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Office hours: Friday period 4 (10:35-11:25am)

**Women and Madness**  
AML 2410; section 1629  
MAT 108  
MWF period 3 (9:35-10:25am)

### **Course Description:**

There has been a recent upsurge in memoirs written by women which detail their battles with mental illness, like Allie Brosh's *Hyperbole and a Half* and Jenny Lawson's *Let's Pretend This Never Happened*, which is occurring alongside a move to discuss mental illness openly. This will be the backdrop for our class to investigate what it means for women to be "mad," and how this definition has changed over time. This course will be constantly mediating between the experiences of real women with the label and the reality of being "mad" or mentally ill, and fictional examples of "mad women." We will be considering the way that madness is socially constructed, how it changes over time in response to changing gendered expectations, and the problem of whether or not this (being "mad") is a powerful position. We will also pay careful attention to the way that the authors of these works present "mad" women in their texts: how they are engaging in tropes and themes of madness in and out of fiction. But, despite theoretical discussions of what it means to be mad, we will also be very aware of how madness and mental illness exists in reality. This means looking at those who are erroneously labeled "mad," and how they deal with and respond to this label, as well as analyzing those who suffer from serious mental illnesses.

There are no University-sanctioned pre-requisites for this course; however, as with any writing course, students should have a basic command of grammar and mechanics. This course will satisfy the Gordon Rule requirement only if all written and evaluated assignments are completed well and in full.

This course can satisfy the General Education requirement for Composition of Humanities. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general---education---requirement.aspx>

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-and-math-requirement.aspx>

### **Course Objectives:**

**After taking this course, students will be able to:**

- Deeply and critically read complex literary texts, and come to conclusions through close reading
- Demonstrate familiarity with the social and political forces shaping American culture during the time period
- Use textual evidence to support your claims in oral and informal written discussion of assigned texts, without dismissing or oversimplifying views which differ from yours
- Organize and develop initial reactions to assigned texts, through informal writing, peer critiques, and discussion

- Write a college-level research paper that appropriately uses primary and secondary sources (including basic literary theory)
- Contribute actively to a positive learning environment
- Notice trends that occur across a diverse range of genres
- Consider the way that madness is discussed in a broad range of texts
- Analyze madness as both a trope that is carefully constructed in fiction, and as a reality for people with mental illnesses
- Identify women's unique association with mental illness in and out of fiction.

## Required Texts:

Danquah, Meri Nana-Ama, *Willow Weep for Me: A Black Woman's Journey Through Depression*

(Any edition/version – go for what's cheap)

ISBN: 0345432134

Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*

(You need the Norton edition)

ISBN: 9780393960129

Campbell, Bebe Moore. *72 Hour Hold*.

(Any edition/version – go for what's cheap)

ISBN: 9781400033614

Geller, Jeffrey L. *Women of the Asylum: Voices from Behind the Walls, 1840-1945*

(Any edition/version – go for what's cheap)

ISBN: 0385474237

## Course Policies

### Attendance

Attendance is required. The policy is that if a student misses more than **six** periods during a summer or spring semester, he or she will fail the entire course. Missing class on a double period counts as **two** absences. I will exempt from this policy **only** those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays, as well as military service and court-mandated appearances. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed. **More than two missed classes or conferences will lower your final course grade by a full step; and each additional absence will count as another step (a step is from A- to B+; B+ to B, etc.).**

Please Note: If students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

Tardiness: If students enter class after roll has been called, they are late, which disrupts the entire class. **Two instances of tardiness count as one absence.**

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

a.) Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.

b.) Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

(University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007

<<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>>)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code.

Important Tip: You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without also providing the exact location from which it came.

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student---honor---code.aspx>

### **Classroom Behavior**

Please keep in mind that UF students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding sexual harassment, see: <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>

### **In-Class Work**

Papers and drafts are due at the beginning of class or on-line at the assigned deadline. Late papers will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse.

Participation is a crucial part of success in this class. Students will be expected to work in small groups and participate in group discussions, writing workshops, peer reviews, and other in-class activities. Be prepared for unannounced quizzes or activities on the readings or classroom discussion. Students must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them. In-class work cannot be made up. Writing workshops require that students provide constructive feedback about their peers' writing.

In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

### **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities**

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and to make available this material.

### **Mode of Submission**

All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) documents to E-learning/Sakai. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered.

### **Writing Center**

The Writing Center is located in Tigert 302 and is available to all UF students.

### **Students with Disabilities**

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting accommodation should contact the Students with Disabilities Office, Peabody 202. That office will provide documentation to the student whom must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

### **Misc. Policies:**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

### **Assignments**

#### **Long Posts (5; 350- 450 words)**

Every other week, you will be required to write a response to the readings. This should be a close reading – so choose something from the text, and analyze it, question it, place it historically (this means there should be **at least one quote**). If you are responding to Monday's reading, it must be posted by 4 pm on the preceding Sunday (so your peers have time to respond). If you are responding to Wednesday's reading, it must be posted by 4 pm the preceding Tuesday. And, if you are responding to Friday's reading it must be posted by 4 pm of the preceding Thursday.

**Poin**

**150**

**Short post (5; 150-250 words)** **100**  
On the weeks when you are not writing a longer response, you should respond to the close reading of your peers. This must be posted before class time on the day the reading will be discussed.

**Presentation** **50**  
You will lead the class discussion for 15 minutes. This means that you should come prepared with questions, interesting passages to look at and analyze, and/or historical context.

**Close Reading (1000 words)** **100**  
This assignment will require you to choose a reading, and present a thesis-driven argument based *only* on textual evidence.

**Mid-term Essay (1500 words)** **180**  
This essay will be a formal researched paper. You will choose at least one text from our syllabus, and make an original argument.

**Final Essay (2000 words)** **300**  
This will be a memoir assignment. You will be either creating a memoir of your experiences of readings/discussions in the class, or creating your own memoir of your experiences with mental illness (yours, or someone close to you).

**Quizzes/Participation** **120**  
We will have occasional quizzes which will be extremely easy if you have completed the reading. Students will need to regularly speak in class discussions, participate during in-class activities and small-group work, and peer review/workshopping sessions.

**Total Points: 1000**

**Grading Scale:  
A Grading Scale**

A	4.0	93-100%	C	2.0	73-76%
A-	3.67	90-92%	C-	1.67	70-72%
B+	3.33	87-89%	D+	1.33	67-69%
B	3.0	83-86%	D	1.0	63-66%
B-	2.67	80-82%	D-	0.67	60-62%
C+	2.33	77-79%	E	0.00	0-59%

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant.

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

