

**San José State University**  
**Humanities and Arts/English 182**  
**Women's literature—Women and Violence, Fall 2015**

**Instructor:** Susan Shillinglaw  
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**Office Hours:** Tuesday, 3-5; Thursday, 8-10  
**Class Days/Time:** Tues/Thurs. 10:30-11:45  
**Classroom:** BBC 128

**Course Description/goals**

In this course, we will consider the nature of violence in texts written by and about women. We will consider women as perpetrators of violence as well as victims. Is violence inconsistent with femininity? How is violence explained: Woman as mad, as deviant, as victim?

The goal of this course is to examine depictions of violence, discuss in class, and expand students' awareness to a deeper cultural awareness of the significance of women and violence.

**Student Learning Objectives [SLO]**

In the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, and/or rhetoric;
2. show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American and World Literature;

3. write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject;
4. develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively;
5. articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend 4-5 hours per week preparing for a 3-unit course.

### **Required Texts/Readings**

***Medea*, Euripides (PDF)**

***Beloved*, Toni Morrison**

**“The Roan Stallion,” and “Apology for Bad Dreams,” Robinson Jeffers**

[https://archive.org/stream/selectedpoertyof029969mbp/selectedpoertyof029969mbp\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/selectedpoertyof029969mbp/selectedpoertyof029969mbp_djvu.txt)

***Trifles*, Susan Glaspell**

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10623/10623-h/10623-h.htm>

***White Oleander*, Janet Fitch**

***The Round House*, Louise Erdrich**

***Girl Soldier: A Story of Hope for Northern Uganda’s Children*, Faith J. H. McDonnell and Grace Akallo (PDF)**

***Soldier Girls: The Battles of Three Women at Home and War*, Helen Thorpe**

### **Classroom Protocol**

Please come to each class prepared and on time; please read the assignment for each day carefully. Unannounced reading quizzes may be given at the beginning of class—no makeups, no quizzes to late arrivals. Please hand in hard copies of essay, typed double space, MLA format. I do not accept online submissions unless I give a student permission to hand in an assignment online. Late essays will receive lower grades. Failure to attend class will result in lower participation grades as well, since you will miss quizzes and in-class work. Please do not use computers or

cellphones in class (unless you are consulting online texts for the class)—this is a seminar, and attentive participation is expected of all.

### **Assignments and Grading Policy**

**Group report 25%:** On the syllabus are dates for 5 different group presentations, each with a different theme. The groups will be created by August 27. Each group will have 4-5 students, and groups will work together to produce a quality class presentation of 30-40 minutes, focused on that theme. Each presentation will explore their theme by reading nonfiction prose--journalism, nonfiction texts, memoirs, and editorials—that is relevant to the theme. In short, groups will discuss the implications and continued relevance of issues raised in the texts we studied. Reports will emphasize relevance, theoretical implications, contemporary examples, cultural differences surrounding the topic. Each presentation will expand fellow students' awareness, explore additional questions related to the topic, make pointed comparisons between class texts and contemporary issues. These reports will be graded on quality of ideas, examples, theoretical issues discussed, clarity of presentation.

**Essay inspired by group report, 25%:** Each student will also hand in a 5-page essay, due the next class period after the presentation. That essay will compare one idea generated by the text and explore contemporary relevance. The papers may draw from the group work but they are not expected to duplicate what was said during the presentation. The essay is an opportunity for each student to explore ideas generated in the group in greater depth. Each essay must include a bibliography of sources cited and each essay must compare class text with nonfiction articles.

**Midterm exam: 20%.** An in-class essay/short answer exam based on class readings and presentations.

**Quizzes and class participation: 5%.** Reading quizzes may be given at the beginning of class. Each student is expected to participate fully in discussions, coming to class prepared to discuss the readings.

**Final exam, Friday December 16: 25%.** Essay/short answer exam based on class readings and presentations. The final exam is comprehensive, covering material throughout the semester.

## **Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](#) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the [current academic calendar](#) web page located at [http://www.sjsu.edu/academic\\_programs/calendars/academic\\_calendar/](http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/). The [Late Drop Policy](#) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

(Insert your expectations for participation, attendance, arrival times, behavior, safety, cell phone use, etc. here.)

## **University Policies**

### **Academic integrity**

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University's Academic Integrity policy](#), located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](#) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

## **Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Disability Resource Center](http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/) (DRC) at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.

## **Schedule**

**August 20:** Introduction:

<https://www.nytimes.com/books/98/07/05/specials/oates-violent.html>

**August 25:** *Medea* Please complete play for today—PDF sent. [SLG 1,2, 5]

**August 27:** *Medea*; From “On Violence,” Hannah Arendt—Xerox. [SLG 1,2, 5]

**September 1:** *Beloved*, 3-75. [SLG 1,2,5]

**September 3:** *Beloved*, 76-146 [SLG 1,2,5].

**September 8:** *Beloved*, 147-235. [SLG 1,2,5].

**September 10:** *Beloved*, complete. [SLG 1,2,5]

**September 15:** “Roan Stallion” (web) [SLG 3,4]

**September 17:** “Roan Stallion” (web) [SLG 1,2,5]

**September 22:** “Roan Stallion,” “Apology for Bad Dreams” PDF **Group report #1: Women and violence against children** [SLG1,2,5]

“Apology for Bad Dreams” originated from the episode of the woman and her sons torturing a horse, a thing which happened on our coast. Cruelty is a part of nature, at least of human nature, but it is the one thing that seems unnatural to us; the tension of the mind trying to recognize cruelty and evil as part of the sum of things is what made the poem. (This woman a few years later was killed by another horse: an unusual piece of justice.) Jeffers,  
Foreword

**September 24:** *Trifles* (web) [SLG 1,2,5]

**September 29:** *Trifles* (web) [SLG 1,2,5]

**October 1:** *Monster* (film) [SLG 1, 2, 5]

**October 6:** *Monster* (complete) "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage," Renato Rosaldo (PDF). **Group Report #2: Rage** [SLG 3,4]

**October 8:** *White Oleander*, 3-135. [SLG 1].

**October 13:** *White Oleander* 136-267. [SLG 1].

**October 15:** *White Oleander*, 168-372 [SLG 1]

**October 20:** *White Oleander* complete. [SLG 1].

**October 22:** *Round House*. **Group Report #3: Domestic violence, women as perpetrators.** [SLG 3,4]

**October 27:** *Round House* [SLG 1,2,5]

**October 29: MIDTERM EXAM** [SLG 1,2,5]

**November 3:** *Round House* [SLG 1]

**November 5:** *Round House* [SLG 1]

**November 10:** *Girl Soldier*, PDF **Group Report #4: Rape.** [SLG 1,5]

**November 12:** *Girl Soldier*; "Living in a State of Fear," Linda Green. PDF [SLG: 1,5]

**November 17:** *Girl Soldier*, PDF [SLG 1,5]

**November 19:** *Soldier Girls* [SLG 1,5]

**November 24:** *Soldier Girls* [SLG 1,3,4,5]

**November 26:** Thanksgiving

**December 1:** *Soldier Girls*

**December 3** *Soldier Girls*; **Group Report #5 Women and Combat** [SLG 1,4,5]

**December 8:** Discussion of final exam [SLG 1,4,5]