English 104: Introduction to Fiction (CRN 34633)
Spring 2014

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Office Hours: Weds 10:30-2:00 and by appointment
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Class Meetings:
195 Anstett Hall
T/TH 2:00-3:20

Course Description
In Salman Rushdie’s novel, Haroun and the Sea of Stories, the child protagonist asks his father, “What’s the use of the stories that aren’t even true?” Taking this question as our lead, this course will consider the meaning and significance of stories that aren’t true, and the specific tactics fiction writers use to reflect and shape their perceptions of facts, fictions, imaginings, memory, and the past. We will consider fiction’s role in responding to or adapting previous fictions and histories. Along these lines, we’ll look at the fictions of realism, the realism of fiction, and the narrative strategies writers use to link facts and fictions. In sum, our aim will be to study some of the powerful ways in which the world is made from fictions and fictions are made from the world.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes
1. To read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions
2. To draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts
3. To perform critical, formal analyses of literary texts
4. To learn to write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose
5. To employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments
6. To employ primary sources with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay’s thesis

Required Texts (Available at the UO bookstore)
Michelle Cliff, Abeng
Neil Gaiman, The Ocean at the End of the Lane
Thomas Hardy, Far From the Madding Crowd (This edition: ISBN 978-0-14-143965-5)
Posy Simmonds, Tamara Drewe
Assorted readings posted on Blackboard
Dictionary (Oxford English Dictionary, found on the library’s website, is best)
Course Expectations and Details

Work & Assessment
10%  Class participation — including quality and consistency of contributions to discussions, punctuality, preparedness for class, and quiz grades
40%  Average of Response Essays
30%  Mid-Term Essay
20%  Final Take-Home Exam

Reading
This class will have demanding (but wonderful!) reading assignments. We will move at a steady pace and I will expect everyone to keep up. You should bring to each class the book/text we are reading for that day, paper, and a writing utensil (notes may be taken on computers, but paper will be necessary for in-class writing assignments & quizzes). As you read each night’s assignment you should take physical or mental notes, asking questions, or identifying important or confusing passages.

Class Participation
Each person enrolled in this course is expected to help foster a community of respect. We will read controversial material and I expect that everyone will not always agree, or that your experiences may be much different from those you learn about in the course materials. It is crucial that everyone listen carefully and contribute to class discussion in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

Please turn cell phones to vibrate before class begins, and silence any electronic equipment capable of interrupting class. The use of electronic social media during class time is prohibited.

Writing
1) Response Essays should be printed and turned in at the beginning of class
   For this assignment you will write a 1-2 page paper responding to reading assigned on the Response Essay due date. Essays should address one of the points listed on the “Questions to Consider” page located on the last page of the syllabus. For each Response Essay please identify (at the top of your essay following your name) which question you have chosen from the list. Essays should follow the formatting guidelines below.

2) Midterm Essay should be uploaded to Blackboard as a Word attachment
   Essay guideline will be handed out in class and will ask you to respond to the relationship between Hardy’s Victorian novel and Posy Simmonds’s Neo-Victorian graphic novel. Essays should be 3 pages in length and should follow the formatting guidelines below.

3) Final Take-Home Exam should be uploaded to Blackboard as a single Word attachment
   For this assignment you will be asked to write two short essays on works and issues we’ve addressed in this class. Exam should follow the formatting guidelines below.
WRITING GUIDELINES: All essays should be formatted in the following way:
*Font should be 12pt. Times New Roman
*Essays should be double spaced
*One-inch margins on all four sides
*In the top left-hand corner include name, date, and professor’s name
*At the top center of page one include an original title focused on your essay’s concern(s)
*Page numbers should appear on the center bottom of each page except on the first page (where page numbers are unnecessary)
*Book titles should appear in italics; short story titles should appear inside “quotation marks”; article titles should appear inside “quotation marks.”
*For the first mention of an author use full name; for subsequent references use last name only
*Quotes should be introduced (as the narrator explains...) and followed by a page reference

Quizzes
Quizzes are unannounced and will focus on the reading due on the day of the quiz. If you are absent on the day of a quiz, you cannot make it up (since it will be “pop”). However, you may drop one quiz grade from your quiz grade average. If you’ve missed one quiz, you can count it as your “dropped” quiz. If you haven’t missed a quiz then the lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Quizzes take place at the start of class.

Attendance Policy
Class attendance is mandatory. It is your responsibility to sign (your name only) the sign-in sheet at the beginning of each class. If you neglect to sign your name you’ll be listed as absent for that day. Signing names other than your own is prohibited.

Your regular attendance is vital to the goals of this course. You may miss two class meetings without penalty. Your final grade will drop one-third of a letter grade for each subsequent absence unless you have contacted me and we have agreed on alternative arrangements. You are responsible for making your sure work is turned in on time despite absences.

Plagiarism
All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources. Plagiarism will be handled according to the Student Conduct Code:
http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx

Tutoring and Help
Writing help is available through Academic Learning Services, located in 68 PLC, and available by phone at 346-3226. I am also very happy to help you will coursework. Please contact me by email or after class to set up a writing conference.

Course Website (blackboard.uoregon.edu)
You will need to access this site to upload your writing assignments; receive feedback on your written work; and access reading materials, syllabi, and other various handouts.
Students with Disabilities
If you have a documented disability and will need accommodation, let me know by week two of the term so that I can make appropriate arrangements. Please request that the UO Accessible Education Center (http://aec.uoregon.edu/) send me a letter indicating that you’ve consulted with them about your disability.

