

Course Syllabus  
Midcoast Senior College  
Fall I 2022

Title: Mid-Century Modern: English Women Writers from 1945 to 1960

Instructor: Charisse Gendron ([gendroncharisse@gmail.com](mailto:gendroncharisse@gmail.com))

Description: Coming between the monumental experimental writers of English high modernism (Lawrence, Woolf) and the writers who again disrupted the novel form with an injection of feminism (Fay Weldon, Angela Carter), the four midcentury writers under consideration—Nancy Mitford, Ivy Compton-Burnett, Barbara Pym, and Barbara Comyns—tend to be overlooked by the academic and literary communities. Belonging to no particular artistic movement, their critically acclaimed books—insouciant, ruthless, understated, or ingenuous—deserve to be appreciated by a wider audience. To this end, the course will reintroduce these writers as masters of style and keen observers of the status quo.

Schedule:

September 15

*The Pursuit of Love* (1945), by Nancy Mitford, chapters 1-11

September 22

*The Pursuit of Love*, chapters 12-21

September 29

*Manservant and Maidservant* (1947), by Ivy Compton-Burnett, chapters 1-5

October 6

*Manservant and Maidservant*, chapters 6-13

October 13

*Excellent Women* (1952), by Barbara Pym, chapters 1-14

October 20

*Excellent Women*, chapters 15-27

October 27

*The Vet's Daughter* (1959), by Barbara Comyns, chapters 1-11

November 3

*The Vet's Daughter*, chapters 12-20

Texts:

*The Pursuit of Love*, by Nancy Mitford. Paperback \$14.95 from Barnes and Nobel

(<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/pursuit-of-love-nancy-mitford/1100271553?ean=9780307740816>). ISBN-13: 9780307740816. Publisher: Knopf Doubleday.

Publication date: 08/10/2010.

Manservant and Maidservant, by Ivy Compton-Burnett, Diane Johnson (Introduction). Paperback \$18.95 from Barnes and Nobel (<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/manservant-and-maidservant-ivy-compton-burnett/1100013950?ean=9780940322639>). ISBN-13: 9780940322639. Publisher: New York Review Books. Publication date: 02/28/2001.

Excellent Women, by Barbara Pym, A. N. Wilson (Introduction). Paperback (Reprint) \$16.00 from Barnes and Nobel (<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/excellent-women-barbara-pym/1101076224?ean=9780143104872>). ISBN-13: 9780143104872. Publisher: Penguin Publishing Group. Publication date: 12/26/2006.

The Vet's Daughter, by Barbara Comyns, Kathryn Davis (Introduction). Paperback \$15.95 from Barnes and Nobel (<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-vets-daughter-barbara-comyns/1000359700?ean=9781590170298>). ISBN-13: 9781590170298. Publisher: New York Review Books. Publication date: 04/30/2003.