

**BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND MODERN LANGUAGES**

**ENGLISH 353
IMAGES OF MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS IN FILM AND LITERATURE**

**Dr. Renee H. Shea
Spring 2004**

Office: MLK 0228

Office Hours:

Monday and Friday by appointment
Tuesday 2- 5
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Contact Information:

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Course Description

This course is a study of the images of mothers and daughters in literature (poetry, memoir, fiction, and drama) and film. Students will analyze such diverse depictions as motherhood as transformation, mother as saint, the absent mother, matriarchal power, separation from the mother, and the daughter as mother by writers and filmmakers in the past century. These works will be studied individually for their literary merit and stylistic concerns as well as historical context and political viewpoints.

Required Texts

House of the Spirits by Isabel Allende
The Road from Coorain by Jill Kerr Conway
Breath, Eyes, Memory by Edwidge Danticat
Mother Love by Rita Dove
Autobiography of My Mother by Jamaica Kincaid
Tangled Vines edited by Lyn Lifkin
Zenzele by J. Nozipo Maraire
The Joy Luck Club (or) *Bonesetter's Daughter* by Amy Tan
Of Woman Born by Adrienne Rich

Films (need not be purchased)

White Oleander
Daughters of the Dust
Daughter of Danang

Student Outcomes

Upon completion of English 353, students will be able to

1. Read literature and view film critically
2. Place these works in historical, social, political, and economic context with emphasis on the depiction of mothers and daughters in the society being depicted
3. Relate individual authors and works to feminist critical theory
4. Write and correctly document research papers
5. Conduct and analyze interviews
6. Write reflective personal essays

Teaching Modes

This course will be taught as a combination seminar and book group with the instructor acting as facilitator. Students are expected to participate in class discussions, view films outside of class, and develop projects that involve the community.

Course Grade

Class attendance and participation	15%
Critical Analysis	30%
Community Project	30%
Personal Essay	25%

As with any seminar course, **attendance and participation** are essential to its success. Anyone missing more than two classes without an acceptable and documented explanation will lose one letter in the final course grade.

In the first essay, students will analyze “the image of _____” in a minimum of three works, only two of which may be from those read for class. This essay will be documented with a minimum of four secondary sources.

(Length: ~ 1500 words)

(Due: 18 March)

The project may be done individually or in groups and will be developed through a series of steps from proposal to planning to final paper. Students will engage at least one other person in response to a literary work – a poem, passage from fiction, excerpt from memoir – and analyze that response. For instance, Jamaica Kincaid’s “Girl” might be presented to the student’s own mother and her response compared to that of the student. Or, a student might do a writer’s workshop that involves several generations looking at a poem about mothers and daughters. A group of students might work with seniors in a

community center to generate writing remembrances of their own mothers. The possibilities are wide and deep! But keep in mind that the results must be analyzed – and the whole project written up.

(Length: This will vary but about ~2500 words)

(Due: 29 April)

The final essay will be a reflective piece, a type of memoir, exploring the role being a mother and/or daughter plays in the student's own identity. It will be written through a process of several drafts (and peer critiques), and the final essay will include consideration of the films and literature studied in class as part of the paper. This may be submitted as a conventional essay or more of a multimedia presentation.

(Length: ~2500 words)

(Due: 13 May at the time of class)