Grading
A range: Demonstrates that you have read the material/text carefully, and have responded insightfully and persuasively with clearly written prose and a persuasive argument. Your writing addresses the specific expectations of the assignment, and is guided by a clear focus and logical progression from one idea to the next. Your essay is well organized, succinct, specific, well informed, free from grammatical errors, and does not rely on generalities or assumptions. A-range essays contain a persuasive argument.
B range: Essays in this range have a solid thesis but need more persuasive tactics to make the essay claims more convincing or clear to the reader. B-range essays not only include quotes or examples from the text but also engage in a careful analysis and close reading of those quotes. B-range essays are mostly grammatically and typographically clean; although they may contain a handful of small errors. They have been revised several times and make solid claims about the tensions raised by their subject matter.
C range: Essays in this category contain some interesting ideas that are in desperate need of focus, specificity, and analysis. If you include quotes without close analysis or interpretation your grade will fall into the C range. If you have a thesis that is unclear or unpersuasive your essay will fall into the C-range. If you have more than a small number of typographical or grammatical errors your essay will fall into the C-range.
D range: This mark indicates that your essay has serious problems with syntax, organization, and/or focus. Essays in this range have a kernel of a thesis but it is delivered in a way that lacks clarity. D-range essays contain ideas about topics you’re planning to think about some day (“This novel was boring” or “I enjoyed this poem”) with little follow-through or analysis.
F: Failure to complete the assignment.

PLEASE NOTE: Late work can be uploaded to Blackboard, but will be counted as “late.” Paper grades will be docked 5 points for each day late. Extensions and incompletes will be given only for documented emergencies. I do not accept written work submitted by email.

Schedule: Assignments are due on the dates listed below.

Week 1
T 4/1      Intro to Course and Discussion
TH 4/3     Far from the Madding Crowd, chapters I-VIII

Week 2
T 4/8      Far from the Madding Crowd, chapters IX- XXIII; Response Essay 1
TH 4/10    Far from the Madding Crowd, chapters XXIV-XXXII
Week 3
T 4/15  *Far from the Madding Crowd*, chapters XXXIII-XLIII
TH 4/17  *Far from the Madding Crowd*, chapters XLIV-end

Week 4
T 4/22  Scott McCloud “The Vocabulary of Comics” and “Living in Line”  
(Blackboard — bring to class a printout or e-copy of Blackboard materials in addition to your copy of *Tamara Drewe*  
TH 4/24  *Tamara Drewe*: read “August” AND number all pages in this novel continuously, beginning with title page of the first section, “August” (title page to “August” is page 1, and so on);  
**Response Essay (2)**

Week 5
T 4/29  *Tamara Drewe*, “Autumn”  
TH 5/1  *Tamara Drewe*, “Winter”

Week 6
T 5/6  *Tamara Drewe*, “Spring” and Linda Hutcheon, “Treating Adaptations as Adaptations” (Blackboard—bring a paper or e-copy to class)  
TH 5/8  **Midterm Essay Thesis due**—bring 2 copies to class;  **In-class writing workshop**

Week 7
T 5/13  Angela Carter, “The Fall River Axe Murders” (Blackboard bring to class)  
TH 5/15  Ernest Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephants” (Blackboard bring to class)  
**Friday 5/16**  **Midterm Essay Due on Blackboard by 9:00 AM**

Week 8
T 5/20  *Abeng*, chapters 1-7  
TH 5/22  *Abeng*, chapters 8-14

Week 9
T 5/27  *Abeng* finish;  **Response Essay (3)**  
TH 5/29  *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, through page 64

Week 10
T 6/3  *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, pages 65-122  
TH 6/5  *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, pages 123-end;  **Final Exam will be handed out on this day**

Final take-home exams must be uploaded to Blackboard (as a single Word Attachment) no later than **Monday, June 9 at noon**.
Questions to Consider

1) Find a passage that struck you as interesting, beautiful, ugly, sad, or that otherwise stands out in your mind. What is it about that passage that you find so compelling or striking? Pinpoint some of the features (language, imagery, voice, perspective, surprise, etc.) that make the passage so powerful? Why do those features, or the author’s execution of those features, have so much power?

2) Which character jumps out most? Why? What features of the character’s identity lead to your strong reaction? Is the character one dimensional or complex? How do you know?

3) What do you notice about the setting of the text? What does it look like? How does the setting shape your impression of the story? What features of the writing (language, sentences, tone, imagery, placement of a passage, relationship of passage to character, etc.) help to create that setting?

4) Does this text raise controversial subjects? Pick one to examine closely. What is the significance of the way the text treats that issue? Does that treatment of the issue lead you to see it in a new way? Why? How?

5) Is the narrative told in the present or past tense? How does the perspective of the narrator influence your reading? Find a passage to read closely, as you think about the position of the narrator in relation to the story he/she tells. What kind of power does this perspective hold in shaping your understanding of the passage? How would an alternate perspective (told from a different moment in time or by a different kind of narrator) affect your reaction to that passage?

6) Select a surprising moment. What do you notice about the way the writer presents that surprise? Did it catch you off guard, or did you see it coming? Which details from earlier passages prepared you for that surprise?

7) What shape does this text take? Is it a ten-chapter novel? A short story made of a single paragraph? What unique structural features (diaries, letters, short chapters, no chapters, etc.?) distinguish the shape of this text from others you’ve read? How does the form of the novel influence your understanding of its content?

8) If you’ve finished the novel consider the significance of its title. What does the title emphasize or illuminate about the work? How does emphasis affect your understanding of the text? What does it help you to understand better? What issues addressed in the text does the title complicate? How do you see the title complicating those issues?

9) How does the writer get you to sympathize with or dislike particular characters? What features of the writing lead you to certain conclusions about characters or events?

10) How does this text trouble or complicate the relationship between facts/histories and fiction?