



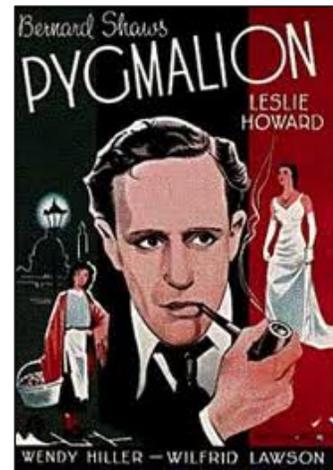
*“I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood.”*

Audre Lorde

“The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action”

*“But you have no idea how frightfully interesting it is to take a human being and change her into a quite different human being by creating a new speech for her. It’s filling up the deepest gulf that separates class from class and soul from soul.”*

(Higgins) George Bernard Shaw  
*Pygmalion*



## EN 275: Women and Literature

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### Course Description

Within human communication, speech has always been central. In literature, speech is recorded as words, but this does not mean those words are altogether silent or without inflection. As you read a written text, you hear an echo of sound in your mind, enriched by the context presented by the author. In this course, we will listen to literature, continually asking the question:

***“How does a woman sound?”***

This central question will take us many directions during the semester. We will listen to the (seemingly silent) words from women writers. We will listen to how women’s voices are portrayed by both male and female authors. Interspersed with literary texts, we will listen to elements from popular culture – songs, videos, podcasts – to connect our central question to current culture.

There is no one correct answer to the question “How does a woman sound?”. During the course of the semester, we will test out many different answers to the question, and explore how the answer has changed over the course of history. Although there is not one correct answer, you will be expected to provide one answer to this question, using the texts we read in this class, as well as your own thoughts and opinions. To find answers to the question, we will use a broad definition of literature, meaning not just long-form fictive works, but also rhetorical texts, non-fiction essays, and multimodal texts. We will not just be reading books, we will be listening, watching, and observing. We will consider how women sound in different contexts, including racial and class-based contexts. This will serve as an introduction to the presence and activities of women as authors, literary characters, and social and political subjects.

## Course Objectives

After this course, students will be able to

- Read closely and critically, interpreting literature in a way that is both intellectually rigorous and personally significant and presenting their interpretations in class discussion online and during class time.
- Discuss interpretations of literature in a thoughtful manner using both personal experience and imagination - as well as listen to other's interpretations respectfully and constructively.
- Begin to identify power dynamics of communication situations (reading, writing, speaking, listening) particularly in relation to gendered communication and then demonstrate these identifications in essay reflections.
- Craft different types of essays – textual, multimodal, and audio – that communicate about how women in literature are presented and interpreted.
- Connect experiences and viewpoints across documents, and articulate these connections in oral and written moments.
- Generate new images, concepts, possibilities and/or interpretations and connect apparently disparate ideas. (AU Higher Level Thinking ILO)
- Employ active listening techniques, including summarizing, paraphrasing, questioning and nonverbal response. (AU Communication ILO)

## Textbook Materials

Margaret Atwood *The Year of the Flood*  
Lorraine Hansbury *Raisin in the Sun*  
Audre Lorde *Sister/Outsider*  
Marjane Satrapi *Persepolis*  
George Bernard Shaw *Pygmalion*  
Other readings/audio/video on Canvas



*Persepolis*  
Marjane Starapi

## Course Requirements

Reflection Essays (3)	15%
Projects (2)	30%
Exams (2)	20%
Class Engagement	35%
Total	100%

### Reflection Essays (3)

These short essays (500-700 words) will be a place for you to taken an idea you have had while reading or during class discussion and expand on it. Reflection essays require no outside research, but they should involve critical thinking and comparison between ideas or essays. Each reflection essay will have a prompt, although you will be able to choose what text or part of text to work on. These are formal essays in that they require an introduction/body/conclusion, as well as Standard American English, but they do not need Works Cited pages. Plan to share elements from your reflection essay in class.

### Projects (2)

Project assignments are in-depth considerations of class readings. There are two primary projects: the Class Discussion Project and Audio Project. Detailed explanation will be provided for each project.

#### Leading Class Discussion Project

During the second week of class, you will choose a text. On that day the class is scheduled to discuss that text, you will lead class discussion. You will need to prepare at least 5 discussion questions, as well as become familiar with the author and context of the text. This will include research on your part exterior to the class. For this project, you will need to prepare questions which you email me the day prior to your discussion (by 5pm), lead discussion as best as possible on that class day, and write a brief reflection (300 words) on how the discussion went.



Terry Gross *Fresh Air*

### “How does a woman sound?” Audio Project

In the final project, you will craft an audio essay that answers our class question “*How does a woman sound?*” This can include performing and recording parts of a text, comparing lines across texts, or recording other’s responses to the question and comparing them to class texts. Audio essays should be 4-6 minutes, with some musical elements. Emphasis will not be on production, but on the manner in which you answer the question. I will be available to assist with any technology issues. You will present your final project to the class.

### Exams

Our exams are a place to test your ability to have complex thoughts about material we have covered in class. They are not a place where I try to trick you or question you about something we have not covered. If you have been coming to class, doing the reading, and participating in class discussions, there should be nothing surprising on the midterm or the final, although that doesn’t mean it will be easy. The midterm will be taken in-class and the final will be take-home. Each exam will consist of short answer and essay questions. You will have a list of possible midterm questions to study. The final will be cumulative.

### Class Engagement

Because this is a discussion-based course, attending class, engaging in the discussion, and participating online is crucial. Literature is not just a set of facts that you can learn on your own, it is about engaging with perspectives and imagination, two things that a community of people (your classmates) are instrumental in producing. There are three parts to Class Engagement: Attendance, In-class Participation, and Canvas Participation.

#### Attendance Policy

Students are expected to come to class prepared. If there is reading to be completed, you should do it prior to class. If an essay is due, it should be finished prior to class. Students should attempt to come to all class meetings. If you cannot make class, check with a fellow student to find out what we covered and expect that you missed something. Three absences will be tolerated before your grade is affected. Following three absences, your attendance will be reported to your advisor and your grade will be decreased by 1/3 of a letter grade. If there are extenuating circumstances, let me know early and we can possibly work on other arrangements.

#### Participation Policy

To participate in class, you must be present, have your materials, and be prepared to learn. You are required to purchase all books; leaving your text at home continually will result in participation penalty. Participation means listening to myself, your fellow students, and thinking about the material. You are also expected to put forth your opinion in the form of writing or speaking. Occasionally we will be working in groups, at those times your participation will be judged on how you work within the group.

#### Canvas Participation Policy

About once per week we will have a discussion on Canvas. You are expected to find the discussion after I mention it in class, and complete the prompt, as well as comment on at least one of your fellow student’s responses.

