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# ENG 210: Foundations of Literary Study I

Spring Semester 2019

A 118 Wells Hall, MW 4:10-5:30

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If printed, please recycle this syllabus at the end of the semester.

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### INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

*INSTRUCTOR:* Christine Peffer

*OFFICE HOURS:* Thursdays, 10-12. All other times by appointment.

*OFFICE LOCATION:* C711 Wells Hall

*CONTACT INFO:* [pefferch@msu.edu](mailto:pefferch@msu.edu) (allow up to 24 hours for a response)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

ENG 210 is a **reading- and writing-intensive course** that introduces students to strategies and tools used for literary analysis and interpretation. The course will focus on interpreting literary texts in a variety of different forms—prose fiction, poetry, drama, and graphic narrative—by using a practice of close reading, and by attending to the different conventions of genre and form.

In order to focus our investigations, we will consider how our texts invite questions of what it means to be human. What is a human? What factors shape our understanding of the concept? Who gets to be human, and who decides? How many ways of being human are there? Is the creation of art a uniquely human enterprise? Relatedly, how does *dehumanization* occur in our texts? Who is dehumanized, and who benefits from another's dehumanization? Some of our texts begin to prod at these questions by depicting the (non)humanness of strange beings like monsters, zombies, swamp creatures. How do we distinguish ourselves from such lifeforms? What happens when the gap between us and them seems to vanish, or becomes fuzzy? Still other texts on our list will consider vectors along which dehumanization takes place—gender, race, sexuality, socioeconomic status—and how dehumanization is used as a tool to reinforce interlocking systems of oppression.

### COURSE GOALS

1. Students will gain a deeper understanding of what elements shape a literary text, and a familiarity with texts composed in a variety of forms: prose fiction, poetry, drama, and the graphic narrative.
2. Students will gain an understanding of how literature can (re)present different perspectives, cultures, experiences, and ways of knowing.
3. Students will develop skills in critical thinking to analyze texts and thereby better understand text-based literary interpretation: that is, the idea that texts have different, and often shifting meanings.
4. Students will develop an approach to written argumentation that begins with inquiry (asking good questions), and is built upon textual evidence and a method of close reading.
5. Students will learn to use contexts of genre and form to better understand written and visual texts.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein*.

Whitehead, Colson. *Zone One*.

Holbrook, Susan. *How to Read (And Write About) Poetry*.

McKibbens, Rachel. *blud*.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*.

Williams, Tennessee. *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Moore, Alan, Stephen Bissette, and John Totleben. *Saga of the Swamp Thing: Vol II*.

Tamaki, Mariko and Jillian Tamaki. *Skim*.

\* Texts listed in assigned reading order

### **NOTE ON ALTERNATE EDITIONS:**

You are not required to purchase any specific editions of the assigned texts above, although I strongly recommend hard copies as opposed to digital or Kindle copies. The MSU Bookstore will have copies available of each, but you can often order alternate editions online for much cheaper. Any assigned readings that do not appear on this list will be made available to you on D2L.

### **TRIGGER WARNING:**

The texts assigned in this course are meant to challenge you, and to offer you space to deeply consider your place in the larger world, as well as to engage openly with your peers in pursuit of shared understanding. As a result of confronting challenging texts, you might encounter material that you disagree with, find offensive, or find difficult to engage with for a variety of reasons, whether those reasons are personal, experiential, cultural, etc. My intent in assigning such material is to foreground the complexities of lived experience and to provide space for a multitude of voices to be heard, as opposed to eliminating them from our shared cultural understanding.

A number of texts assigned for this course include graphic, sensitive, and even triggering material (including abuse, rape, and suicide). Though such material is not gratuitous, it is nonetheless explicit. Should any student want to talk about which texts will include such material ahead of time, please contact me directly or come into office hours at any time throughout the semester. No questions asked.

## **ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:**

\* ALL assignments should be submitted to their corresponding drop box on D2L by 9 a.m. on the due date. Assignments must be submitted as a .docx or .pdf file. Pages is NOT compatible with D2L; if I can't open the file by the time due, the assignment is late.

