Welcome to Women’s Studies 4113 / English 4113. This course explores the interdisciplinary field of feminist law and literature, a topic that is taught in both literature programs and in law schools! Our analysis will be wide-ranging, from the Renaissance to today, from poems, drama, popular novels and short stories to legal commentary and court decisions. The purpose of the course is twofold: we will explore the complex relationships between literature and law to examine how women’s identity is shaped by legal narratives about race, class, ability, age and sexuality. By the end of the course, you will have an understanding of the two traditional schools of law and literature: law in literature and law as literature.

How to use this Syllabus
Check the Syllabus weekly so you don’t fall behind, and calendar your assignments, leaving enough time to hand in rough drafts for feedback, if you choose.

There are a lot of (fun and enjoyable) readings in this course. Use the lighter reading load of the first 3 weeks to get through some of the longer readings that will come mid-term, and follow advice about getting started on longer readings where it appears in your Weekly Schedule.

As always, do not turn to classmates for clarification of the assignments or the Syllabus: they did not design the course, and like you, can only guess. If you have questions contact me. I’m happy to help.

Table of Contents
I. Required materials ................................................................. 2
II. Course learner outcomes ...................................................... 2
III. My availability ................................................................. 2-3
IV. Weekly topics and materials .................................................. 3-7
V. Assignment due dates and weighting ................................. 7
VI. Comments on extensions/lateness, plagiarism, assignment formatting, and other details ............................................. 7-8
I. Required Materials

Available from the Bookstores in Thunder Bay and Orillia

- Smith, Minnie. *Is it Just?* University of Toronto Press, 2011.

Available Online at the library or via D2L CourseLink

- All other readings listed in the syllabus

II. Course Learner Outcomes

At the end of this class you will:

1. Understand the major schools of law and literature
2. Be able to connect the course topics, current events, and your lived experiences
3. Understand how dominant narratives shape supposedly objective legal reasoning
4. Understand the social role of literature that engages with legal subjects
5. Have performed literary and legal analysis
6. Have developed a critical legal studies lens, and be able to apply it to thinking about how laws are embedded in culture, and how peoples’ understanding of right and wrong is tied to dominant narratives (the metanarratives that shape our lives and understanding of our world)
7. Show detailed knowledge of the course concepts, and be able to apply them in the everyday through discussion and writing
8. Show development in your analytical capabilities

III. My Availability

I check my work email during regular office hours 8:30am-4:30pm, Mon-Fri; during very busy Administrative times I may not respond to you for up to three (3) days, but I do my best to respond within 24 hours.
I am **always available in person during my office hours**, and I welcome requests for phone calls, Facetime, or Skype. I will absolutely make time to contact you if you want to speak with me and can’t make it to my office in person.

**IV. Weekly Topics and Materials:** All materials are required, unless noted as Optional Supplementary Readings.

**Introduction**

**Wk 1 (classes start Sept. 5)**


Optional Supplementary Reading


**Part I: Law in Literature**

Questions to help you access the text, if you’re not used to doing literary analysis; you do not have to use them, and you do not need to formally answer all of them. They’re here to help you:

- If, as Nedelsky argued in Week 1, affect helps to develop good judges, jurors, and lawyers, what affect do the reading(s) produce in you? What might the legal effects of such affect be on lawyers and judges?

- Why do we use materials like poetry, plays, and novels in Women's Studies as sources of knowledge?

- What critiques does each author make about the law? What do the critiques reveal about structural violence, oppression, intersectional barriers?

- Does the author offer any solutions to the legal problems they present?

- What literary tools do the writers use to make their arguments (tone, metaphor, setting, characterization, etc.)?

- What moments stood out to you most in the reading, and why, within the context of what we’re learning in the course and your own experiences?

**Wk. 2 (Sept 11-15): Poems as Socio-legal Critique I**


**Wk 3 (Sept 18-22): Poems as Socio-legal Critique II**


**Wk. 4 (Sept 25-29): Proto-Feminist Legal Critique**


Notes, Elizabeth Cary’s *Tragedy of Mariam*. Women & Legal Narratives Resource.

Optional Supplementary Reading:

Roth, Jenny. “‘She was now disgraced’: Doris and the Critique of Law in Elizabeth Cary’s *The Tragedie of Mariam, the Faire Queene of Jewry*.” *Women’s Writing*, vol. 19, no. 4, 2012, pp. 487-506.

