

ENG104: Introduction to Fiction
Loneliness and Coming of Age in Contemporary Fiction

Fall 2016 | CRN 16868 | MWF 1:00-1:50 p.m. | Room: ESL 112

*“A story matrix connects all of us. There are rules,
processes, and circles of responsibility in this world. And the
story begins exactly where it is supposed to begin.*

We cannot skip any part.”

- Joy Harjo, Mvskoke

COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor	Margaret Bostrom Email: mbostrom@uoregon.edu Office: PLC 241 (541.346.0531) Office hours: M and W, 2:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.
Course Overview	<p>Coming-of-age literature is famously full of misfits, rejects, and loners: characters who feel like outsiders even in the places where they're meant to feel most at home. In this class, we will read five short, contemporary novels dealing with themes of loneliness, vulnerability, and coming of age. We will ask what it means to be lonely and what can we learn about identity and transformation by analyzing literary representations of loners and the worlds to which they—however fragily—belong. We will explore how various external factors (including gender and sexuality; racial and class differences; and experiences of grief or trauma) contribute to our protagonists' feelings of isolation, and we will analyze how internal experiences of loneliness are rendered—verbally and visually—by the authors of the different texts we read.</p> <p>A primary skill you will take away from this class is the ability to closely read texts and offer interpretations of their form and content in your own writing. We will learn to analyze elements of verbal (and visual) craft, building a vocabulary of key terms and a framework for literary analysis. You will practice interpretive skills in brief, low-stakes writings assignments and quizzes, small-group Canvas posts, and short close reading essays. The term will culminate in a longer assignment that will let you respond to our course themes and foci critically <i>or</i> creatively. Note: This course satisfies the University Arts and Letters requirement. It does not count toward the English major.</p>
English Department Learning Outcomes	<p>Upon completion of this course, students should be able to achieve the following outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;2. Draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts;3. Perform critical, formal analyses of literary, cinematic, and other cultural texts;4. Write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose;5. Employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments;6. Employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay's thesis.

Required Texts

The following texts are required for this course and available in the UO bookstore. Any additional readings will be provided for you on the course Canvas site. Please bring the texts with you to class on the days we will discuss them.

Ness, Patrick. *A Monster Calls*. Illustrated by Jim Kay. Boston: Candlewick, 2013.
 Alexie, Sherman. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2009.
 Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage, 2009.
 Yuknavitch, Lydia. *Dora: A Headcase*. Portland: Hawthorne Books, 2012.
 Carson, Anne. *Autobiography of Red*. New York: Vintage, 1998.

Access to additional course materials via Canvas.

COURSE WORK AND GRADING

Grading Breakdown

<i>Optional: Courage Writings</i>	0-5%
In-Class Engagement	5%
Quizzes & Small Writings	10%
Close Reading Paper #1	15%
Small Group Canvas Posts	20%
Close Reading Paper #2	20%
Final Assignment:	[total: 30%]
Proposal	5%
Creative Assignment & Artist’s Statement <i>or</i> Extended Literary Analysis (5-8p)	25%
	100%

Grading Scale

A: 100-94	C+: 79-77
A-: 93-90	C: 76-74
B+: 89-87	C-: 73-70
B: 86-84	D: 69-60
B-: 83-80	F: 60

Reading

Though you do not receive a “reading” grade in this class, success in **every** part of the course begins with your reading. Bring the appropriate book or books to every class period and be sure you’ve completed all readings by the date indicated on the syllabus. As you read, make notes, ask questions in the margins, mark up your books (or a sheet of paper tucked into your book) and look over these notes before coming to class. Read attentively, curiously, skeptically, irascibly—read with pleasure, annoyance, or even boredom—read however & wherever you like. I recommend reading with a dictionary, or looking up unfamiliar words on your phone. Bottom line: please do read and bring your books to class.

