

From *Tess* to #MeToo: Narratives of Sexual Violence

ENGL 384:09

Fall 2020

MWF 1:20-2:20 pm

Contact Information

Dr. Shannon Draucker (she/her/hers)

Email: sdraucker@siena.edu

Office Hours: T 2:30-5 pm

Th 2:30-5 pm

& by appointment

all office hours on Zoom this semester; link to Dr. D's meeting room [here](#)



Images: Oxford World's Classics, Variety, Time

Course description & learning goals

Welcome! In this class, we will study how writers and artists represent the trauma of sexual assault. From Harriet Jacobs's 1861 *Incidents of the Life in a Slave Girl*, to Thomas Hardy's 1891 novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, to memoirs by campus rape survivors, to new collections of #MeToo-era poetry, writers have long sought to convey the horrors of sexual violence. Informed by intersectional feminist and antiracist theoretical frameworks, we will consider a range of sensitive, troubling, and complex – but nonetheless crucial – questions, such as: how do writers represent rape? How do writers put into words experiences so deeply rooted in the body? What literary techniques do authors draw on to represent sexual violence? How do we read such narratives – and what are our duties and obligations in doing so? How do survivors tell their stories?

These are just a few of the questions that will motivate our readings and discussions in this course. Our responsible consideration of these ideas will require all of us to draw upon our most fundamental close reading, critical thinking, and communication skills. Successful completion of this course means you will:

- Improve your abilities as a close reader of literary texts and theoretical works about gender, sexuality, and race.

- Develop as a writer who recognizes the importance of revision and engages meaningfully with feedback.
- Become an active participant in class discussions by respectfully listening to and engaging with your peers' ideas.
- Ponder deeply the connections between the material in this course and the "real world." How does analyzing representations of sexual violence help us to more meaningfully approach the problem of sexual violence in our society? How might we turn these academic conversations into concrete activist practices?

Required Texts

The following course texts are available at the Siena Bookstore and online. I encourage you to order from Bookshop.org so that your purchases will support independent bookstores during this difficult time. Many of these novels can also be purchased at local independent bookstores such as the Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza, Market Block Books, or Dove & Hudson. You are required to use *these editions* and bring them to class on the days we are discussing them. Please consult with me if you have difficulty accessing one of these course texts.

Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. (Oxford / ISBN: 9780199537051)

Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (Vintage / 978-1400033416)

Sapphire, *Push: A Novel* (Knopf / ISBN-13: 978-0679766759)

Carmen Maria Machado, *In the Dream House* (Graywolf Press / 978-1644450031)

Course Schedule

Please note: readings are listed on the day they are due. Readings labeled “C” are on our Canvas site. Items listed in **bold** are things you need to hand in; items listed in **bold with an asterisk (*)** are graded assignments .

This schedule is subject to change as needed. Updates will be provided in class and via email.

Unit 1: Introductions, theories, and frameworks

- M 8/24: Introductions & syllabus
- W 8/26: Read syllabus carefully & email Dr. D with questions (C)
Read Siena College, “Sexual Violence Defined” (C)
Watch Kimberlé Crenshaw, “The Urgency of Intersectionality” (C)
- F 8/28: Read your assigned framework (one of the following):
Andrea Dworkin, from *Our Blood* (C)
Catharine MacKinnon, from *Women’s Lives, Men’s Laws* (C)
Linda Martín Alcoff, from *Rape and Resistance* (C)
Kate Manne, “Himpathy,” “Locker Room Talk,” & “Misogynoir in Action,” from *Down Girl* (C)
Angela Davis, “We Do Not Consent: Violence Against Women in a Racist Society” (C)
Latoya Peterson, “The Not-Rape Epidemic” (C)
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, from *We Should All Be Feminists* (C)
Jennifer Patterson, from *Queering Sexual Violence* (C)

Unit 2: Rape in the Nineteenth Century

- M 8/31: **News article analysis due* (by 1:20 pm, submit via Canvas)**
Lucy Stone, “Crimes Against Women” (C)
Lucy Stone, “Pardoning the Crime of Rape” (C)
- W 9/2: Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, chs. i-vi (pp. 13-54)
- F 9/4: *Tess*, chs. vii-xi (pp. 55-83)
- M 9/7: *Tess*, chs. xii-xv (pp. 83-113)
- W 9/9: *Tess*, chs. xvi-xxiv (pp. 113-167)
- F 9/11: *Tess*, chs. xxv-xxxI (pp. 168-218)