**Wk. 5 (October 2-6): Law versus Justice**

Smith, Minnie. *Is it Just?* University of Toronto Press, 2011.

Optional Supplementary Reading:


Questions specific to Smith’s novel to help you access the text:

- In what ways are women legally oppressed in Smith’s novel?
- What narratives (stories) does Smith use to argue that law is unjust, and what narratives does she use to support her call for justice?
• How does Smith envision justice for her characters? Is justice served by the end of the novel?

• Why do you think Smith presents us with the very different Miss Todd and Mrs. Pierce, and/or Mr. Hastings and Mr. Pierce?

• Why do you think she ends the novel with the blossoming relationship between Helen and Dick?

• What do you think the symbolic role of the different forms of masculinity and femininity is in the story?

Wk. 6 (Oct 9-13): Reading Week – Enjoy your break!

Wk. 7 (Oct 16-20): Structural Sexism in Legal Process

Optional Supplementary Reading:

Questions specific to Glaspell’s short story to help you access the text:

• What do the women notice?

• What do their observations and conclusions suggest about a legal system that did not allow women jurors? Or, in which women are under-represented in the legal field / judiciary?

Wks. 8 & 9 (Oct. 23-Nov. 3): Gender, Colonization, Class & the Law

Questions specific to Pratchett to assist your analysis:

• As a popular text (a best-selling ‘pulp’ fantasy / satire), how does Pratchett’s work fit within the law in literature milieu?

• In Equal Rites, different locations with different systems of understanding right and wrong collide: what are some examples from the text, and what, for you, were the implications of the tensions these different worldviews created?
• Why do you think Pratchett created the tension behind different ways of operating ‘according to tradition’ in the text?

• How does gender appear in relation to systems of power? Give specific examples, as well as your thinking about the significance of them.

*Law as Literature*

*Note: the Supreme Court of Canada decision, *R. v. N.S.* is long. Use the lighter reading load over the next two weeks to make your way through it so you have it done by Week 12, when we will workshop how to analyze case law using a law-as-literature lens to help prepare for your final paper. Don’t worry if it makes no sense to you at this point, we will workshop it, but you must have it read by the workshop date to begin to engage in analysis.*

**Wk. 10 (Nov 6-10): Law is Interpretation**


How to Read Case Law, Women & Legal Narratives Resource

Introductory Materials on the Study of Law, Women & Legal Narratives Resource

**Wk. 11 (Nov. 13-17): Social Locations, Judicial Attitudes, and Law**


**Wk. 12 (Nov 20-24): Practice Case Analysis: Workshop Week**

*R v N.S.*, 2012 SCC 72, [2012] 3 S.C.R.

Optional Supplementary Reading


Questions to help you begin to analyze in preparation for the Workshop:

• What stereotypes and cultural assumptions appear in the different Justices decisions?

• What ‘stories’ to the Justices tell about Canada? Veiling? Multiculturalism? Women? Sexual Assault?
• What metanarratives underlie their stories?

Wk. 13 (Nov. 27-Dec.1): The Legal Stage and its Storytelling

V. Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Weeks 1-4</th>
<th>Throughout weeks</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation Weeks 5, and 7-9</td>
<td>Throughout weeks</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation Weeks 10-11, and 13</td>
<td>Throughout weeks</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Response</td>
<td>Accepted until Friday, Sept. 29, until 11:30 am*</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law in Literature</td>
<td>Accepted until Friday, Nov. 10, until 11:30 am*</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12 Workshop Participation</td>
<td>Week 12 in class (Nov. 20-24)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law as Literature Final Paper</td>
<td>Accepted until Friday, Dec. 15, until 11:30 am*</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please hand all Assignments in on D2L under the Assignment tab. The due dates and times are the last time I will accept assignments without deducting late marks. Please note that assignments received on the due date, but after the due time, will have late marks deducted as though they are a day late.

VI. Comments on Extensions/Lateness and Plagiarism, and Other Details:

You have all the evaluated assignments listed in this Syllabus, so there will be no extensions, except for documented medical reasons.

Grades will be reduced by 3 marks every day including Saturdays and Sundays. Any work more than 7 days late will not be accepted without appropriate documentation.

Plan your time management at the beginning of term, so that you won’t find yourself struggling to meet deadlines at the last minute.

Make yourself aware of the University’s policy on plagiarism, and comply with the policy’s expectations, available at:
Please ask me any questions in relation to plagiarism, if you're unsure. Remember to cite *all* information and ideas that you get from the readings, the class lectures / discussion / presentations, outside research, including paraphrased (summarized) ideas and concepts.

