Penguin)
Thurs., Mar. 29	Gloria Naylor, <u>The Women of Brewster Place</u> , pp. 1-74
Tues., Apr. 3	Gloria Naylor, <u>The Women of Brewster Place</u> , pp. 75-127
Thurs., Apr. 5	Gloria Naylor, <u>The Women of Brewster Place</u> , pp. 129-192; Jill L. Matus, "Dream, Deferral, and Closure"
Tues., Apr. 10	Edwidge Danticat, <u>Krik? Krak!</u> , Ch. 1-3
Thurs., Apr. 12	Edwidge Danticat, <u>Krik? Krak!</u> , Ch. 4-7
Tues., Apr. 17	Edwidge Danticat, <u>Krik? Krak!</u> , Ch. 8-9, Epilogue; Rocio G. Davis, "Oral Narrative as Short Story Cycle"
Thurs., Apr. 19	Gita Mehta, <u>A River Sutra</u> , Ch. 1-4
Tues., Apr. 24	Gita Mehta, <u>A River Sutra</u> , Ch. 5-10
Thurs., Apr. 26	Gita Mehta, <u>A River Sutra</u> , Ch. 11-16; Course Evaluations
Tues., May 1	<b>Essay 3 due in my mailbox (BH 901) by 5:00pm</b>

## Essay #1

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Draft due on **Thursday, February 9** at the BEGINNING of class.  
Final draft due on **Thursday, February 23**. Upload to 'Assignments 2' by 1:00pm.

### PROMPT:

Please choose one of the stories that we have discussed in class so far. Using at least one of the secondary essays that we've considered, please discuss how the form of the short story contributes to its meaning, message, or theme.

### PLANNING TIPS:

**Step 1:** Much of the planning work in this assignment will consist of identifying what you believe is a major theme or message in the story (and there are multiple ones to choose from—there is no “right” answer here). I expect that you will be able to provide evidence of this assertion and that your eventual description of the theme shows sophistication.

**Step 2:** After you have a sense of what message you'd like to focus on, go back and determine how the structural features interact with the content/message of the story. These features might include: narrative voice, paragraph breaks, framing, length of the piece, etc. This is a good stage to begin considering which secondary essay you'd like to use. Also, don't ignore conflict or contradiction here! Often the best stories will challenge or undercut their own message.

**Step 3:** Organize and compose your essay, paying attention to the balance you strike between plot summary and analysis. You should provide enough details about the story so that a reader unfamiliar with it can understand your essay, but you shouldn't let the plot overwhelm your analysis. Be sure to support your claims about structure with descriptions of the text (you can describe how many pages long it is, mark shifts in tone or voice with relevant plot points, describe notable punctuation marks, etc.). Remember, quotes aren't the only form of evidence available to you!

### FORMAT:

This paper should be 3-4 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point, with 1-inch margins. It should be in MLA format and include a Works Cited page. This assignment will be worth 150 points (15% of your final grade).

## Essay #2

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Final draft due on **Thursday, March 22**. Upload to 'Assignments 2' by 1:00pm.

### PROMPT:

Please choose **two** of the stories that we have read in class so far (you may also choose a story included in the Penguin anthology that we haven't read). Please write a comparative analysis of how these two stories treat a single issue, theme, or problem. Your paper should include an analytical thesis that compares the two texts and direct evidence from both texts to support your claims.

### PLANNING TIPS:

You should begin your paper by identifying a central issue or problem that both texts explore. In a comparative analysis, however, it is not enough to simply point out a similarity or difference. You must identify a *similarity within a difference*, or a *difference within a similarity*.

Similarity within a difference:

- Step 1: Identify a difference between the texts. (In *Hippolytos* the gods are portrayed as existing and having actual power over the mortal characters, whereas in *Titus Andronicus* they are used by the characters as a ruse to fool others)
- Step 2: Explore the similarities within this difference. (In both cases, religion relieves the characters of personal responsibility for their actions)
- Step 3: Tie it in to the bigger picture. (What are the overall attitudes toward religion in the works? Why is this significant?)

Difference within a similarity:

- Step 1: Choose a similarity in the texts. (Both *Titus Andronicus* and *Hippolytos* feature father figures that kill their sons due to a misunderstanding)
- Step 2: Explore the differences in the two situations. (Titus shows little regret for killing Mutius, but Theseus begs for forgiveness from Hippolytos)
- Step 3: Tie it in to the bigger picture. (What does this tell us about the difference between how Theseus and Titus view responsibility and fatherhood? What does this mean for the work in general?)

