

Goodreads blurb for *The Woman of Colour*

Social media has impacted not only how we share and communicate, but also how we read. Many of you are likely familiar with Goodreads, an online platform through which readers can catalogue, share, rate, and discover books. As of June 2019, Goodreads had 90 million members who have catalogued over 2.6 billion books and written over 90 million reviews. Many people (including myself and, perhaps, some of you!) use Goodreads to keep track of their reading habits, share books with others, and learn about new books or authors.

While we will think critically about social media's impact on reading culture (e.g., how platforms like Goodreads might encourage capitalist or consumerist attitudes towards reading), an arguable benefit of Goodreads is its exposure of lesser-known, often marginalized authors and scholars. Scholars and activists have begun to flood Goodreads with ratings and reviews of relatively-unheard of authors and works to introduce them to a wider readership.

For this assignment, you will **compose a Goodreads-style blurb** of the anonymously-published (and still understudied) novella *The Woman of Colour*. This assignment will help you practice several skills that you will use throughout the semester (and hopefully as lifelong readers!): writing about a novel, incorporating specific textual evidence, and thinking critically about your reading experience. It will also help you practice writing for a more public, less academic audience and raise awareness of a text that more people might want to be aware of.

Your Goodreads blurb should be "short and sweet" (**between 300-500 words**) and should consist of the following:

- 1) A brief summary of the novella's premise (NOT a plot summary – some readers get extremely grumpy about spoilers). Where does it start off? What arc(s) does the book trace?
- 2) A short discussion of the major themes of the novella – what topics and ideas should readers expect to find?
- 3) A brief "review" and evaluation of your reading experience. Did the novella hold your interest? If so, why? If not, why not? What did you like or not about the writing style? Here, be sure to give specific examples from the text.

You will submit a draft of the review to me on **F 9/20 (via email, before class)**. I will quickly return the review to you with comments so that you can post it to Goodreads **before 11:59 pm EST on T 9/24**.

After you post your review, you will also be required to **respond to two other reviews on Goodreads** (your classmates' or others') with respectful comments and questions about their analyses. Do this **by F 9/27 before class**.

A few notes on Goodreads: If you do not already have a Goodreads account, you will need to create one. You may use your Siena email address, or you may choose to create an email address specifically for this purpose. You may also use a pseudonym if you do not wish to have your name in public (this is totally fine; just be sure to tell me what the name is so that I can give you credit for the review and your comments). For

privacy reasons, I'd advise you to use your **first name and last initial**. Remember that your reviews and comments on each other's reviews will be public.

Details

- There are three due dates for this assignment:
 - F 9/20: Draft of review due to me (before class, via email)
 - T 9/24 by 11:59 pm: Post your review to Goodreads
 - F 9/27: Respond to two other Goodreads posts
- This assignment is worth **25 points**:
 - Review (20 points): 5 points for summary (#1 above), 5 points for theme discussion (#2), 10 points for review and evaluation (#3)
 - Responses (5 points): 2.5 points for each response