\* Completion of ALL major writing assignments and the discussion lead required to pass the course.

\* More detailed assignment sheets for each of the following will be posted to D2L.

### **PRÉCIS: 50 pts**

Before embarking on the two close reading papers you will write this semester, you will complete a short writing assignment that will help you firm up the skills you will need to write the longer essays. You will write a 125-175 word précis (a specific kind of summary—we'll talk about this in class) of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and you will draw three inferences about the text (again—we'll discuss this).

Précis due: Wednesday, Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>

*CLOSE READING PAPER DRAFTS (x2): 50 pts each*

For both of your two close reading papers, you will turn in a rough draft and will bring a copy to class for a draft workshop. You may choose to bring a hard copy of your rough draft, or a laptop from which your workshop partner can access a digital copy. These rough drafts should be complete (3-4 pages) and will be workshopped by one or two of your classmates. 25 pts will be awarded for turning complete drafts in on time, and 25 pts will be awarded for participating in the workshop for a total of 50.

Paper 1 draft due: 9 a.m. Monday, Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>

Paper 2 draft due: 9 a.m. Monday, Mar. 11<sup>th</sup>

*CLOSE READING PAPERS (x2): 100 pts each*

You will write two short close reading papers this semester. These papers will be 3-4 pages in length, analyzing the significance of a short (1-3 sentence) passage from any of the texts we've read up to that point, discussing any of the following: characterization, voice, tone, symbolism, metaphors/similes, descriptive phrases, etc. See detailed assignment sheet and grading rubric in the Appendices section.

Paper 1 final copy due: 9 a.m. Monday, Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>

Paper 2 final copy due: 9 a.m. Wednesday, Mar. 20<sup>th</sup>

*SEMINAR PAPER STRUCTURAL OUTLINE: 50 pts*

The Structural Outline for your final paper will help you build your argument for the final paper from the ground up. This assignment will allow you to brainstorm and list all of the subtopics you will need to address in your paper in order to support your main argument. This assignment is essentially a précis of your own final paper, but without the evidentiary support from your chosen text included. This is an exploratory exercise designed to launch you into writing your final paper, and, as such, your argument will likely continue to shift and grow before settling into its final form. Be open to these possibilities.

Structural Outline due: Wednesday, Apr. 10<sup>th</sup>

*SEMINAR PAPER DRAFT: 50 pts*

For your seminar paper, you will turn in a rough draft and will bring a copy to class for a draft workshop. You may choose to bring a hard copy of your rough draft, or a laptop from which your workshop partner can access a digital copy. This rough draft should be complete (8 pages) and will be workshopped by one or two of your classmates. 25 pts will be awarded for turning a complete draft in on time, and 25 pts will be awarded for participating in the workshop for a total of 50.

Seminar paper draft due: Wednesday, Apr. 17<sup>th</sup>

*SEMINAR PAPER: 300 pts*

Your capstone assignment for this semester will be an 8-10 page paper analyzing any text/s we study in this course. This paper should be claim-driven, and should use close reading as its central method of analysis. The paper should include a thesis statement, close reading, and evidence from your chosen texts to support the thesis. The paper will allow you to demonstrate that you are able to write about literary texts in a way that moves beyond summary and observation and into analysis and argumentation. Secondary sources are encouraged, but not required.

Seminar paper due: Monday, Apr. 29<sup>th</sup>

*PARTICIPATION: 200 pts*

This category will encompass your active participation in class activities. This includes group discussions, but it also means that you are actively engaged in the class (i.e. not sleeping, browsing the web, texting, snapchatting, etc. etc. etc.). Also included here will be any in-class writing or activities that may be collected for points. Assigned in-class activities will range from 10-20 pts. Make-up or late in-class writing will not be accepted (with an excused absence, you will be exempt from missed points. See Course Policies section for details).

