DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for “A Room of One’s Own,” chapters 1-3

1) How does Woolf use physical spaces, and her narrator’s movement through them, to advance her “argument”?

2) Can you describe Woolf’s style of sentence writing? How do the poetic techniques of imagery and metaphor contribute to her essay?

3) What is the significance of World War I in this essay?

4) How does Woolf account for women’s poverty? For the absence of women’s history?

5) What does Woolf mean by “patriarchy”?

6) What is Woolf’s attitude toward anger? How does this relate to her own writing style?

7) In the questions above, I have referred to Woolf? Who is the “I” in her essay?

8) What does the fictional professor add? What does the story of Judith Shakespeare add?

9) What does she mean by “genius”? Why has there been no woman Shakespeare?

10) What lines made you laugh?

11) With which statements did you agree? Disagree? How does your own historical situation affect your responses?

12) What are the fundamental changes that have taken place between Shakespeare’s time and Woolf’s? Between Woolf’s and ours?

13) Does Woolf want to be an “insider”? Does she want women to be “insiders”?

14) How does she illustrate the connection between material conditions, sensations, and the psyche or subjectivity? Where does she locate the soul?

15) What corrodes an artist’s confidence? How is this gendered?