

ENGLISH 336: WOMEN WRITERS

Summer Session II 2008 • Online

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Course Overview

In our section of 336, we will focus on The Furies, a lesbian feminist collective that existed from (roughly) 1970 to (roughly) 1973. The Furies collective had a number of notable feminist activists and writers in it; Rita Mae Brown and Charlotte Bunch are probably the most famous, but other Furies included photographer Joan E. Biren (JEB), Ginny Berson and Jennifer Woodul (two of the founders of Olivia Records, the first all-women-owned music studio/producer in U.S. history), among others.

When a dozen women split from NOW in 1970 to form the Washington, D.C.-based Furies collective, the issue underlying that split was the homophobia of the mainstream feminist movement. The Furies collective was thus formed in resistant counterpoint to a larger movement, just as the second-wave women's movement itself can be said to have been formed in counterpoint to the male-dominated New Left. During its short existence, the collective founded a newspaper, a day care center, and a school at which women learned auto repair, home repair, and self-defense—in short, it translated feminist theory into direct action. At the same time, however, questions of what counted as “real” work, coupled with the collective's suspicion of leadership and individual authorship as markers of elitist self-promotion, precipitated the collective's demise.

The significance of the group (for our purposes) relies on the work that members tried to do with their writing. As Brown notes in her introduction to *Plain Brown Rapper*, the Furies “explored new territory and didn't have a language to describe it. We fell back on the language of the political Left to try to explain the dynamics within the group. ... By the simple act of speaking in this cheapened jargon we lessened our chances to communicate and drew further apart” (16-17). Thus, in this section of ENG 336, we will explore the Furies' love-hate relationship with the work of writing, looking at how that relationship was itself informed by an explosive intersection of class, gender, and textuality.

Required Texts

- Brown, Rita Mae. *Rubyfruit Jungle*. New York: Bantam, 1983. Other editions are acceptable, as long as they are unabridged.
- Coursepack from University Readers
- *The Furies* newspaper, archived online at The Rainbow History Project
- Readings on e-reserve (or available as a web handout): TBA

Course Requirements

Final paper (40% of final grade). This eight-page (2000-word) project will expand upon your earlier work in the class, including Blackboard posts as well as short papers (details TBA). DUE SEPTEMBER 3 by 5 p.m.

Blackboard Posting (30% of final grade). Every week you need to post four times to the Discussion Boards. Two of those posts will be in response to our readings and/or discussion questions; the other two posts will be in response to somebody else's posts. You have until Wednesday at midnight to complete your "original" posts and until Friday at midnight to respond/converse with a colleague.

Remember that the point of the Discussion Boards is to further the conversation (not shut it down). That doesn't mean that you can't argue—it just means that you need to be focused, organized, and honest in your comments and responses. Everyone should assume goodwill on the part of everyone else, and post accordingly. DUE WEEKLY

Response #1 (10% of final grade). This project is a creative piece that asks you to imagine yourself as an activist/writer in the late 1960s/early 1970s. Look at the "Feminist Chronicles" link on our Blackboard Site (it's under *External Links-->The Furies-->Feminist Chronicles*). Pick one year from 1968 to 1972; then pick three events from that year, and write as if you lived through them in some way. Write a poem, or a manifesto, or a journal, or a series of letters describing the events (you may certainly approach the project via another genre; just let me know). This project should be three pages long; we'll talk about other particulars on the Discussion Board or in a chat session. DUE AUGUST 8 by 11:59 p.m.

Response #2 (10% of final grade). This project is a more recognizably "academic" paper than the first response. In it, you'll choose a text by one of the Furies (either from their newspaper or from our coursepack), and offer a reading of it in the context of its political, rhetorical, and/or aesthetic aims. What is the significance of your chosen text? Like the first response, this project should be three pages (750 words) long; we'll talk

about other particulars on the Discussion Board or in a chat session. DUE AUGUST 22 by 11:59 p.m.

Weekly Quizzes (10% of final grade). These quizzes will be ridiculously easy if you've kept up on the reading; I use them as a tool to help you learn dates, names, and historical data. *Hint:* The Week 1 quiz on Friday, Aug. 1, will be on your classmates' introductions on our Discussion Board. DUE EACH FRIDAY by 5 p.m.

Grading

A = 94-100%	C = 72-75%
A- = 90-93%	C- = 69-71%
B+ = 86-89%	D+ = 66-68%
B = 82-85%	D = 62-65%
B- = 79-81%	D- = 59-61%
C+ = 76-78%	F = below 58%

All work must be turned in on the date due, by the time indicated. Work will be downgraded a full grade per day and will not be accepted after one day. I will not grant extensions and incompletes except in the case of documented medical or family emergencies. In these cases, please contact me as soon as possible. *NOTE:* if you take an "incomplete" in this class, you can get a grade no higher than "B."

Policies

It is your responsibility to read and be familiar with University policies on academic honesty, course registration, and course withdrawal as published in the 2008-09 University bulletin.

Attendance: In an online course, your attendance is pretty easy to measure: are you logging into our Blackboard site and posting to the discussion boards? Are you doing that at least three times a week, meeting all the posting deadlines? Good. You'll find that it's in your best interest to attend: you'll understand and enjoy our readings more if you're online to participate in discussions.

Completion of Projects: All major projects must be completed in order to pass the course. If you fail to complete any of the major projects, you will fail the course.

Office Hours: During our first week, I'll find out what dates/times will work best for online office hours and informal chat sessions.

Late Papers: In general, I don't accept late papers. Late work, even if you've got a good reason, is a nuisance for both of us, and it throws things off-schedule. *If you must turn in a late paper:* the grade for any given paper will be lowered 1/3 of a letter grade for each day it is late.

Plagiarism: Do your own work and make sure you give proper credit to your sources! If you're unsure about whether you should cite somebody, ask me. Any incident of plagiarism will result in an "F" for the assignment; depending on the seriousness of the plagiarism, you may receive an "F" for the course and/or be suspended from the university.

ADA Compliance: If you have a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires accommodations, you should contact the Services to Students with Disabilities (SSD) office immediately for information on appropriate policies and procedures. To contact the SSD office, call 909-537-5238 or 909-537-5242 TDD. The SSD office is located in UH 183.

Rules of the Road

- Check our Blackboard site at least every other day for announcements.
- Follow the reading schedule and pay attention to due dates for projects.
- Look at the descriptions of your assignments on our Blackboard site for details on each project's requirements. Ask questions! Use the "Troubleshooting" discussion board to ask questions of general interest to the class; email me individually for specific questions about your own projects.
- Create a folder to keep all relevant communications with me during the term, as well as the "receipts" that you receive when you post materials to Blackboard's "Digital Dropbox" (you may also wish to print them).
- Your quizzes are available during the days and times posted on our Course Calendar, and are accessible for a finite period. Make sure that when you start your quiz, you're aware of how much time you have. I won't accept quizzes posted or emailed to me later than 10 minutes past the deadline. You will also be penalized for taking a sneak peek at an exam and not taking it.
- Turn in all documents as .doc, .pdf, or .rtf files. If you have questions about how to "Save As" an .rtf in WordPerfect (or MS Works, or some other program), contact me at jrhodes@csusb.edu (you can leave a message on my office phone at 909-537-5026, but I keep limited hours there during the summer; email is a much better bet).