**Reading quizzes:** Unannounced reading quizzes will pop up randomly throughout the semester to hold one another accountable for being up to speed on the assigned readings. There will not be a set number of these. Rule of thumb: the better our class discussions go, the less likely I will be to give quizzes. If it is apparent we aren't reading, expect quizzes to occur with greater frequency.

*DISCUSSION LEAD: 50 pts*

On designated class sessions, a group of students will open up our discussion of that day's assigned reading, and to be at the fore of that day's discussion for the remainder of the session. Groups will be formed during week 1. On the day your group is scheduled to lead discussion, your group should open up discussion by doing the following:

- Bring attention to a specific sentence or passage that stood out to the group. What stuck out to you? What do you want your classmates to consider when looking at this passage again?
- Track a specific word, image, metaphor throughout the text, and open up a discussion about what new insights might be gained by doing so.
- Make connections between, or illuminate tensions/complications across, different chapters, sections, or texts.
- Prepare a close reading to share with the class.
- Create a list of further questions to which classmates can respond.

*GRADING SCALE:*

1,000-970	A+	4
969-930	A	4
929-900	A-	3.5
899-870	B+	3.5
869-830	B	3
829-800	B-	2.5
799-780	C+	2.5
779-730	C+	2
729-700	C-	1.5
699-680	D+	1.5
679-630	D	1
629-600	D-	1
below 600	F	0

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

### *LATE WORK*

All papers must be submitted to the corresponding drop box on D2L by 9 a.m. on the due date. All late papers will be reduced by a half grade-step (0.5) for EACH DAY the paper is late. Late rough drafts will be accepted and subject to the same deduction, but the points for missing in-class peer review cannot be recouped. Tech issues are never grounds for submitting work late—check and re-check to ensure that your file is uploaded correctly!

- EXTENSIONS: I am ALWAYS open to working with you on deadlines for major assignments. If something is going on that is making it difficult for you to complete an assignment, stop by my office hours and we can discuss the possibility of an extension.
- NOTE: Extensions are NOT retroactive. In other words, if you want to ask for an extension, you will need to talk to me at least 24 hours before the assignment is due. No exceptions.

Make-up reading quizzes will not be offered. Reading quizzes missed due to excused absence will be exempted (see attendance policy below). Late in-class work will not be accepted in the event of an unexcused absence. In-class work missed due to an excused absence will be exempted (see attendance policy below).

### *ATTENDANCE*

\* Missing more than 7 classes constitutes grounds for failing the course.

#### Unexcused absences

- You are allowed THREE free unexcused absences this semester. Use them wisely. For each additional unexcused absence, your final grade will be reduced by a half grade step: in the event of four unexcused absences, a 4.0 becomes a 3.5, five absences results in a 3.0, etc.
- If you are taking an unexcused absence, you never need to email me your reason for missing class. You have three freebies: use them with your best discretion. You owe me no explanation.
- However, it will be your responsibility to check the syllabus and stay caught up with course material, including upcoming due dates and reading assignments.
- Make-up quizzes will not be offered, and late in-class assignments will not be accepted.

#### Excused absences

- To have an absence excused, please provide me with appropriate documentation (doctor's note, coach's note, flight cancellation notice, grief absence form, VISA, etc.) in person or via email.
- Make-up quizzes or in-class writing will not be offered, but you will be exempt.
- In the event of a grief absence, please **first** follow the procedure outlined below in the university's Grief Absence Policy. Please review the policy on Page 7.

### *TECHNOLOGY*

Because many of our assigned readings will be accessible on D2L, laptops or tablets will be permitted to view such files during class. However, laptops should be put away during discussion and in-class activities that do not require their use. Cell phone use is never permitted during class. If you forgot a laptop or tablet from which you can access that day's reading, ask a classmate if you can share theirs.

### **PAPER FORMATTING AND CITATIONS**

All papers should be formatted in doubled-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman, with 1" margins. All papers MUST follow MLA style, including correct in-text citations and a Works Cited page. It is expected that students 1) are already familiar with MLA, 2) will use the resources at the end of the syllabus to become familiar with MLA, OR 3) will attend office hours and work with your instructor outside of class time to become familiar with MLA. I am always happy to work with students individually, outside of class time.