I will stop marking assignments when I reach their page limit, even if that means I do not read all of your work. Edit carefully for length.

Use either MLA or APA citation style in your work. Online examples are available, so I expect to see no or very few errors in the formatting and application of in-text citations, or your Works Cited / References page. The links below will take you to instructions for each style:

MLA: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/
APA: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

**VII. Participation 30% (10% x 3)**
If you are shy, you may submit questions and comments for me to read on your behalf. You must attend class to receive your participation grade. If you miss more than two (2) classes, without required documentation, you will receive an F for participation.

**VIII. Creative Response 20%**
If you choose Journaling or a Short Story, restrict your page count to 2-3 pages.

All projects will include a Written Explanation of 3-4 pages, Arial, 12-pt-font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced.

Develop a Creative Response that you will hand in with a written, academic, explanation of how your Response connects to the concepts introduced in Weeks 1-3. Choose one of the following:

Art work (broadly defined)
Craft
Journaling your experiences reading the poems
Short Story
Scrapbook
Poetry
Dance
Film
Song
If you have an idea for another creative approach you might want to do, please clear it with me first.

*NOTE: Because we are spread over two campuses, if you create something physical, such as a craft, art, or scrapbook, please send me, to my Lakehead email account, a quick video of you holding the piece and introducing yourself, so I can see that it is yours and you have produced it. Please submit a photograph of your work to the D2L Assignments area. Thanks for your help with this. If I do not receive your video confirming that you’re not just uploading a random image that you didn’t produce, I will not be able to mark your assignment.

Your academic Written Explanation will place your creative work in the context of the concepts and readings we covered in Weeks 1-3, and will follow all usual scholarly requirements, including citations.

This assignment is in two parts: a creative piece, and the more academic Written Explanation. Each is worth 50% of the assignment, overall.

IX. Law in Literature 20%
5-6 pages, Arial, 12-pt-font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced.

Choose a common theme that addresses one aspect of legal power in two of the readings from Weeks 4-9. Analyze how the readings address the theme you have chosen. Your thesis should clearly state your theme and why it is important to the field of feminist law and literature. Be sure to take an integrative perspective. That means that you will consider more than ruler / subject, law / citizen, man / woman; you will also consider how race, class, sexuality, age, and ability are represented, and what the implications of such representations are in regards to structural legal barriers and oppressive systems.

Your paper will adhere to all scholarly conventions of formatting, citation, and argumentation.

Please, discuss your idea with me before you start your paper.

X. Week 12 Workshop Participation 10%
We will work as a large group and smaller break-out groups to develop your law-as-literature analysis in preparation for your Law as Literature paper.

XI. Law as Literature Final Paper 20%
5-6 pages, Arial, 12 pt font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced.
You will analyze the case R. v. Millar, [2008] OJ No 2330 (Sup Ct Just) using a law-as-literature analysis (as we workshoped in Week 12). You will consider how Justice McKinnon’s interpretation of the facts of the case are culturally-bound by dominant myths and stereotypes about women, men, and sexual assault, and you will use the concepts and readings we have done in the course
to back up your analysis of what McKinnon’s use of stereotypes and myths suggests about law, gendered ideas of right and wrong, power, and rights (and perhaps, thinking back to our literary authors, “justice”).

XII. Class Expectations, alongside the Student Code of Conduct

You can expect from me that:

- I will provide you with feedback on any rough drafts that I receive up to one week before the due date (multiple drafts will be accepted, happily);
- I will stick to the course outline;
- I will encourage your learning, and support you in an inclusive and intellectually dynamic environment;
- I will hand back assignments two weeks after their due date;
- I will be available during my posted office hours to discuss any aspect of the course, and to answer more general questions you may have about the university system or your program;
- I will check my work email during regular work hours (8:30 am – 4:30 pm), Monday to Friday), and will respond to your email as soon as I can during those times;
- I will do my best to give you the information you need to succeed in this course.

