

FRESHMAN ENGLISH POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

November 6, 1985

Attending: Ruszkiewicz, Bertelsen, Frost

Absent: Slatin

I. Call for order at 4:05 p.m.

II. Ruszkiewicz introduced the only item on the agenda for this meeting, Mary S. (Doll) Mathis' proposed variant for E 306 for the Spring term, Writing About Images of Women in Literature and Culture.

Frost moved to accept the proposal. Bertelsen seconded.

Specifically, Frost noted her approval of the broad base of the course, of its historical movement, of the literary merit of the readings, and of the integration of these readings with important writing skills. She expressed some questions about whether the course may be too "heavy"—for the teacher if not for students. Bertelsen expressed confidence in Mathis' teaching experience, especially in view of her work this semester with literature in Humanities 303. Carol MacKay said that this course is close enough in content to Humanities 303 to count as a freshman course.

Finally, the question was called. The motion to accept Mathis' proposal passed unanimously.

III. The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

—Submitted by Beth Daniell,
Secretary to the FEPC

Ruszkiewicz



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

PAR 108 • Austin, Texas 78712-1164

MEMORANDUM

To: Freshman English Policy Committee
(Bertelsen, Frost, Slatin)

From: John Ruszkiewicz

Date: November 4, 1985

Please review the attached variant course proposal before the FEPC meeting on Wednesday, November 6. We will meet in Parlin 8C at 4:00 p.m. The meeting should be brief.

TO: Members of the Freshman English Policy Committee
FROM: Mary S. (Doll) Mathis
DATE: November 1, 1985
RE: Variant Course Proposal for Spring 1986: Writing About
Images of Women in Literature and Culture

Course Description

The major goal of this course is to enable students to write clear, well-organized, sharply focused, interesting essays on significant topics. The course will stress the following features of effective writing: use of several different rhetorical strategies, practice in a wide range of writing skills, effective use of the various stages of the writing process, sophisticated thinking, and significant, interesting content.

The reading material is an integral part of the course. The overarching topic of the course, "images of women," will spark class discussion, provide a sense of thematic continuity, and generate paper topics of interest to members of the class. We will explore the experience, treatment, and perception of women by reading and discussing works of literature in which women play a prominent part. We will also explore images of women in the culture in which we live.

Justification as a 306 Course

The main goal of this course, as stated above, is in accord with that of the regular 306 course. The focal point of this course will be writing, not literature. I want to use the literature primarily for purposes of invention and only secondarily and occasionally as subject of analysis. In other words, students will usually write about issues raised by the literature; they will rarely write about the literature itself. Most of the work will be expository writing, not literary criticism.

I also plan to continue my emphasis on writing as process, requiring that the students submit a draft, either to me or to their peers, for evaluation and revision in all major writing assignments except one in-class essay and the final. I will also continue giving unit quizzes on grammar and style (based on the Handbook) and will reserve at least one class session per unit (besides one on peer evaluation) for writing workshops.

Syllabus and Assignments

I have organized the units both by topic and by rhetorical approach.

Unit 1: Archetypes and Stereotypes of Women / Self-expression

Readings: an essay on archetypes and stereotypes of women;
Handbook of Current English (HCE): "Introduction," ch. 4
"Common Sentence Errors"

Writing Assignment: In-class narrative self-expressive essay on a situation in which the student has been stereotyped or has stereotyped someone else

Unit 2: Images of Women in Religion / Informative Comparison-Contrast

Readings: Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth, selected passages from the Bible and Paradise Lost; HCE: ch. 5 "Agreement of Subject and Verb," ch. 8 "Pronouns," ch. 19 "The Process of Writing: Audience and Purpose," ch. 20 "Discovering What You Have to Say," ch. 21 "Developing and Arranging Your Material"

Writing Assignment: Informative essay comparing/contrasting images of women in Inanna and either the Bible or PL

Unit 3: Images of Women in Popular Culture / Inductive Informative

Readings: HCE: ch. 6 "Verbs," ch. 7 "Nouns," ch. 9 "Adjectives and Adverbs," ch. 22 "Using Outlines," ch. 23 "Drafting, Revising, and Editing," ch. 24 "An Essay in Progress," ch. 25 "Paragraphs"

Writing Assignment: Inductive informative essay on images of women in a particular genre, e.g. magazine advertisements, sitcoms, horror movies, soaps

Unit 4: Woman as Author; Women in the Professions / Persuasion and Analysis

Readings: A Room of One's Own; HCE: ch. 10 "End Punctuation," ch. 11 "Commas," ch. 12 "Semicolons and Colons," ch. 29 "The Meaning of Words," ch. 30 "The Effect of Words"

Writing Assignment: Analysis of A Room of One's Own as persuasive discourse

Unit 5: Contemporary Women's Issues / Research

Readings: HCE: ch. 13 "Dashes, Parentheses, and Brackets," ch. 14 "Quotation Marks, Ellipsis Marks, and Italics," ch. 15 "Capital Letters, Hyphens, and Apostrophes," ch. 16 "Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Numbers," ch. 33 "Writing and Research"

Writing Assignment: Research paper on a contemporary women's issue of personal concern and interest to the student

Unit 6: Woman as Witch, Monster, Evil / Informative with Library Research

Readings: Medea; HCE: ch. 17 "Spelling," ch. 18 "Using a Dictionary," ch. 26 "Sentence Development," ch. 27 "Sentence Variety and Emphasis," ch. 28 "Sentence Economy"

Writing Assignment: In-class informative report on some aspect of ancient Greek culture pertinent to the portrayal of Medea (to be revised later)

Unit 7: A Victorian Buldingsroman: Growing Up Female / Analytical-Classification

Readings: Jane Eyre

Writing Assignment: Analytical classification paper on the portrayal of women in Jane Eyre

Unit 8: Social Roles of Women / Argumentative thesis-support

Readings: Merchant of Venice

Writing Assignment: Argumentative thesis-support essay on role-playing in MV

Unit 9: A Southern Black Buldingsroman / Exploratory

Readings: The Color Purple

Writing Assignment: In-class final exam including an exploratory essay on The Color Purple or on an issue raised by that book

Texts

Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth, translated by Diane Wolkstein and edited by Samuel N. Kramer

A Room of One's Own, by Virginia Woolf

Medea, by Euripides

Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Bronte

Merchant of Venice, by William Shakespeare

The Color Purple, by Alice Walker

Handbook of Current English, by Jim W. Corder and John J. Ruskiewicz