M 9/14: *Tess*, chs. xxxii-xxxvii (pp. 219-273)

W 9/16: *Tess*, chs. xxxviii-xliv (pp. 274-322)

F 9/18: *Tess* chs. xlv-lii (pp. 323-385)

M 9/21: *Tess*, FINISH (pp. 386-end)

Unit 3: Slavery and sexual violence

W 9/23: **Close reading essay due (before class, via Canvas)***

F 9/25: Saidiya Hartman, "Seduction and the Ruses of Power" (C)
Syreeta McFadden, "How Did It All Begin?" (C)

M 9/28: From Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (C)
From Elizabeth Keckley, *Behind the Scenes* (C)

W 9/30: Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, beginning to 51

F 10/2: *Beloved*, 53-100

M 10/5: **Optional Comments on Comments for close reading essay due*
(before class, via Canvas)**
Beloved, 101-158

W 10/7: *Beloved*, 159-195

F 10/9: *Beloved*, 196-247

****Weeks of 10/12 & 10/19: Meet with Dr. D about Representing Rape essays (sign up [here](#); draft of at least 2 pages due at least ONE HOUR before your scheduled time)****

M 10/12: *Beloved*, 248-277

W 10/14: *Beloved*, 278-end

F 10/16: *Beloved* wrap-up discussion

Unit 4: Narrating incest

M 10/19: Sapphire, *Push*, beginning to 97

W 10/21: Sapphire, *Push*, 98 to end

F 10/23: **Midterm paper (Representing Rape) due (before class, via Canvas)***

Unit 5: #MeToo and Its Literary Aftermath

- M 10/26: Kristen Roupenian, "Cat Person" (C)
Elisa Schappell, "Re: Your Rape Story" (C)
- W 10/28: Tarana Burke, "#MeToo was started for Black and Brown women and girls. They're still being ignored." (C)
Watch Tarana Burke, "Me Too is a Movement, not a Moment" (TED talk) (C)
Aishah Shahidah Simmons and Farah Tanis, "Better Off Dead: Black Women Speak to the United Nations CERD Committee" (C)
- F 10/30: Audre Lorde, "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action" (C)
Chanel Miller, "Emily Doe's Victim Impact Statement" (in *Know My Name*) (C)
Christine Blasey Ford, Opening Statement for Senate Hearing (C)
Watch video from Dr. Claire Draucker (Indiana University School of Nursing): "Storying Sexual Violence: Narrative Therapy and Clinical Practice" (C)
- M 11/2: **Optional Comments on Comments for midterm essay (Representing Rape) due!* (before class, via Canvas)**
Claire Schwartz, "& The Truth Is, I Have No Story" (C)
Elissa Bassist, "Why I Didn't Say No" (C)
Brandon Taylor, "Spectator" (C)
Roxane Gay, from *Hunger* (C)
- W 11/4: ****VOTE ON 11/3!****
June Jordan, "Poem About My Rights" (C)
Patricia Lockwood, "Rape Joke" (C)
Rupi Kaur, from *milk and honey* (C)
Maria Hummel, "Letter to My Blackout" (C)
Yrsa Daley-Ward, "Bone" (C)
Jericho Brown, "Duplex"
Jericho Brown, "Layover"
- F 11/6: Listen to Dasan Ahanu, "Can I" (C)
Watch FreeQuency, "I'm Sorry" (C)
Watch Halsey, "A Story Like Mine" (C)
- M 11/9: Carmen Maria Machado, *In the Dream House*, beginning to 86

Jennifer Patterson, from *Queering Sexual Violence* (C)

W 11/11: *In the Dream House*, 87-161

F 11/13: *In the Dream House*, 183-end

Unit 6: Visual art, performance art, music

****Week of 11/16: Meet with Dr. D about final paper/project (outline due at least one hour before meeting; sign up [here](#))****

M 11/16: Nan Goldin, "Nan One Month After Being Battered"
Emma Sulkowicz, "Carry That Weight"
Sue Williams, "Irresistible"

W 11/18: *Last class*
Bikini Kill, "Liar"
Tori Amos, "Me and a Gun"
TLC, "His Story"
Ke\$ha, "Praying"
Lady Gaga, "Till It Happens to You"
John Legend and Kelly Clarkson, "Baby It's Cold Outside (2019 remix)"

T 11/24: **Final paper/project due (via Canvas, by 11:59 pm EST)***

Last day to turn in all outstanding work for this class. I will not give any credit to work submitted after 11:59 pm EST.