Course Overview

This course is an introduction to the study of prose fiction. You will read, discuss, and write about literary works (short stories, novels, and comics) that treat similar themes and participate in related genres of fiction. In addition to looking at genres and themes in these works, we will concentrate on identifying and analyzing the formal literary techniques used by the authors, as well as questions of history’s influence on these works (and these works’ influence on history). You will improve your ability to think, read, and write critically about fictional texts, as well as to situate them within a broader historical, social, and cultural context that gives them relevance beyond “just stories.”

NOTE: This course satisfies credits toward the Arts and Letters category General Education requirements; however, these credits do not count toward the English Major.

Required Texts: Available at the Duck Store. Get the same editions if you buy them elsewhere.

Le Guin, Ursula. *The Word for World is Forest* (Tor, 2010 edition)
Miller, Frank. *Batman: Year One*
Moore, Alan. *Batman: The Killing Joke*
---. *V for Vendetta* (Vertigo softcover)

***All other readings will be posted as pdfs on Blackboard

Requirements and Policies

Reading: I expect you to have completed all the assigned reading by the beginning of class the day it is listed.

Reading Quizzes (15% of grade): About twice a week on days with assigned readings, we will begin class with a short quiz on the text(s) (and any biographical information on the author I have given in the previous section). Quiz questions will be multiple choice, short answer, matching, and identification, and they should not be difficult if you have done the reading. **I will drop each student’s three lowest scores (including zeroes on missed quizzes). I do not give make-up quizzes for any reason.**

Class Participation (10% of grade): You are expected to arrive on time, stay the full 50 minutes, and actively participate in discussions, group work, in-class writings, and all other aspects of the course. Just showing up is not sufficient to earn an A for this grade. Also, frequent tardiness or inattentiveness (ie, texting in class) will seriously impact this portion of your grade.
Participation Related Notes:

• While there are some appropriate technologies for a college classroom, phones and other messaging devices aren’t among them. Please silence them and put them away; anyone using them during class will receive a zero for participation for the day and may be asked to leave.

• Likewise, laptops in an English class are more often a distraction than a tool. If you plan on taking notes on your laptop, please talk to me and be prepared to email me a copy of your notes immediately after every class.

Paper One (15%) and Paper Two (25%): You will compose two essays that analyze our readings. These papers should represent sustained, thesis-based arguments about a text or texts, and clearly reflect your critical thinking about what a fictional work “does” in a manner supported by evidence from the text.

No outside research is permitted without my approval. Paper One is to be a three to four page close reading of a story or passage in a story; Paper Two is to be a five to six page essay that takes close readings of at least two texts into account and develops an argument about a general theme that these texts engage with. Further details and specific topics will be distributed in class. Papers should be composed in MLA style: double-spaced, with uniform 1 inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font, class info (your name, instructor, class, date) in the upper left of the paper, and works cited briefly in text. If you have questions about MLA formatting please see me or look at the Purdue OWL website linked from blackboard. Papers must be printed out; I do not accept them by email.

Midterm Exam (15%) and Final Exam (20%): Both exams will contain short answer, identification, and multiple choice questions drawn from readings, discussions, and, especially, quizzes. The final exam will be comprehensive and, in addition to the aforementioned question types, will also ask you to write short essays. Make-up exams will not be given except in cases of documented emergencies.

Attendance: More than four absences will result in the lowering of your final course grade by one grade level (from an A- to a B+, for instance) per subsequent absence regardless of the cause; therefore, it is your responsibility to budget your absences to ensure you have adequate days available in case of illness or emergency. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to check with your classmates to find out what you have missed.

Late Work: All assignments must be brought to class meetings the day they are due. Assignments will drop one full letter grade each day they are late.

Honesty: All work submitted for this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented and is only permitted with my approval—see me if you have any questions about using sources. Please refer to the Code of Student Conduct at the Judicial Affairs Website for more information.

In cases where plagiarism has been clearly established, an F for the final course grade is the standard practice. Because the texts we are using are all very familiar to me, it is likely I’ve read the outside sources you may be tempted to plagiarize and will easily recognize them—don’t do it.

Incompletes: No incompletes will be granted except in cases of documented emergencies that interfere with the completion of one major portion of coursework. If you are forced to take an incomplete, you have one calendar year to make up the incomplete before it automatically changes to a grade of F.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability (physical, learning, or psychological) that you think may affect your performance in this class, please see me during the first week of the term so that we can discuss whatever accommodation(s) may be necessary.
Week 1
F 4/1: Edgar Allan Poe “The Black Cat,” “Berenice,” “Some Words with a Mummy”

Week 2
W 4/6: Philip K Dick “The Days of Perky Pat”
F 4/8: Octavia Butler “Bloodchild,” “Speech Sounds”

Week 3
M 4/11: Yevgeny Zamyatin We (1-89)
W 4/13: Yevgeny Zamyatin We (90-153)
F 4/15: Yevgeny Zamyatin We (154-225). **Paper 1 topics distributed**

Week 4
M 4/18: Aldous Huxley Brave New World (3-106)
W 4/20: Aldous Huxley Brave New World (107-185)
F 4/22: Aldous Huxley Brave New World (186-259)

Week 5
M 4/25: Alan Moore Batman: The Killing Joke
W 4/27: Frank Miller Batman: Year One (1-47 (Chapters 1-2)). **Paper 1 due.**
F 4/29: Frank Miller Batman: Year One (48-96 (Chapters 3-4))

Week 6
M 5/2: **Midterm exam**
F 5/6: Alan Moore V for Vendetta (1-86)

Week 7
M 5/9: Alan Moore V for Vendetta (87-179)
W 5/11: Alan Moore V for Vendetta (180-288)
F 5/13: Paolo Bacigalupi “Pump Six,” “The Calorie Man”

Week 8
M 5/16: Ursula K. Le Guin The Word for World is Forest (9-88)
W 5/18: Ursula K. Le Guin The Word for World is Forest (89-155)
F 5/20: Ursula K. Le Guin The Word for World is Forest (157-189)

Week 9
M 5/23: Cormac McCarthy The Road (3-130). **Paper 2 topics distributed.**
W 5/25: Cormac McCarthy The Road (131-216)
F 5/27: Cormac McCarthy The Road (217-287)

Week 10
M 5/30: **Memorial day: NO CLASS**
W 6/1: The Road Warrior (view outside of class)
F 6/3: Review for final exam

**Monday, June 6:** Paper 2 due by 5 p.m. in my office (PLC 1)
**Wednesday, June 8th:** 10:15 a.m.: FINAL EXAM