The first person "I" point of view is acceptable in all papers. The opinions expressed in your papers are, after all, YOURS. However, such usage should not be gratuitous. If you find yourself using first person in nearly every statement, consider the following:

"I will argue in this paper that Shelley's *Frankenstein* portrays the folly of Enlightenment man's attempts to master nature," can be easily revised as such: "Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* portrays the folly of Enlightenment man's attempts to master nature."

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Plagiarizing all or part of another writer's work, intentionally or not, may result in earning a 0 for the class. We will be using the Turn It In tool on D2L with each major paper submitted.

Honesty and integrity will be vital to our work together this semester and to ALL academic work you do in the future (at MSU and in the workplace). Because one of our goals this semester is to further develop your confidence as writers, it is crucial that all work you complete is, in fact, YOUR work. Not only does plagiarism commit a serious breach of intellectual property rights, it also prevents you from improving your own writing and critical thinking skills.

In order to avoid plagiarism in this course, refrain from the following:

- Using word for word, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, etc. from any course without acknowledgment and citation;
- Incorporating material from another source with only slight changes in wording without acknowledgment and citation;
- Submitting the same piece of writing in two different classes, or commit self-plagiarism. If you want to double submit, you must obtain permission from BOTH instructors first.
- Attempting to pass off the work of other students or professional writers as your own.

All students are expected to follow the university guidelines for academic integrity, which you can access here: <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/academic-integrity/index.html>. If at any point you have any specific questions regarding plagiarism or using proper citation, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

### **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:**

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the

Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation (“VISA”) form.

Please present this form to me **at the start of the term** and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.

### **MANDATORY REPORTING/CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University’s student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others.

As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices (including the Department of Police and Public Safety) if you share it with me:

- 1) Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child;
- 2) Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff,
- 3) Credible threats of harm to oneself or others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. **In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual.** If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center (please see the additional resources section of this syllabus for that contact information).

### **GRIEF ABSENCE POLICY:**

\*This course defers to the official university policy on grief absences

#### University Policy on Grief Absences

For undergraduate students, it is the **responsibility of the student** to:

- i. notify the Associate Dean or designee of their college of the need for a grief absence in a timely manner, but no later than one week from the student’s initial knowledge of the situation,
- ii. provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the Associate Dean,
- iii. and complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the instructor.

It is the **responsibility of the Associate Dean** or designee to:

- i. determine with the student the expected period of absence – it is expected that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others depending on individual circumstances,
- ii. notify the faculty that the student will be absent, and
- iii. receive verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon the student’s return.

It is the **responsibility of the instructor** to work with the student to make reasonable accommodations and to include appropriate language describing such accommodations in their course syllabus, so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

Purdue Online Writing Lab, MLA Formatting and Style Guide

[https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/?\\_ga=2.19623804.558179429.1522454400-1709346682.1522454400](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/?_ga=2.19623804.558179429.1522454400-1709346682.1522454400)

MSU Writing Center

<http://writing.msu.edu/>

MSU Policies on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

<https://ombud.msu.edu/academic-integrity/plagiarism-policy.html>

MSU Resources for Reporting Sexual Violence

<http://titleix.msu.edu/make-a-report/index.html>

<http://endrape.msu.edu/>

MSU Counseling and Psychiatric Services

<https://caps.msu.edu/>

MSU Resources for Persons with Disabilities

<https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/>

Office of the Ombudsperson

<https://www.ombud.msu.edu>

## COURSE SCHEDULE:

\*Any reading or assignment you see listed for a particular class session indicates that the reading or assignment is due ON THAT DAY.

\*This schedule is subject to change, and it will be the student's responsibility to be aware of any announced adjustments or alterations.

\*Assigned readings that do not appear in the REQUIRED TEXTS list can be found on D2L → Content → Readings. Ask if you're unsure.