Courage Writings (0-5%)

Optional:
 The protagonists of the books we’ll be reading are often faced with difficult situations that ask them to do courageous things — like all of us, sometimes they rise up to meet these challenges and sometimes they retreat or shy away. These writings are meant to give you an opportunity to share courageous moments from your own life and see courage as part of your work as a student. In no less than one paragraph and no more than one page, describe a situation that required you to be courageous and how you responded. Courage takes many forms and occurs as often in little happenings as in heroic exploits, so feel free to write about small things. You can submit five courage writings over the course of the quarter, each worth one additional point on your end of term grade (though they cannot raise your grade above 100%). Turn these in to me during any class period or in office hours. You may submit no more than two writings for credit in any single week.

In-Class

Your active engagement in class is essential. I expect you to participate in full-class discussions and in small

<p>Engagement (5%)</p>	<p>group activities, and you should always bring assigned texts to class. I do understand that some of us experience significant anxiety when faced with large group discussion, and therefore I consider multiple modes of engagement as participatory. Active engagement with our readings and in-class discussions can be shown by being focused and vocal in small group work, by dropping in for office hours, by attentive listening and note-taking (expected of all students), or participating more actively than required (see below) in your Canvas discussion group. If you're worried about your in-class engagement grade, please be in touch with me before the middle of the quarter.</p>
<p>Quizzes & Small Writings (10%)</p>	<p>I will give quizzes as necessary to ensure completion of the reading. These quizzes may be announced or unannounced, so please come to each class prepared to answer questions about the reading and to define or apply the key terms we've discussed in previous sessions. Small writings will mostly be in-class writings marked on the syllabus, though there may be one or two out-of-class assignments over the course of the quarter. You may only make up quizzes and small writings by contacting me before class to make an alternative arrangement.</p>
<p>Small Group Canvas Posts (20%)</p>	<p>In addition to in-class participation, you will engage with your classmates through small-group discussion boards on Canvas. These more intimate, online conversations are meant to deepen and expand our in-class discussions about shared readings. While they will give you an opportunity to practice your writing skills, these posts are also meant to let you share your thoughts and ideas in an informal space and in different formats (through images, songs, links to videos, etc.). Typically, your posts will be due by 9pm on Wednesdays, and replies to your peers' posts will be due by 9pm on Thursdays. See the syllabus for a detailed posting schedule. Prompts for posts will be available on Mondays by 9pm.</p> <p>While this online space is meant to be friendly and informal, it is also an extension of our classroom and, as such, it is important that your posts be thoughtful, respectful, and caring. Even when expressing disagreement or frustration, please treat each other with kindness and respect.</p>
<p>Close Reading Papers (10% + 15%)</p>	<p>For close reading papers #1 (2-3 pages) and #2 (3-4 pages), you will analyze a short passage of your choosing from one of our shared readings, in response to prompts distributed in class. Each paper should have a specific thesis statement as its first sentence (or bolded later in the first paragraph). This statement should make an original analytic claim about the chosen text, and should support this claim with textual evidence (including quotations) and key terms learned in class. Prompts with more detailed guidelines will be distributed at least one week before each paper is due.</p> <p>There is a ENG 104 Writing Packet available on Canvas with guidelines for close reading & writing interpretative arguments. Refer to this resource while planning and working through your written assignments!</p>
<p>Final Assignment (30% total)</p>	<p>In Week 7 you will submit a proposal for your final writing assignment (due at the end of Week 10). You will have the option of writing an extended literary analysis (e.g., a longer, more substantial version of a close reading paper) comparing multiple of our texts or submitting a creative assignment (poetry, short fiction, graphic narrative or other form/mediums are acceptable) and an accompanying Artist's Statement. More details for this assignment will be available by the mid-quarter. The proposal will be worth 5% of your course grade and the final project or essay will be worth 25%.</p>

COURSE POLICIES

<p>Email and Canvas</p>	<p>This course relies on email and Canvas. Any announcements or last-minute changes to the schedule will be sent to your University of Oregon email account (not your personal email account) and announced on Canvas. As you will have weekly small-group Canvas posts, it is important to make sure you have access to Canvas during Week 1. You're welcome to contact me with questions not answered in the syllabus, but please keep in mind that I do not read or respond to emails after 5pm. Plan your communication with me accordingly and swap contact information with a classmate so you can ask your peers questions as well.</p>
<p>Attendance</p>	<p>Attendance is required and you are responsible for signing the attendance sheet each day. You are allowed three unexcused absences without penalty. Unexcused absences beyond three will lower your course grade by</p>

1/3 of a letter grade. For example, the first additional absence after one week of absences will reduce a B- to a C+, the second will reduce a B- to a C, and so on. Missing class may also lower your in-class engagement grade.

