



**ENG 030: FORMS OF POPULAR FICTION
LETTER: SPRING 2012 SYLLABUS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
T/TH 11:00-12:15 IN MEREDITH 102**

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Office & Hours: Howard 329
Mondays: 3:00-6:00
Thursdays: 9:00-11:00; 2:30-3:30

Required Texts:

1. Excerpts from ***Mythology* by Edith Hamilton** (handout provided)
2. ***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon**
3. ***In Persuasion Nation* by George Saunders**
4. ***Rubyfruit Jungle* by Rita Mae Brown**
5. ***Candide* by Voltaire** (2005 Theo Cuffe translation ONLY)
6. ***Promethea, Book I* by Alan Moore**
7. ***Coming, Aphrodite!* by Willa Cather**
8. ***The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien**
9. Handouts and other Material Provided In Class

Course Objectives

Students will read **popular** works of fiction for detailed **comprehension**, and for **insight** into the function of various **forms** of fiction.

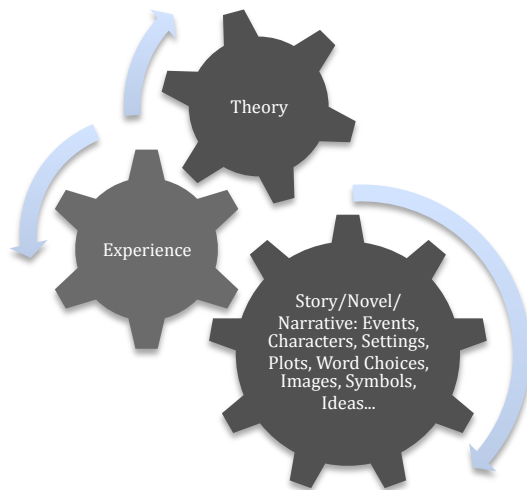
Students will learn interpretive **methods** through **practice** and develop more **complex** responses to fiction.

Students will consider the responses of others, and **compose** arguments which will **persuade** others of the merit of their own individual interpretations.

What to Expect:

This is a writing-intensive course: the majority of the student's final grade is based upon structured writing assignments requiring **creativity, sourcing, and/or revision**.

This is a reading-intensive course: the students are expected to read carefully for **comprehension, recall, and interpretive significance**. *For each hour spent in class, students should anticipate spending about two hours reading, writing, and doing other work outside of class.* (Roughly six hours per week outside of class.)



This is a discussion-based course, which means part of the course materials lie in the minds of the students: the class requires the students' **informed insight and opinion** to operate properly. Informed participation in classroom discussion is necessary and therefore required.

Multi-tasking impairs comprehension, recall, and the awareness of significance. **Single-task** all reading assignments.

Reading: students should expect to leave every class meeting with a reading assignment. If the student has difficulty reading or recalling what s/he read, **it is the student's responsibility** to address the problem by using whatever strategies are necessary to succeed in class. Suggested strategies:

1. Establish and enforce a quiet, distraction-free zone for your reading time.
2. Take hand-written notes while you read.
3. Use a bookmark to block out the rest of the page while you read.
- 4.. Use white noise or a focus-inducing sound file to block out distractions.



Use of Technology in the Classroom

I am a new media artist & professor and, personally, a huge fan of technology. However, my classroom policies are designed to create the most beneficial, efficient, and productive learning environment – they are written with the results of experience and several controlled scientific studies in mind.

1. Turn **off** all phones before entering class.
Students should inform their regular contacts that they will be *unavailable* from 11:00 to 12:15 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
2. Taking notes on a laptop is **not permitted**.
A tablet device with its internet connection disabled **may** be permitted *only* under certain pre-approved circumstances (consult me for details).
3. Exception: I might ask you to use a device under certain circumstances.
If a student does access an electronic device during class s/he is giving permission to *all persons in the class, including the professor*, to look at it.
4. Violation of these rules will not be tolerated.
Devices used during class in violation of these rules will be turned off, taken away, and returned to the student after class; **this action will result** in a partial-absence grade penalty **and** a lowering of the participation grade.
5. These rules are designed to minimize class disruption.
So disrupting class further by objecting to Rule #4 **will result in forfeit of **entire**** class participation grade. You can always meet with me later to discuss the situation.
6. Handle your rare & occasional serious situations like a serious adult.
If, for example, your mother (or even a beloved pet) is in the hospital, obviously you need to stay connected, but you cannot disrupt the routines of others. You are permitted the occasional bathroom break, after all.
7. Prioritize your in-person experiences.
Connection takes many forms, but the most valuable form of all is real-world in-person connection, with its nuance of gesture and heightened creative possibilities. Try to live *in the moment; be with the people who are with you*. Doing this well will bring you happiness and success.