Date	Assignment Due	Reading Due
Week 1: Prose Fiction		
M, Jan 7	Syllabus review: be sure to read the syllabus in its entirety.	
W, Jan 9	Investigate list of assigned texts—what are they about? Who is the author?—to help choose your Discussion Lead.	William Hope Hodgson, “The Voice in the Night” Mario Klarer Ch 1
Week 2: Prose Fiction		
M, Jan 14		Frankenstein, Preface and Volume 1 Mario Klarer Ch 2 pp. 9-27 (stop before “Poetry” section)
W, Jan 16	Discussion Lead: Alec	Frankenstein, Volume 2
Week 3: Prose Fiction		
M, Jan 21	NO CLASS, MLK DAY	
W, Jan 23	Précis due	Frankenstein, Volume 3 Mario Klarer Ch 4
Week 4: Prose Fiction		
M, Jan 28		Zone One, “Friday” (depending on your edition, approx pp. 1-128)
W, Jan 30		Zone One, first half of “Saturday” (approx. pp. 130-break on 201)
Week 5: Prose Fiction		
M, Feb 4		Zone One, second half of “Saturday” (approx. pp. 201-271)
W, Feb 6	Discussion Lead: Jackie, Lauren	Zone One, “Sunday” (approx. pp. 273-end)
Week 6: Poetry		
M, Feb 11	Close Reading FIRST Draft Paper #1 due by 9 a.m. to D2L; hard copy or digital copy due in class for workshop.	

W, Feb 13		Holbrook's How to Read Poetry pp. 1-31
Week 7: Poetry		
M, Feb 18	Close Reading FINAL Draft Paper #1 due by 9 a.m. to corresponding D2L drop box	Holbrook pp. 67-88
W, Feb 20	Discussion Lead: Jayla	Holbrook pp. 33-66
Week 8: Poetry		
M, Feb 25		Holbrook pp. 89-109 blud, Part I-II
W, Feb 27	Discussion Lead: Lauren, Joey	Holbrook pp. 123-152 blud, Part III-IV
MAR 4-6 SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS		
Week 9: Drama		
M, Mar 11	Close Reading FIRST Draft Paper #2 due by 9 a.m. to D2L; hard copy or digital copy due in class for workshop.	The Tempest, Act I Klarer Ch. 2 pp. 43-56 (stop before "Film" section)
W, Mar 13		The Tempest, Act II
Week 10: Drama		
M, Mar 18	Discussion Lead: Abby, Joey	The Tempest, Act III-end
W, Mar 20	Close Reading FINAL Draft Paper #2 due by 9 a.m. to corresponding D2L drop box	The Tempest in-class film screening; discussion questions due at the end of class
Week 11: Drama		
M, Mar 25		A Streetcar Named Desire, scenes 1-4
W, Mar 27		A Streetcar Named Desire, scenes 5-7
Week 12: Drama		
M, Apr 1	Discussion Lead: Mattie, Jayla	A Streetcar Named Desire, scenes 8-11
W, Apr 3		A Streetcar Named Desire in-class film screening; discussion questions due at the end of class

Week 13: Graphic Narratives		
M, Apr 8		Scott McCloud Ch 6
W, Apr 10	Structural Outline of Seminar Paper due	Saga of the Swamp Thing Vol II, Ch 1-2 Scott McCloud, Closure + Transitions
Week 14: Graphic Narratives		
M, Apr 15	Discussion Lead: Abby, Alec	Saga of the Swamp Thing Vol II, Ch 3-5
W, Apr 17	Seminar Paper Draft due	Saga of the Swamp Thing Vol II, Ch 7-8 + the pin-up art
Week 15: Graphic Narratives		
M, Apr 22		Skim, Part I: Fall, Part II: No Rest for the Wicked
W, Apr 24	Discussion Lead: Mattie, Jackie	Skim, Part III: Goodbye (Hello)
Final exam week: Seminar papers due by 9 a.m. Monday, Apr 29		