Introduction to Women’s Literature

Course Description: This course will cover a variety of women writers, primarily from the early twentieth century up to the present day and primarily American, as a lens through which to view the field of Women’s Literature. The reading list is ethnically diverse and also represents women of different social/economic groups, geographic regions, ethnicities and gender identities. This broad range reflects the huge variation encompassed by the word “women.” One prominent theme of the course will be girls and young women coming of age and another women’s attempts to gain self-empowerment in a society that disadvantages them. Students’ individual responses to the texts will be at the heart of this course. Although I will provide the class with historical and critical frameworks that shape our understanding of these writers, it is the students’ interaction with them that will form the basis of our discussions.

Teaching Method: Discussion, small group work, student presentations, and extensive writing by students.

Requirements: One oral presentation on a woman writer; three formal five-page papers; informal in-class writing. Daily attendance required.

Tentative Reading List: O Pioneers! Willa Cather; The Color Purple Alice Walker; Their Eyes Were Watching God Zora Neale Hurston; The Joy Luck Club Amy Tan; Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories Sandra Cisneros; A Gate at the Stairs Lorrie Moore; others to be determined.