I will expect from you that:

- You will conduct yourself professionally;
- You contact me when you have questions about the course, the materials, your assignments, or your program;
- You will be in the classroom, ready to begin by the start of class;
- You will respect social and cultural differences. All participants have the right to hold, defend, and promote their opinion, but this right exists alongside regulations that protect all individuals' rights to education without discrimination or harassment on the basis of gender, race, religion, class, sexual orientation, ability, age, place of origin, etc. Intents to insult an individual or group of individuals on the basis of their gender, race, etc. and words or symbols that convey hatred or contempt constitute harassment and will not be tolerated. Respect for differences in political awareness and educational development is essential.
- You will read my comments on your written work, and apply my suggestions to next assignments to improve your writing throughout the course.
Appendix: Marking Rubrics for all Evaluated Work

**Participation**

**A grade:** You regularly *initiate* discussion. This means you come to class thoroughly familiar with the assigned reading(s) and you are prepared to raise questions, to open discussion, to identify topics of interest to you, and to actively engage other students in the discussion. (Obviously this does not mean monopolizing a discussion, or shutting others out, or talking for its own sake rather than to make a point about the topic under discussion).

**B grade:** You participate regularly and productively. This means coming to class prepared and willing to engage. You differ from A-grade discussants in that the latter are self-starters, who do not rely on the instructor’s questions to set the agenda for discussion.

**C grade:** You participate on a regular basis, though less frequently than a B-grade student. C-grade discussants’ participation may indicate that they are not well-prepared for class, or have not given thought to the assigned materials.

**D grade:** You contribute only infrequently to the discussion. D-grade discussants’ contributions suggest that they are not well-prepared for class, or have not given thought to the assigned materials.

**F grade:** You do not participate in class discussion. Participation is impossible if you do not attend class. Frequent absences mandate F grades. Participation that consistently contravenes your peers rights as set out in the *Ontario Human Rights Code* will also garner an F grade.

**Creative Response**

This assignment is in two parts: a creative piece, and the more academic Written Explanation. Each is worth 50% of the assignment, overall.

**Creative Piece (10 marks out of 20)**

**A (8-10):** The piece corresponds to class concepts and shows an effort beyond expectations. It is interesting, or stimulating, or thought-provoking in ways that allow clear connections to the concepts and readings of Weeks 1-3. The piece shows that the student is in command of the topic, shows originality, and enthusiasm.

**B (7):** The piece corresponds to class concepts and shows strong effort. It is interesting, or stimulating, or thought-provoking but will not provide as obvious entry into the concepts of Weeks 1-3 as A-range projects. The piece shows that the student is in command of the topic, shows originality, and enthusiasm.

**C (6):** The piece corresponds to class concepts in unclear or undeveloped ways. It is difficult to connect to the concepts and readings of Weeks 1-3 without the Written Explanation. The piece illustrates less command of the topic and less enthusiasm than B-range projects.
D (5): The piece shows some grasp of the topics and materials covered in Weeks 1-3, but not much. It is impossible to connect to the concepts of Weeks 1-3 without the Written Explanation. The piece shows little effort or engagement/enthusiasm in its production.

E (4) Near-total misunderstanding of the concepts of Weeks 1-3 are. The piece shows that the student has very little grasp of the materials or subject. The piece shows little effort or engagement/enthusiasm in its production.

F (0-3): Total misunderstanding. The piece shows that the student seems to have no grasp of the materials or concepts from Weeks 1-3.

Written Explanation (10 marks out of 20)
A+ (9-10): Near-Perfection: The Explanation clearly develops a near-irrefutable argument concisely and convincingly in its connection between the concepts and readings of Weeks 1-3 and the Creative Piece. Ideas are linked and flow clearly from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph. The argument leads clearly and inexorably to its conclusion, is stimulating to read, and shows analytical abilities well in excess of expectations for the level. There are no errors in scholarly documentation or formatting, and the work is virtually free of errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Secondary sources never stand in for the student’s own thoughts and are used intelligently to evidence the argument.

A (8): Excellent: The essay thoughtfully develops an interesting thesis that connects the concepts and readings of Weeks 1-3 with the Creative Piece; source materials are used intelligently, and not as a substitute for the student’s own thinking. The student is in command of the topic and shows some originality and enthusiasm in discussing it. The essay is well organized, convincingly argued, and clearly expressed – a pleasure to read. It is mainly free of errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and uses the conventions of scholarly documentation correctly.

B (7): Very Good: A competent, accurate treatment of the concepts and materials of Weeks 1-3 in connection with the Creative Piece. The essay is well-written and has a clear thesis. Essays may not have fully digested the material, and may lean uncritically on the readings. The organization is good and the sentences are all comprehensible. There are few errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The essay follows standard conventions of scholarly documentation.