**Formatting
Written Work**

Please take the time to proofread your writing and to format all your work clearly and consistently — this helps me focus on your ideas when evaluating your essays and other writings. All written work should be typed and double-spaced, using an easy-to-read 12- point font (Times New Roman is a good default choice) and 1” margins. Please cite all quotations from course texts with page numbers. If you use any outside sources in your essays, be sure to include full citations in a “Works Cited” at the end of your essay.

Late Work

Submitting work on time is important and submitting assignments late (without asking for an extension) may result in grade reductions. Please contact me **before work is due** if you need an extension. It is especially important that you complete your **Small Group Canvas Posts** on time in order to give your peers time to respond and me time to incorporate your ideas into the following in-class discussion. **You get one free pass for a late Canvas post (provided you complete your post and reply during the calendar week in which it was due) — all subsequent late posts will receive a zero.**

Grading

I’m happy to discuss your grades with you for any assignment, no matter how large or small, but not during class time. Please come to office hours or make an appointment to meet with me at a time that works for both our schedules.

**Technology
Cellphones &
laptops etc.**

This is a small, discussion-based class and cellphones, laptops, and other screens can be very distracting and disruptive. Please only use phones, laptops, or tablets when they’re called for by a particular activity, such as in-class writings. If your phone or computer use disrupts class or distracts you from course material, you may be marked absent for the day and/or your in-class engagement grade may be lowered.

Access

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.

**Difficult
Material &
Content
Warnings**

I’d like you to know that some of what we will read in this course contains graphic language, sexual themes and, at points, sexual violence, emotionally charged subjects, drug use, and violence. If you believe that reading and discussing literary representations of difficult, disturbing, or violent material will make it too challenging for you to fulfill the requirements of the course, you may wish to switch into another section of ENG 104. If you’d like to stay in the class but need to modify your participation around particular course content, please be in touch with me so we can work out alternatives together. I am glad to answer questions about the syllabus and will work to prepare us, as a class, for discussions of difficult course material. Feel free to speak with me if you have any concerns, now or throughout the quarter.

**Academic
Honesty**

All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please refer to the *Student Conduct Code* on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. Please see me before turning in your assignment if you have any questions about your use of sources.

**Observance
of Religious
Holidays**

Students who observe their religious holidays at times when academic requirements conflict with those observances must inform instructors in advance of the holiday. Students are responsible for making up missed work according to a schedule determined with the teacher.

**Mandatory
Reporting**

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. Any UO employee who becomes aware that such behavior is occurring must report that information to the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity: (<http://aaeo.uoregon.edu/>).
The University Health Center and University Counseling and Testing Center provide assistance to students in such cases and have a greater ability to work confidentially.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Below is a breakdown of what we will do in each class during the term, and what you need to prepare for each class. Please prepare the reading before the day we'll discuss it, and bring the appropriate text to class that day.