Attendance and Participation: will count for **10% of the final grade**

Attendance: is graded.

Absences	Attendance Grade
0 or 1	100 or 95
2 or 3	88 or 82
4	72
5	62
6	52
<i>et cetera</i> (for each/any additional absence subtract ten more points)	

Two late arrivals or early departures equals one absence.

Students may be marked absent or late for non-participation, half-participation, or using distracting electronic devices in class.

Participation: a subjective measure of the **frequency** and **quality** of the student's **contributions** to class **discussion**, adherence to classroom **policies**, and, as a practical matter, bringing the required **books** to class.

Classroom Policies: Students are expected and required to **respect** others and **actively help create a productive learning environment**. Any type of class disruption will result in a lowered final grade. The use of disruptive electronic devices, including but not limited to phones and mp3 players, is prohibited. Phones must be OFF (not just on vibrate). **Disrespectful** behaviors, like texting or packing belongings and/or standing up before the end of class, **will** result in a significantly lowered final grade. On-time, prepared attendance is required at all class meetings. Any student asked to leave the classroom for any reason must comply; failure to comply will result in forfeiture of **entire** participation grade.

Did You Know? When others see you use your phone, it is a **trigger** that makes them want to use their phones too: this creates a cascading **distraction** that spreads across a room, and this why you must **always refrain** from using your phone in class.

In-Class Work: 20% of the final grade

Reading Tests/Quizzes: will be given with each new reading assignment.

Each consists of **10 questions** about the **facts** and **events** of the story; questions are *never* based in opinion or subjective interpretation.

Grading for quizzes is both **cumulative** and **competitive**; the number of correct answers considered “100%” at the end will be based upon the second highest-scoring student’s score.

Quizzes are collected but are **not returned**. **Students should keep track** of their scores when the answers are given immediately following the test.

Because the answers are given immediately after the tests, these tests **cannot be made up**.

Quizzes are kept until the end of the semester; **you may visit** my office to see a quiz.

Quizzes always occur within the first ~10 minutes of class; **students who are late forfeit** the quiz grade.

Reading Tests/Quizzes count for **10% of the final grade**.

Written In-Class Group Work: will be an almost daily part of this class.

Students will often be divided into **discussion groups of 3 or 4** to debate interpretive questions, and to agree upon a written answer.

Grading is not based upon having a “right” answer, but having a **plausible answer backed up by detail and reasoning**.

Discussion sheets are collected, graded, copied, and returned to the group members. **Students should keep these** sheets as they will frequently be relevant and helpful to the essay assignments.

The discussion groups **must rate** how much each person contributed to the discussion.

All members of the group receive the **same grade, regardless** of contribution rating.

Groups with fewer members contributing (or contributing fully) **are graded more leniently**.

The in-class group worksheets count for **10% of the final grade**.

Final Exam: **10% of the final grade.**

There will be a **cumulative** final exam for this course **based on class lectures.** Students should routinely take (and study) **lecture notes**, and make sure to understand all concepts introduced in class by **asking questions** and/or performing necessary **research.**

I will *never* provide my lecture notes directly to students: students must work hard, in class, to obtain this content.

Essays: **60% of the final grade**

Essays are submitted through Blackboard, preferably as a **.docx** (.doc and .rtf are also accepted, but not preferred).

One essay will be a video-essay. This can be submitted through youtube or vimeo, dropbox, or on a disk, as the students prefer.

I use Adobe assessment tools to comment on essays, which means your essays will be returned as .pdfs. Adobe Acrobat Reader is a free program you can download at: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

Comments appear as highlighting and “voice bubbles” on the page – you may have to hover your cursor over the comment to read it.

Read comments carefully and don't make the same mistakes: grading of subsequent essays assumes you have read comments on previous essays, **so the same error made on a later assignment will be judged more severely.**

Revisions require you turn on **Track Changes** to create a record of the changes you make.

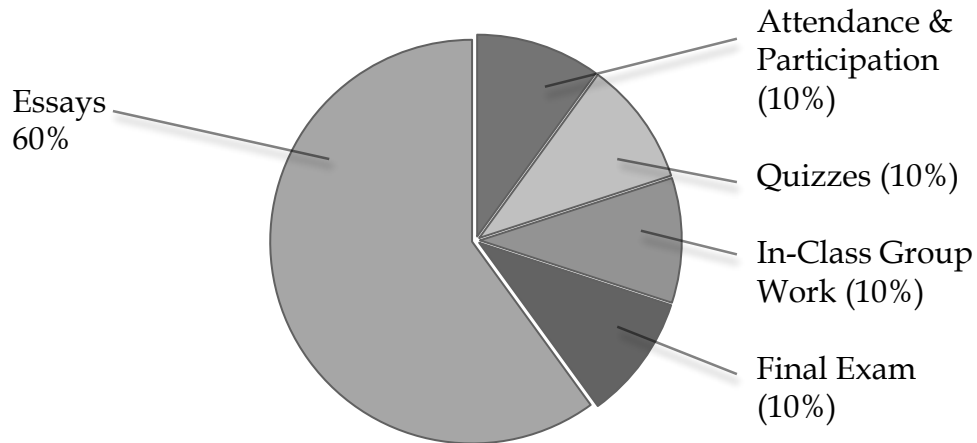
Additional, detailed instructions will be provided when essays are assigned.

