LITTLE WOMEN

Summer 2020

**First Class: July 9**

*“More than a rousing coming-of age saga, Alcott’s rendering of four sisters making their way in the turbulent Civil War years, addresses tensions equally relevant today—social responsibility vs. self-absorption, for example; money, gender and power; independent vs. prescribed thinking, and, of course, the right of women to live autonomous lives.”*

1. **5:45 Welcome:**

1. **Course website** [**http://www.susannedumbleton.com**](http://www.susannedumbleton.com) **and Zoom site**

**Course Energy : Advise on what should be added to website.**

**Zoom etiquette**

1. **Introductions**

Why interested? What questions do you bring?

1. **“Arc of the Course:” Syllabus ( 1-2-3-4-5)**
   1. **Week One: Characters and Setting (using chapters 1-8).**
   2. **Week Two: Dilemmas, Choices, and Growing Individuation (using chapters 9-23).**
   3. **Week Three: The 2019 Film: Money, Woman, Power, Autonomy, Imagination, Aesthetic**
   4. **Week Four: Reaching to Meet their Potential while Accepting their Limits (using chapters 13-21).**
   5. **Week Five: Alcott’s “Compromise”: Happiness, Success, and Identity (using chapters 22-33).**

1. ***Little Women* as an Influence**
2. **6:00 BACKGROUND**

**Biographical:**

New England 1832-1888

Father’s Ideas: (Bronson Alcott): Transcendentalism; Utopianism; Extreme

Vegetarianism; “little women,” Ultimately personally irresponsible

Mother’s Ideas: (Abba May) Abolitionism; Women’s Suffrage; Social Service; Marriage

Instability: Financial duress; The constant moves—then to Orchard House

Pilgrim’s Progress:

**The Period’s Existing Writing:**

The Novel:

Essays: Ralph Waldo Emerson; Henry Thoreau; Margaret Fuller et al

Oratory: Frederick Douglass et al

Creativity and pushing against the norms: Mark Twain,

**6:30 THE COMING OF THE BOOK:**

**Realities**: Money – father producing none and daughters restricted

**Alcott’s Earlier Writing:**

**Part One: 1868**

**Part Two: 1869**

Meeting the Characters: Chapters One: “Playing Pilgrims”; Two: “A Merry Christmas” ; Four: “Burdens”

**Seminar Options: Characters and Setting**

Meg and Amy (3); Jo and Beth (3); Marmee (3) ; Laurie

Hannah; Aunt March; Mr. Laurence

1. What is your overall take on the characters as you meet them in the early chapters?
2. What do you want to be sure everyone in the group understands about them?
3. What questions do you have about them?

**6:45-6:55 BREAK**

**6:55-7:10 CHARACTER Break-Out Rooms:**

**7:15-7:40 Understanding the Scene**: Chapter Five “Being Neighborly; Six: “Beth Finds the Palace Beautiful; Seven “Amy’s Valley of Humiliation”; and Eight: ”Jo Meets Apollyon.”

**7:44-7:45 CHARGE FOR NEXT WEEK**: CHOOSE ISSUES you’d like to explore