

ENG 410: Writer, Teacher, Student, Scholar

Spring 2014 • T/Th 8:30-9:50am • Deady Hall 106

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Office hours: Thursdays 10am to noon and by appointment—we'll find a time that works for you!

Who is a writer? A mad Jack Nicholson typing away in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*?

Who is a scholar? Vladimir Nabokov's creepy annotator in *Pale Fire*? The hilarious, maladjusted faculty of David Lodge's *Changing Places*?

Who is a student? The gifted plagiarist in May Sarton's *The Small Room*?

This course analyses literary and filmic representations of activities we may hold near and dear—writing, teaching, and learning. We'll use literary and composition theory to analyze the kinds of messages encoded in these works and to consider how they may affect us in practice. In other words, as we analyze tropes like “magical” teachers, “parasitic” scholars, “genius” writers, and “rescue-able” students, we'll consider our own work at UO and beyond as we inhabit and move between these roles.

Our goals:

We will...

- Analyze primary texts—three novels and a film—through theoretical, scholarly, and personal-experience lenses.
- Identify recurring tropes and concerns in our primary and secondary course readings and evaluate the values and assumptions they imply.
- Identify and practice the gestures of scholarly writing and argumentation common to literary studies, while at the same time considering reasons one might break with these conventions.
- Test the concepts and ideas we discover against the experience of our own work as writers, students, scholars, and teachers.
- Through each of our preparedness, participation, and good humor, build an engaging, supportive class community.

Course Activities, Grading

- Participation, including “Ephemera Project” (10 percent of your final grade)
- Mid-term exam (quote identification and explication plus take-home essay; 20 percent)
- Blog posts (6 at 250+ words) and responses to peers (apx. 10) (30 percent)
- Final paper proposal and group consultation (10 percent)
- Final paper and participation in final roundtable (6-8 pages, 30 percent)

Required Texts Available at the Duck Store:

- May Sarton's *The Small Room* (1961)
- Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962)
- Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (2005)
- Most of our readings are available as PDFs on Blackboard (Bb). *You should have them in class as annotated printouts or on your laptops for specific, focused discussions.*

Grades and Attendance Policies:

Your overall grade in the course will reflect participation and attendance. You are permitted three unexcused absences; every subsequent absence lowers your final grade one notch (A to A-, B+ to B, etc.). Arriving late three times will count as an absence.

Late papers and responses lose one notch per day (A to A-), including weekends/holidays. After a week, late papers earn an F. Exceptions to these policies are rare and must be arranged between us early: email me as soon as you can if anything may prevent you from handing in your work as scheduled.

Academic Honesty:

All work submitted in Writer, Teacher, Student, Scholar must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources—ideas, quotations, paraphrases—must be properly documented. Please consult the Purdue Online Writing Lab <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl>> for a definition of plagiarism and information on documentation, and refer to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards Web site for UO’s policies and adjudication procedures: <<http://conduct.uoregon.edu>>

If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating, you will fail the assignment, and I will send a report to Student Conduct. Please feel welcome to ask many any questions you have about what constitutes plagiarism and how to work with sources—I’m very happy to help you with this!

Classroom Courtesy:

Please turn off cell phones when you enter the classroom. You’re welcome to take notes or read our texts from your laptop provided it doesn’t become a barrier to your active listening and participation in discussion.

Disability Accommodations:

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Note: We will tailor this schedule of readings to meet our needs as the term progresses—be alert to changes.

Week One

Tuesday, April 1

Welcome! Introductions; Langston Hughes’s “Theme for English B” (1951) and scenes from *The Shining* (1980, dir. Stanley Kubrick), *Dead Poets Society* (1989, dir Peter Weir), and *The D aVinci Code* (2006, dir. Ron Howard)

Thursday, April 3

Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Ch 2 (Bb); Roland Barthes’ “Toys” (Bb)

Week Two

Tuesday, April 8

David Batholomae, “Inventing the University” (Bb); JoAnne Cambell, “Controlling Voices: The Legacy of English A at Radcliffe College” (Bb)

Thursday, April 10
May Sarton, *The Small Room* 1-63 (prologue and ch1-4)

Week Three

Tuesday, April 15
May Sarton 64-166 (ch5-12)

Thursday, April 17
Finish Sarton; bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress*, Intro, "Engaged Pedagogy" (Bb)
optional: Henry James' "The Pupil" (Bb)

Week Four

Tuesday, April 22
The Hours (2002, dir. Stephen Daldry) Roland Barthes' "Children and Novels" (Bb); "The Writer on Holiday" (Bb)

Thursday, April 24
Roland Barthes' "Death of the Author" (Bb); Jonathan Lethem's "The Ecstasy of Influence" (Bb)

Week Five

Tuesday, April 29
Midterm exam

Thursday, May 1
Vladimir Nabokov's Pale Fire 13-69 (Prologue through the end of Shade's poem)

Midterm essay due by 5pm Friday, May 2

Week Six

Tuesday, May 6
Pale Fire 73-172 (Commentary through annotation for "My dark Vanessa")

Thursday, May 8
Pale Fire 172-240 (though annotation for "Into French")

Week Seven

Tuesday, May 13
Finish *Pale Fire*

Thursday, May 15
Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (3-89)

Week Eight

Tuesday, May 20
Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (89-208)

Thursday, May 22
Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (208-281)

Week Nine

Tuesday, May 27

Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (281-381)

(Ephemera Project)

Thursday, May 29

Finish *On Beauty*

Week 10

Tuesday, June 3

Extracts from Rita Felski's *The Uses of Literature* and Elaine Scarry's *On Beauty and Being Just*

Thursday, June 5

The future of the Humanities?

Day of Final: Closing Roundtable Discussion and Breakfast

Monday, June 9, 8am

Papers due in my office Friday, June 13, 5pm