C (6): Satisfactory: The thesis is unclear, or trivial, or undeveloped, and the connections made between the Creative Piece and the concepts and materials of Weeks 1-3 are underdeveloped. Much of the essay is summary or paraphrase, with only occasional analytical comment. There may be inaccuracies; essays may rely exclusively on quotations from the readings instead of the students’ own thoughts when making an argument. The essay is disjointed; some sentences
may be convoluted and incomprehensible. There may be mistakes in grammar, spelling and punctuation, as well as carelessness about scholarly documentation.

D (5): Poor: Has serious inaccuracies and inconsistencies. The student has some grasp of the materials and concepts from Weeks 1-3, but not much. Where sources are cited, they tend to be misused or misinterpreted. The student may express opinions, but does not support them with evidence or argument. The essay lacks coherence, is unclear, and has many errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, as well as carelessness about scholarly documentation.

E (4): Failure Grade: Near-total misunderstanding. The student has very little grasp of the materials or subject. The essay is disorganized, obscure, full of grammatical errors, and is unscholarly.

F (0-3): Failure Grade: Total misunderstanding. The student seems to have no grasp of the materials or subject. The essay is disorganized, obscure, is full of grammatical errors and is unscholarly. This grade is also given for plagiarism.

**Law in Literature AND Law as Literature**

**A+ (18-20):** Near-Perfection: The essay clearly develops a near-irrefutable argument concisely and convincingly. Ideas are linked and flow clearly from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph. The argument leads clearly and inexorably to its conclusion, is stimulating to read and shows analytical abilities well in excess of expectations for the level. There are no errors in scholarly documentation or formatting, and the work is virtually free of errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation. Secondary sources never stand in for student's own thoughts and are used intelligently to evidence the argument.

**A (16-17):** Excellent: The essay thoughtfully develops an interesting thesis; secondary source material is used intelligently, and not as a substitute for the student's own thinking. The student is in command of the topic and shows some originality and enthusiasm in discussing it. The essay is well organized, convincingly argued, and clearly expressed – a pleasure to read. It is mainly free of errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, and uses the conventions of scholarly documentation correctly.

**B (14-15):** Very Good to Good: A competent, accurate treatment of its topic. The essay is well written and has a clear thesis. Essays at the bottom of this range may not have fully digested the material, and may lean uncritically on secondary sources. The organization is good and the sentences are all comprehensible. There are few errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation. The essay follows standard conventions of scholarly documentation.

**C (12-13):** Good to Fair: A pedestrian presentation. The thesis is unclear, or trivial, or undeveloped. Much of the essay is summary or paraphrase, with only occasional analytical comment. There may be inaccuracies; essays at the bottom of this range may rely exclusively on secondary sources instead of the students' own thoughts. The essay is disjointed; some sentences may be
convoluted and incomprehensible. There may be mistakes in grammar, spelling and punctuation, as well as carelessness about scholarly documentation.

D (10-11): Poor: Has serious inaccuracies and inconsistencies. The student has some grasp of the topic, but not much. Where sources are cited, they tend to be misused or misinterpreted. The student may express opinions, but does not support them with evidence or argument. The essay lacks coherence, is unclear, and has many errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, as well as carelessness about scholarly documentation.

E (8-9): Failure Grade: Near-total misunderstanding. The student has very little grasp of the materials or subject. The essay is disorganized, obscure, full of grammatical errors and is unscholarly.

F (0-7): Failure Grade: Total misunderstanding. The student seems to have no grasp of the materials or subject. The essay is disorganized, obscure, is full of grammatical errors and is unscholarly. This grade is also given for plagiarism.

**Week 12 Workshop**

A grade: Your input makes it clear that you have read and tried to engage with the Supreme Court decision in its entirety. You have brought your notes about the case, and you have done preliminary work to connect your notes about the case to law-as-literature concepts you have learned up to Week 12. You initiate discussions in the workshop and show leadership capabilities in your group.

B grade: Your input makes it clear that you have read and tried to engage with the Supreme Court decision in its entirety. Your preparedness in terms of notes and connections to law-as-literature concepts will be less developed than that of an A-range student. You participate regularly and productively in your group and with the class.

C grade: You participate on a regular basis, though less frequently than a B-grade student. C-grade workshoppers may indicate that they are not well-prepared for the workshop, or have not given much thought to the assigned materials.

D grade: You contribute only infrequently to the workshop. D-grade workshoppers indicate that they are not well-prepared for class, or have not given thought to the assigned materials.

F grade: You do not participate in the workshop. Participation is impossible if you do not attend class.