

ENG 395
Fall 2015/ MWF 1-1.50
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Hours M 2-4, W 2-3
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**Late Twentieth-Century Literature:
“What the End is For”**

I take the subtitle of this course in late twentieth and early twenty-first literature and film from the title of a poem by Jorie Graham in order to highlight how the works that we will read and see explore the forms and the uses of the “end.” We will consider “what the end is for” in these works in terms of form as well as theme, from apocalyptic representations of the end of the world to formal aspects of the “end” of a poem, novel, story, or film. Our objective in this course is to consider how the idea and the experience of the end might help us frame and engage a wide range of challenging and influential literary and cinematic works from the mid 20th to the early 21st centuries. Our charge in this course is to read and view these often difficult and disorienting texts closely and carefully -- to *experience* them as fully as possible -- so that we may understand the ends that these writers and directors will go to in order to make us see and feel “what the end is for.”

Advisory and Policies Students should be advised that much of what we will read or see in this course contains graphic language, sexual themes, illegal activity, and scenes of often brutal and even obscene violence. *If you believe that reading, viewing, and discussing literary or cinematic representations of graphic, disturbing, or offensive material will make it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of the course, you should not take this course. If the content of this course is too disturbing, you should take one of the other versions of ENG 395 offered regularly in the English department.* Attendance is mandatory. Students who are absent more than five times over the course of the term will without warning have their course grade lowered one full letter. To be considered “present,” you must arrive on time and stay throughout the class. Please turn off all cell phones and other wireless devices. Review the University policy regarding academic dishonesty that can be found in the *Schedule of Classes*: the policy will be strictly enforced in this class.

Required Texts McCarthy, *Blood Meridian*; Johnson, *Jesus’ Son*; Ballard, *Crash*; Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky*; **Films** Cuarón, *Children of Men*; Lynch, *Blue Velvet*, Corbijn, *Control*. **Books are available at the University of Oregon Bookstore; and films are available on Netflix and in the Knight Library Media Center.** Poems by Frank O’Hara and Jorie Graham, stories by Lucia Berlin, and critical essays will be made available on Canvas.

Assignments and Grades quizzes 25%/ Three written assignments 15% each / **comprehensive** final exam 25%/ class participation 5%. **All students must take the final exam at its scheduled time: Thursday, Dec 10th, 2:45**

ENG 395: Syllabus: “What the End is For”

28 Sept: **Introduction: Jorie Graham**, “What the End Is For”; **Frank O’Hara**, “The Day Lady Died”

30 Sept: **Denis Johnson**, *Jesus’ Son* (3-51)

2 Oct: Johnson, *Jesus’ Son* (55- 113)

5 Oct: Johnson, *Jesus’ Son* (117-160)

7 Oct: **Lucia Berlin**, selected stories from *A Manual for Cleaning Women* (Canvas)

9 Oct: Berlin, selected stories

12 Oct: Berlin, selected stories

14 Oct: **Paul Bowles**, *The Sheltering Sky* (Book One, 3-138)

16 Oct: Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky* (Book Two, 141-257)

19 Oct: Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky* (Book Two, cont) **First Assignment Due**

21 Oct: Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky* (Book Three, 261-313)

23 Oct: Bowles, “The Delicate Prey,” **Georges Bataille**, “The Sacred,” “The Notion of Expenditure” (Canvas)

26 Oct: **David Lynch**, *Blue Velvet*

28 Oct: Lynch, *Blue Velvet*

30 Oct: **Cormac McCarthy**, *Blood Meridian; or, The Evening Redness in the West* (3-54)

2 Nov: McCarthy, *Blood Meridian* (55-135)

4 Nov: McCarthy, *Blood Meridian* (136-253)

6 Nov: McCarthy, *Blood Meridian* (256-337)

9 Nov: **Alfonso Cuarón**, *Children of Men*

Second Assignment Due

11 Nov: Cuarón, *Children of Men*

13 Nov: **Walter Benjamin**, “The Work of Art in the Era of its Technological Reproducibility” (Canvas)

16 Nov: **J.G. Ballard**, *Crash* (1-64)

18 Nov: Ballard, *Crash* (65-118)

20 Nov: Ballard, *Crash* (119-224); **Jean Baudrillard**, “*Crash*” (Canvas)

23 Nov: **Frank O’Hara**, selected poems

25 Nov: O’Hara, selected poems

27 Nov: Thanksgiving Holiday

30 Nov: **Jorie Graham**, selected poems

Third Assignment Due

2 Dec: Graham, selected poems

4 Dec: **Anton Corbijn**, *Control*

10 Dec: **Final Exam, 2:45**