Wk	Day	Session Descriptions and Assignments (due in or prior to class on date listed)		
Week One				
Wk	Day	In Class	Writing Due	Reading due
1	M - 9/26	Introductions, Syllabus, and Survey		
1	W - 9/28	Close reading exercises with selections from Lou Beach's <i>420 Characters</i> (distributed in class)		
1	R - 9/29		9pm: Introductory Canvas Posts	
1	F - 9/30	In-class Writing #1: Excerpt from <i>420 Characters</i> (laptops ok) & response to <i>A Monster Calls</i>	9pm: Canvas Replies	Ness, <i>A Monster Calls</i> , pp. 1-37
Week Two				
2	M - 10/3	Discussion		Ness, <i>A Monster Calls</i> , pp. 38-79
2	W - 10/5	Discussion	9pm: Week 2 Small Group Canvas Post	Ness, <i>A Monster Calls</i> , pp. 80-121
2	R - 10/16		9pm: Week 2 Canvas Reply	
2	F - 10/7	In-Class Writing #2		Ness, <i>A Monster Calls</i> , pp. 122-205
Week Three				
3	M - 10/10	Lecture & Writing Workshop		
3	W - 10/12		9pm: Week 3 Small Group Canvas Post	Alexie, <i>Absolutely True Diary</i> , pp. 1-53
3	R - 10/13		9pm: Week 3 Canvas Reply #2	
3	F - 10/14	First Essay Prompt Distributed In-Class Writing #3		Alexie, <i>Absolutely True Diary</i> , pp. 54-98
Week Four				
4	M - 10/17	Discussion		Alexie, <i>Absolutely True Diary</i> , pp. 99-149
4	W - 10/19	Writing Workshop	9pm: Week 4 Small Group Canvas Post	Alexie, <i>Absolutely True Diary</i> , pp. 150-196
4	R - 10/20		9pm: Week 4 Canvas Reply	
4	F - 10/21	Discussion		Alexie, <i>Absolutely True Diary</i> , pp. 197-229
Week Five				
5	M - 10/24	Thesis workshop	Bring two hard copies of thesis statement for Short Essay #1 to class.	
5	W - 10/26	Discussion	First Short Essay Due No Canvas post this week!	Cisneros, <i>House on Mango St.</i> , pp. 3-38
5	F - 10/28	In-class Writing #4: Mid-term Reflection		Cisneros, <i>House on Mango St.</i> , pp. 39-73
Week Six				
6	M - 10/31	Discussion		Cisneros, <i>House on Mango St.</i> , pp. 74-110
6	W - 11/2	Lecture & discussion activities	9pm: Week 6 Small Group Canvas Post	"Crisis as Content: An Introduction" (<i>Dora</i> , pp. xiiv-xvi)

6	R – 11/3		9pm: Week 6 Canvas Reply	
6	F – 11/4	Discussion + prompt for Final Project + Proposal distributed		Yuknavitch, <i>Dora: A Head Case</i> , Epigraphs through Ch. 7
Week Seven				
7	M – 11/7	Discussion		Yuknavitch, <i>Dora: A Head Case</i> - Ch. 8-13
7	W – 11/9	Second short essay prompt distributed	9pm: Week 7 Small Group Canvas Post	Yuknavitch, <i>Dora: A Head Case</i> – Ch. 14-19
7	R – 11/19		9pm: Week 7 Small Group Canvas reply: respond to	
7	F – 11/11	In-Class Writing #5	Creative Assignment / Final Essay Proposal due in class	Yuknavitch, <i>Dora: A Head Case</i> , Ch. 20-27
Week Eight				
8	M – 11/14	Discussion		Yuknavitch, <i>Dora: A Head Case</i> , Ch. 28-end (including epilogues)
8	W – 11/16	Thesis Workshop	Bring two hard copies of thesis statement for Short Essay #2 to class. No Canvas Post!	
8	F – 11/18	In-class Writing #6	Second Short Essay Due	Carson, <i>Autobiography of Red</i> , pp. 3-29
Week Nine				
9	M – 11/21	Discussion		Carson, <i>Autobiography of Red</i> , pp. 30-62
9	W – 11/23	Class Cancelled for Thanksgiving Travel [Details for make-up activity: TBA]	9pm: Week 9 Small Group Canvas Post. Note: reply due Sunday, not Thursday!	Carson, <i>Autobiography of Red</i> , finished for Monday's class.
9	F – 11/25	Class Cancelled — Thanksgiving		
9	Sun – 11/27		9pm: Week 9 Canvas Reply	
Week Ten				
10	M – 11/28	Writing Workshop		Finish Carson, <i>Autobiography of Red</i> .
10	W – 11/30	Discussion	9pm: Week 10 Small Group Canvas Post	Review selections from Carson, <i>Autobiography of Red</i>
10	R – 12/1		9pm: Week 10 Canvas Reply	
10	F – 12/2	Course Wrap Up	Creative Assignments + Artist Statement or Final Essays Due. Last day to submit Courage Writings	
This class will not have a final!				