Course Description

English 208 studies texts by women writers from a range of time periods and samples many kinds of writing: prose fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama, and graphic literature. Texts are drawn from writers in the British Isles and North America; this focus allows us to trace connections among women writers and consider the changing social structures and literary traditions shaping their circumstances. We will consider a number of inter-related issues: What does it mean to be a woman according to this text, this writer, this era? How does gender enable, hinder, or define the work of the writer? What subject matter does the writer address and with what intimacy or authority? We will explore gender as one among multiple intersecting and interacting social, cultural, and economic identities.

Proposed Texts:
Readings will include prose fiction by Toni Morrison, Sylvia Plath and Ursula LeGuin; plays by Marie Clements and Caryl Churchill; poetry by Eavan Boland, Joy Harjo, and Natasha Trethewey; graphic literature by Jillian Tamaki and Aminder Dhaliwal; as well as selected criticism, theory and commentary by women theorists, critics, and creative writers including Wollstonecraft, Butler, and Hill-Collins.

Proposed Assignments:
Two essays; Four reading reports; Final exam