This course will examine nineteenth and early twentieth-century American women's fiction in terms of changing configurations of the "feminine self" and of feminine agency and voice. Its focus will be historical and theoretical, as well as literary, and it will examine texts by women from a wide range of ethnic groups. We will look at mid-nineteenth century texts which both maintain and critique women's traditional sphere, later nineteenth-century texts which reconfigure domesticity and transform language, and twentieth-century texts which depict the struggles of female characters for voice and identity as they face modernity. As the predominant stereotype for women changed from the "True Woman" to the "New Woman," do writers of fiction show female characters that find voice, identity, "subjectivity"? Or do women writers insist instead that (to borrow a phrase from Luce Irigaray) "any theory of the 'subject' has always been appropriated by the 'masculine'?" And how does race and racial identity figure into these conflicting and shifting paradigms of feminine identity?

I. READING

Books (Available at the bookstore)
Fanny Fern, *Ruth Hall & Other Writings* (1855)
Harriet Wilson, *Our Nig* (1859)
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening and Other Stories* (1889-1900)
Frances Harper, *Iola Leroy* (1892)
Zitkala-Sa, *American Indian Stories* (1900-1915)
Willa Cather, *The Song of the Lark* (1915)
Jessie Fauset, *Plum Bun* (1929)
Humishuma (Mourning Dove), *Cogewea* (1927)
Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)
Jade Snow Wong, *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1945)
*Please note: all books for this course have also been placed on reserve at the library*

Other Materials (Course Packet #   , Wordsmith, 426 E. Main Street)
Sui Sin Far (Edith Eaton), "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of a Eurasian," "In the Land of the Free," "The Sing Song Woman," "Mrs. Spring Fragrance," "The Inferior Woman," "Its Wavering Image" (1898-1912)
Maria Christina Mena, "The Vine-Leaf" (1914), "John of God, the Water-Carrier" (1913), "The Gold Vanity Set" (1913)
Nina Otero-Warren, "Asking for the Bride," and "The Field of Crosses" (1936)
Maria Herrera-Sobek, Introduction to *Mexican Village*

II. READING SCHEDULE

**Unit One: Establishing the Image of the True Woman**
- Sept. 3: Course Introduction
- Sept. 5: Creation and Critique of the Domestic Saint
  Fanny Fern, *Ruth Hall* (pp.13-134)
- Sept. 10: *Ruth Hall* (Con't)
  *Ruth Hall* (134-211)

Martha Cutter, "Language and Feminine Subjectivity in American Women's History, 1850-1930."

- Sept. 12: African American Perspectives on the Domestic Saint
  Harriet Wilson, Our Nig
- Sept. 17: Our Nig (Con't)

**Unit Two: The Image Cracks**

- Sept. 19: Revolting Women
- Sept. 24: Racial and Sexual Identities at the turn into the Twentieth Century
  Kate Chopin, The Awakening
- Sept. 26: Voices of Subversion?
  Kate Chopin, "Elizabeth Stock's One Story," "La Belle Zoraide," "Désirée's Baby"
- Oct. 1: Resisting the Silencing of Race
  Frances E.W. Harper, Iola Leroy
- Oct 3: Iola Leroy (Con't)
- Oct. 8: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of feminine identities

**Unit Three: Racial Perspectives on Feminine Stereotypes**

- Oct. 10: Zitkala-Sa's Autobiographical Writings
  Zitkala-Sa, "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "The School Days of an Indian Girl," "An Indian Teacher Among Indians"
- Oct. 15: Zitkala-Sa's Fiction
- Oct. 17: Co-Authorship and "Minority" Discourse
  Mourning Dove, Cogewea: The Half-Blood
- Oct. 22: Race, Racing, and Cultural Identity
  Mourning Dove, Cogewea: The Half-Blood (Con't)
- Oct. 24: Border Identities in Asian American Fiction
  Sui Sin Far (Edith Eaton), "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of a Eurasian," "In the Land of the Free," "The Sing Song Woman," Mrs. Spring Fragrance," "The Inferior Woman," "Its Wavering Image"
• Oct. 29: Cultural and Sexual Indoctrination
  Jade Snow Wong, Fifth Chinese Daughter
• Oct. 31: Resistance to ideologies of race and gender?

Unit Four: The New Woman, Race, and Feminine Identity

• Nov. 5: Willa Cather and Stereotypes of Femininity
  Cather, The Song of the Lark
• Nov. 7: Willa Cather and "Women's" Art
• Nov. 12: The New Woman and the True Woman in Jessie Fauset's Fiction
  Fauset, Plum Bun
• Nov. 14: Passing, Language, and Racial Discourses in Plum Bun
• Nov. 19: Ethnic Discourses: Cather and Fauset
• Nov. 21: Racial and Feminine Identities in Early Mexican American Women's Writing
  Maria Christina Mena, "The Vine-Leaf," "John of God, the Water-Carrier," "The Gold Vanity Set";
  Nina Otero-Warren, "Asking for the Bride," and "The Field of Crosses"
• Nov. 26, 28: Thanksgiving Break (No Class; Work on Final Paper!)
• Dec. 3: Beyond Stereotypes? Zora Neale Hurston's Fiction
  Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God
• Dec. 5: Silence, Voice, and Vision in Their Eyes Were Watching God
  Missy Dehn Kubitschek, "’Tuh de Horizon and Back’: The Female Quest in Their Eyes Were Watching God,”
• Dec. 10: Representations of Mexican American Identity
  Josephine Niggli, "The Plaza of the Viceroy's," "The Avenue of the Illustrious Men"
• Dec. 12: Course Conclusion: The Meaning of "Ethnicity"

III. REQUIREMENTS

A) Class Participation (10%). This class will be centered on discussion of texts by students, and as such it necessitates that all students participate in class on a regular basis. Class participation is a requirement for successful completion of this course. In preparation for our discussions, I expect you to complete all of the primary reading assignments on time, as well as any secondary essays I assign. Attending class is also helpful if you wish to earn this 10% of your grade.

B) Response Paragraphs (15%). From time to time I will require you to prepare for class discussion by writing a brief response to a topic I or a student has raised. These responses must be typed. If appropriate, I may xerox some of them for class discussion.

C) Class Presented Paper (25%) (6-8 pages) (See handout).

D) Final paper (50%): Students are required to write a final seminar paper. This will be due on Dec. 18, by 5:00.
   You can use your class presented paper as a basis for your longer paper (15-20 pages), or work on an entirely different project (10-20 pages). This paper should involve primary as well as secondary sources.