

Simone de Beauvoir, Hannah Arendt, and the Woman Intellectual

What does it mean to be a woman and an intellectual? This course begins with major works by two women who helped define the field in the mid-twentieth century, the French writer Simone de Beauvoir and the German-Jewish-American Hannah Arendt. It then turns to works by women from other traditions: Toni Morrison, Isak Dinesen, and Virginia Woolf.

We will consider these writers from a variety of perspectives. To what extent are the preoccupations of these women intellectuals defined by gender? Do they define the relationship or relationships between public and private in ways that differ from many male writers? How do their lives shape their works? What kind of stories do they tell?

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING: One two-page paper (10%); one five-page paper (40%); five quizzes (25%; you may drop your lowest grade); one abstract (5%); one oral report (5%); Class participation will count 15%.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Simone de Beauvoir: excerpts from *The Second Sex*, 2010 ed., trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier; excerpts from *The Prime of Life*

Hannah Arendt: *The Human Condition*; *Eichmann in Jerusalem*; “Walter Benjamin”; “Isak Dinesen”

Toni Morrison: *The Bluest Eye*; “Nobel Lecture”

Isak Dinesen: “The Roads of Life”; “The Diver”; “Tempests”; “Sorrow Acre”

Virginia Woolf: *A Room of One’s Own*; *Three Guineas*

Recommended:

Toril Moi: *Simone de Beauvoir: The Making of an Intellectual Woman*

Dierdre Bair: *Simone de Beauvoir*

Judith Butler: “Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*” In *Yale French Studies*, No. 72, Simone de Beauvoir: Witness to a Century (1986), pp. 35-49.

Feminist Interpretations of Simone de Beauvoir, ed. Simons

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl: *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*

Lisa Disch: *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy*

Hanna Fenichel Pitkin: *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt’s Concept of the Social*
Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt, ed. Honig

Judith Thurman: *Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Storyteller*

Karen Blixen/Isak Dinesen: *Out of Africa*

Karen Blixen/Isak Dinesen: “Sorrow-Acre.” In *Winter’s Tales*

Robert Langbaum: *The Gayety of Vision: A Study of Isak Dinesen's Art*
Lynn R. Wilkinson: "Hannah Arendt on Isak Dinesen: Between Storytelling and Theory."
Comparative Literature 56:1 (Winter 2004): 77-98.
Pollak: *Out of Africa* (film adaptation of Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa* and her *Letters from Africa*)
Gabriel Axel: *Babette's Feast* (film adaptation of Isak Dinesen's *Babette's Feast*)
Stephen Li: *Toni Morrison: A Biography*
Toni Morrison: *Beloved*
Toni Morrison: *The Source of Self-Regard: Selected Essays, Speeches, and Meditations*
Toni Morrison: *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*
Hermione Lee: *Virginia Woolf*

Syllabus

1 Week of August 21

Aug. 22 Introduction to the course

Aug. 24 Karen Blixen/Isak Dinesen: "The Blank Page"; Toni Morrison: Nobel Lecture
<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1993/morrison/lecture/>

2 Week of August 28

Aug. 29 *The Prime of Life*: Preface; Chapter 1

Aug. 31 *The Prime of Life*: Chapter 6

3 Week of September 4

Sept. 5 *The Prime of Life*: Chapter 8
Quiz 1

Sept. 7 *The Second Sex*: Introduction

4 Week of September 11

Sept. 12 *The Second Sex*: Part 2, Introduction; Justifications; The Independent Woman

Sept. 14 Hannah Arendt: *The Human Condition*; Prologue; Chapter 1

5 Week of September 18

Sept. 19 *The Human Condition*; Chapter 2
Quiz 2

Sept. 21 *The Human Condition*; Chapter 3

6 Week of September 25

Sept. 26 *The Human Condition*; Chapter 4

Sept. 28 *The Human Condition*; Chapter 5

7 Week of October 2

Oct. 3 *The Human Condition*; Chapter 6

Oct. 5 Hannah Arendt: *Eichmann in Jerusalem*: Chapters 1-5

8 Week of October 9

Oct. 10 *Eichmann in Jerusalem*: Chapters 6-10
Quiz 3

Oct. 12 *Eichmann in Jerusalem*: Chapters 11-15; Epilogue

Oct. 14 Two-page paper due on Canvas, 11:59 pm

9 Week of October 16

Oct 17 Hannah Arendt: *Men in Dark Times*: “Walter Benjamin”; “Isak Dinesen”

Oct. 19 Karen Blixen/Isak Dinesen: “The Diver”; “Tempests”

10 Week of October 23

Oct. 24 Toni Morrison: *The Bluest Eye*

Oct. 26 *The Bluest Eye*

11 Week of October 30

Oct. 31 *The Bluest Eye*
Quiz 4

Nov. 2 Virginia Woolf: *A Room of One's Own*

12 Week of November 6

Nov. 7 *A Room of One's Own*

Nov. 9 Margarethe von Trotta: *Hannah Arendt*

Nov. 11 150-word abstracts for final paper due on Canvas by 11:59

13 Week of November 13

Nov. 14 Virginia Woolf: *Three Guineas*

Nov. 16 *Three Guineas*
Quiz 5

Optional first drafts of five page papers due on Canvas by 11:59

November 20-25 - THANKSGIVING BREAK

14 Week of November 27

Nov. 28 Presentations

Nov. 30 Presentations

Dec. 4 Five page papers due on Canvas by 11:59

Writing Assignments

The due dates for the first versions of your three-page papers and your final paper are marked on your syllabus. These dates are firm. *I will not accept late papers unless you have made arrangements with me in advance at least two days before the paper is due.* If an illness prevents you from turning in your assignment on time, I will need a signed doctor's statement that this is the case.

EXTENSION POLICY: If you have an unusually busy schedule at the time one of the papers is due or an unusual circumstance, such as a wedding out of town, please inform me and we can arrange another deadline.

1. You must ask for the extension by the time class meets BEFORE the deadline on the syllabus, i.e. at least one class in advance. You may also ask for an extension any time before the class meeting before the deadline.
2. You must get my permission—and the new deadline—in writing. The best way to do this is by sending me an email message outlining the reasons for your request. Keep a copy of my reply.

Your writing must be your own work. If you **plagiarize**, I will report you to Student Judicial Services and you will fail the entire class. Simple rule of thumb: “If you use words or ideas that are not your own you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism.” If you have any questions as to what constitutes plagiarism, please see the page on the Student Judicial website: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php

All of your papers should be typed or keyboarded. Please double space.

Writing Center: I strongly encourage you to use the University Writing Center. The Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT student, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Any undergraduate enrolled in a course at UT can visit the UWC for assistance with any writing project. They work with students from every department on campus, for both academic and non-academic writing. Whether you are writing a lab report, a resume, a term paper, a statement for an application, or your own poetry, UWC consultants will be happy to work with you. Their services are not just for writing with “problems.” Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance they provide is intended to foster independence. Each student determines how to use the consultant’s advice. The consultants are trained to help you work on your writing in ways that preserve the integrity of your work.

Class Presentations/Oral Reports

The final writing assignment for the course is a ten-page paper on a topic of your choosing. A title and abstract of your paper are due on April. During **weeks 14 and 15**, you will give a talk of **no more than ten minutes** on the subject of your final paper. Some questions to consider:

- Why you chose this topic
- Why it is significant
- How you went about developing your ideas
- What kind of research you did
- What you learned
- Future topics you might explore

Please note that if you plan to read your talk, you should estimate that it takes about two minutes to read one double-spaced page (12-point font, normal margins).