Course description:
The determination of gender is a form of reading: reading bodies, reading gestures, reading histories. In the spirit of that feminist insight, this course will offer an introduction to feminism through fiction and criticism that thematizes reading in its diverse forms. Students will explore the relationship between interpretation and experience, identity and performance, from both the social feminist angle and the literary-critical angle. We will acquaint ourselves with foundational feminist novels, from *Jane Eyre* to *To the Lighthouse* to *Their Eyes Were Watching G-d*, and pair them with critical theory that addresses feminism in conversation with race, class, ability, and sexual orientation. Students will be encouraged to consider contemporary applications of the historical thought, and will have the option of writing a final paper that analyzes a contemporary text of their choice. The class will also require short writing assignments that will develop students’ facility with argumentation and academic essay forms.

Learning goals:
Skill-based:
1. Development of close reading skills;
2. Awareness of the mutual constitution of theory and fiction;
3. Proficiency with college-level literary analysis and essay forms.

Content-based:
1. Textual and contextual familiarity with some of the canonical works of feminist literature;
2. A historical introduction to feminist aims and concerns;
3. Sophisticated understanding of the broader structural insights of feminism and their impact on literary and political theory.

Literary texts:
Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre* (1847)
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wall Paper” (1892)
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (1899)
Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927)
Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching G-d* (1937)
Ursula LeGuin, “She Unnames Them” (1985)

Critical texts (excerpted):
Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979)
Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, “Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire” and “Conclusion: From Parody to Politics” (1990)
Assignment structure:
There will be four formal written assignments.

The first three are pre-assigned postings of around 500 words. We will circulate a sign-up sheet on the first day of class to assure even posting distribution throughout the quarter. Students’ work will be posted to the “Discussions” section of the course’s Canvas page by no later than 5pm on the Monday of the pre-assigned week (before class). Fellow students are expected to read the postings by Tuesday’s class. Together we will discuss the posts’ arguments and approach and build off of the readings they offer.

The fourth assignment will be a final paper of 12-15 pages. This paper will use both primary and secondary sources to develop an argument about one or two texts which may or may not be on the syllabus. It must include close-reading and will take care to consider the broader political arguments the texts are endeavoring to make.

Honor code:

The Stanford University Fundamental Standard is a part of this course. It is agreed to by every student who enrolls at Stanford.

The Fundamental Standard states:

Students at Stanford are expected to show both within and without the University such respect for order, morality, personal honor and the rights of others as is demanded of good citizens. Failure to do this will be sufficient cause for removal from the University.

Students will not give or receive aid in examinations; they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading; and they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.

If you are unclear about Stanford’s expectations of you as a student and a community member, re-read the Fundamental Standard.

The Fundamental Standard is most commonly violated in English classes by instances of plagiarism. These are frequently embarrassingly easy for instructors to identify, and, more importantly, it violates the fundamental purpose of this class: namely, to develop theory in line with one’s personal experiences and values. Should you find yourself in a situation in which you have nothing or very little to turn in, it is far better to discuss the matter with me than to resort to drastic measures; we’ll work out a solution. Less egregious instances of plagiarism often involve the failure to cite work. We will pay special attention to citation throughout the class, so you will receive some education in that arena. Should you ever be in doubt about whether to cite, you should cite. Besides the ethics of the matter, citation strengthens your academic credibility in acknowledging your forebears and suggesting a wide scope of background reading.

Accessibility:

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk; phone: 723-1066; oae.stanford.edu.
Grading:

The requirements for each assignment will be articulated in its respective assignment sheet. The general grading scale may be understood as follows:
A: fulfills all requirements, offers original insights, and demonstrates strong writing and critical thinking skills.
B: fulfills all requirements, offers sensible insights that may be a bit obvious or unoriginal, and demonstrates decent writing and critical thinking skills.
C: fulfills most requirements, offers little insight, and suggests rushed production.
D: fulfills some requirements, offers little or no insight, and demonstrates poor writing and/or critical thinking skills.
F: does not fulfill requirements.

Attendance is required for all classes with the exception of documented illness and other urgent matters. It is your responsibility to contact the instructor as soon as possible should an emergency arise.

Given the short duration of the quarter, attendance is essential. After the first missed class, a 4-point deduction will be taken from the final grade for each missed session. Please also make an effort to arrive on time!

Of course, it goes without saying that you should do the reading; and in a seminar class participation is essential. Should the burden of reading become too onerous, contact me to let me know so we can work out a reasonable solution.

Late assignments will be penalized ten points for each day they are late, unless an agreement has been reached with the instructor 24 hours in advance of the due date.

The course assignments will be weighted as follows:
Assigned postings (3): 15% each
Final paper, extended analysis: 40%
Attendance, preparation, and participation: 15%