

ENGLISH 3513
Women and Literature: Spring 2014
Counts as an upper division Humanities credit!
Professor: Becky Hagenston

MWF 9:00 – 9:50



Susan Glaspell in Greenwich Village.
Berg Collection/New York Public Library.

A foul murder was committed Saturday night near Medford, fifteen miles southwest of Indianola. A farmer named Hossack was struck over the head and killed by unknown parties, at his home a few miles out from Medford. . . Mr. Hossack was about 60 years of age and leaves a wife and large family.

--Susan Glaspell, in the *Des Moines Daily News*, December 3, 1900

This is a small class for students who are interested not just in women's literature but also in **true crime**. The play *Trifles* and the story "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" are both based on actual murders, which we'll be reading about.

We'll also explore questions like these:

- Why did so many farmers' wives end up in mental hospitals?
- What was the fate of a Victorian governess who never married?
- Why were Victorians so shocked by *Jane Eyre*?
- How did Rochester's first wife try to cast a voodoo spell on him?
- How much of *A Raisin in the Sun* is based on Lorraine Hansberry's real experiences?

Texts:

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Dover Thrift Edition)

Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Norton Critical Edition)

Natasha Trethewey, *Beyond Katrina*

Susan Glaspell, *Trifles*

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

Paula Vogel, *How I Learned to Drive*

"Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" by Joyce Carol Oates

Personal essays by Dorothy Allison and Alice Walker

Please contact Becky Hagenston at bhagenston@english.msstate.edu with any questions.