While your thesis need not be in the *similarity-within-difference* / *difference-within-similarity* format, your analysis should reflect this level of complexity.

### FORMAT:

This paper should be 4-5 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point, with 1-inch margins. It should be in MLA format and include a Works Cited page. This assignment will be worth 200 points (15% of your final grade).

## Essay #3

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Final draft due on **Tuesday, May 1**. Upload to 'Assignments 2' by 5:00pm.

### **PROMPT:**

Please choose one of the short story collections that we have read in class (Jewett, Allende, Naylor, Danticat, or Mehta) and craft an argument that addresses the **form of the short story cycle**. In other words, you should consider how the individual stories are affected by their inclusion within a larger collection. Questions to consider include: How is unity among the stories achieved? How does the juxtaposition of certain stories affect the overall presentation of the collection? Are certain messages or interpretations complicated/contradicted by different stories? You may discuss the cycle as a whole or simply choose two or more stories within the collection to compare.

This essay will benefit from the skills practiced in your two previous essay assignments. Paying close attention to the formal elements of a short story cycle and offering a nuanced comparison between stories will contribute greatly to successful papers.

### **FORMAT:**

This paper should be 5-6 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point, with 1-inch margins. It should be in MLA format and include a Works Cited page. This assignment will be worth 250 points (25% of your final grade).

## Individual Presentations

At one point during the semester, each of you will give a short presentation on one of the stories. I expect that your presentation will last 5-7 minutes and you will lead discussion for at least another 10 minutes.

**Presentation:** Your presentation should be more focused than a simple summary of the text. I ask that you choose a specific claim, theme, or topic within the text that will open up discussion. I also ask that you prepare supplementary materials for your presentation (a handout, powerpoint, etc.). This not only helps the class to follow along, it can also help ease the tension of presenting to a large group. [Note: see the following page for an example of a handout]

**Discussion:** I also ask that you prepare several discussion questions about the reading. Ideally, these questions should stem from the claim or theme that you address in the presentation. These should be thoughtful enough to be able to sustain discussion for at least 10 minutes. To this end, I suggest avoiding “yes or no” questions or those with simple answers. Try to think of questions that have multiple interpretations.

**Grading:** You will be graded based on

- the depth and insightfulness of your presentation
- the organization and preparation of your supplementary materials
- the quality of class discussion that your presentation promotes

This presentation is worth **200 points** (the equivalent of an essay)—please plan to spend as much time preparing for it as you do your essays.

I encourage you to visit my office hours to discuss your presentation as well.

Holly Schreiber  
CMLT C340 Sample Presentation  
January 12, 2012

## Orientation and Vision in Edith Wharton's "Roman Fever"

When describing the past of both Mrs. Slade and Mrs. Ansley, Wharton positions them so that they are facing each other and observing.

"Mrs. Slade and Mrs. Ansley had lived opposite each other—actually as well as figuratively—for years" (1387)

[After the two women's assessment of each other]

"So these two ladies visualized each other, each through the wrong end of her little telescope" (1388).

In the present, for the majority of the story, the two women are sitting together but facing the Roman ruins rather than each other.

"For a long time they continued to sit side by side without speaking. It seemed as though, to both, there was a relief in laying down their somewhat futile activities in the presence of the vast Memento Mori which faced them" (1389).

["Memento Mori" (latin) = "remember your mortality"]

[After Mrs. Slade remarks that Babs is so dynamic]

"Mrs. Ansley's hands lay inert across her needles. She looked straight out at the great accumulated wreckage of passion and splendor at her feet" (1389).

During the major climactic moments and revelations in the story, the women are turned directly toward each other.

"Mrs. Ansley had not moved for a long time. But now she turned slowly toward her companion. 'But I didn't wait. He'd arranged everything. He was there. We were let in at once,' she said" (1393).

"Mrs. Ansley was silent again. At length she turned toward the door of the terrace. She took a step, and turned back, facing her companion.

'I had Barbara,' she said, and began to move ahead of Mrs. Slade toward the stairway" (1394).

### Discussion Questions:

1. In "Every Subject Must Contain within Itself Its Own Dimensions" Wharton advises "never to let the character who serves as reflector record anything not naturally within his register. It should be the storyteller's first care to choose this reflecting mind deliberately, as one would choose a building-site, or decide upon the orientation of one's house, and when this is done, to live inside the mind chosen, trying to feel, see and react exactly as the latter would" (1594-5). How does her use of orientation in "Roman Fever" reflect this?
2. How is the opposition between women also reflected in their physical descriptions? Their mannerisms?
3. How is the view significant? Why Rome? Why the Coliseum?