Virginia Woolf – וירג'יניה וולף

BA Seminar

Prof. Shirley Sharon-Zisser
Course no.: 0626-3461-01 2018/19, Fall term, 4hr credit for BA
Monday and Thursday, 10-12, Webb 105
Reception hours: Monday, 14:00-15:00 or by appointment, Webb 509

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Course prerequisites: interest in the writing of Virginia Woolf and in questions of writing anf gender as well as writng and subjectivity; interest in poetics, literary theory, psychoanalysis; love of language. It would be beneficial for students to have taken the introductory course in theory, poetry analysis, narrative analysis.

Course Description

Please note that this seminar proceeds from a psychoanalytical Freudian-Lacanian position.

 "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" is the celebrated quote from Virginia Woolf's manifesto-like *A Room of One's Own,* usually read as an insistence on the social and economic conditions that might allow more women to write more literary works. From a psychoanalytical perspective, however, this quote and the book as a whole raise the question of the function of the "room" (a signifier and concept that recurs in Woolf's work) for Woolf as a particular subject and as woman struggling with writing. What might Woolf's work teach us about the psychic necessity, for a woman writer, to postulate a room in order to posit a limit in the face of what, in a woman's sexuality, does not cease not to be written? What does this text and Woolf's pioneering and singular works of fiction such as *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves*, and *Between the Acts* teach us about the question of feminine jouissance in its relation to writing? About the possible function of writing as a way to treat a real that plagues the subject? We shall examine these and other psychoanalytical questions in relation to Woolf's texts mentioned above as well as some of her short stories, essays, and autobiographical essays such as "A Sketch of the Past" and "Reminiscences." Our theoretical guides shall be the works of psychoanalyst Michele Montrelay on femininity, and Jacques Lacan's seminar 23, *Joyce the Sinthome*. In the light of this seminar we will ask about the subjective differences between these two giants of modernist literature and their possible relation to questions of gender.

Course Requirements
Requirements: regular attendance, active participation (10 %), in class presentation on part of the reading (20%), and a referat or seminar paper (70%) whose topic is to be discussed with the instructor by mid-December.

 Course Reading
The course will focus on a close reading and discussion of the works listed in the bibliography. Most texts are available online, and those that are not will be uploaded to

moodle. Students are expected to have read the texts thoroughly before they are discussed in class and always to have a text in class for reference.

Detailed Course Plan

Please note that this schedule is tentative and may be subject to change, depending on course dynamics and the students' interests and questions.

Part I – Theoretical Framework

Jacques Lacan, "Lituraterre," Seminar 23: *The Sinthome*

Part 2 -- Woolf's Writing Room

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, "Reminiscences," "A Sketch of the Past"

Sigmund Freud, "Feminine Sexuality," Lecture on Femininity"

Jacques Lacan, "The Function of the Written" from *Seminar 20: Encore*

Part 3 – Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

Part 4– Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*

Part 5 – Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts*

Bibliography

Other than the primay and theoretical texts mentioned above, the seminar will be accompanied by referebces to the psychoanalytical work of Michele Montrelay on femininity and witing (in *L'Ombre et le nom* and elsewhere) and by the book *Virginia Woolf: L'Ecriture refuge contre la folie* (ed. Stella Harrison). I will provide scans of the texts and translate where necessary.