Essays: 60% of the final grade

Date Due	Type of Writing	Length in Words	Source(s)	Subject/Topic	Percentage of Essay Grade*
1/31	Full-Length Draft	800-1000	George Saunders's <i>In Persuasion Nation</i> and Selections from Edith Hamilton's <i>Mythology</i> (handout).	The Real and The Un-Real: Modern Mythology	5%
2/2	Revised Final Essay	~1000; w/Track Changes			20%
3/6	Full-Length Draft	1000-1200	Rita Mae Brown's <i>Rubyfruit Jungle</i> & Voltaire's <i>Candide</i> *collaborative project	Fictionalization and Social Satire in the 17 th and 20 th Centuries	5%
3/8	Revised Final Essay	~1200; w/Track Changes			20%
4/3	Video Draft	≥ 3 minutes	Mark Haddon's <i>Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> and Alan Moore's <i>Promethea</i> *collaborative project	Empathy, Imagery, "Pictures," and Symbolism	5%
4/5	Fully-Produced Video Essay	5-10 minutes			20%
5/1	Full-Length Draft	1000-1200	Willa Cather's <i>Coming, Aphrodite!</i> and Tim O'Brien's <i>The Things They Carried</i>	Modern and Contemporary Fiction that Orchestrates a Variety of Techniques	5%
5/3	Revised Final Essay	~1200; w/Track Changes			20%

*100% of the Essay Grade = 60% of the Course Grade

Your Final Grade



Grade Scale For Assignments:

A+ = 100	A = 95	A- = 92	B+ = 88	B = 85	B- = 82
C+ = 78	C = 75	C- = 72	D+ = 68	D = 65	D- = 62
NG (no grade) = 0 unless revised; revision meeting required					

Grade Scale For Calculating Final Grade:

100-90 = A	89-80 = B	79-70 = C	69-60 = D	≤ 59 = F
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⚠ Plagiarism ⚠:

Plagiarism means presenting the **ideas or words** of others as though they were your own: it is *always* grounds for **automatic failure of the course**. Students can rely on this instructor to **fail and dismiss** any student found to use dishonest methods to obtain **any** kind of advantage in this class.

Note on **sources**: using a source (other than your own imagination and insight) **requires** that you **cite** within the text to indicate exactly which ideas or words were found at exactly what source. Failure to **clearly** indicate the source of one's ideas **is** plagiarism. If you have any doubt, cite. No one has ever failed a course for over-citing.

Plagiarism Detection: Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review for the detection of plagiarism.

Other Important Information:

Students who require **accommodations** due to a **disability** to properly execute coursework must contact **Disability Services in Old Main 107** and arrange the necessary accommodations. Accommodations, in any situation, will be **limited**.

Assignments are not accepted late. In case of technical difficulty, take **extraordinary measures** to **prove** you had the essay completed **on-time** (send the full text in the body of an email, take pictures showing date and time, etc.), then submit the essay properly as quickly as possible.

Any essay may be **revised** for a higher grade; however, all revisions **require** the student(s) arrange a **meeting** to discuss the intended **revision**.

Contacting your college instructors is an **adult professional** activity. **Always** write emails **formally**, using **correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation**; be **clear** and **detailed** about who you are and what you need; make your purpose apparent in the subject line; most importantly, be **polite**.

Responsibility: **The student is responsible** for all information and material discussed in class, including any changes to the schedule or assignments. If forced to miss a class, it is **the student's responsibility** to obtain accurate information regarding what was missed.

Calendar: This schedule may be changed at any time; readings may be added, deleted, or moved. Regular class attendance insures you do not miss any changes.

I

January 17: Introduction

January 19: Small-Group Discussion of excerpts from *Mythology* by Edith Hamilton

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II

January 24: Reading Test; Lecture; Small-Group Discussion of *In Persuasion Nation*

January 26: Small-Group Discussion of *In Persuasion Nation*; Essay One Assigned

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III

- Monday January 30: W Drop Date -

January 31: Essay One Draft (800-1000) Due; ESSAY DEATHMATCH!

February 2: Issues in: *In Persuasion Nation*; Essay One (~1000) Due at 8pm

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IV

February 7: Reading Test; Lecture; Small-Group Discussion of *Rubyfruit Jungle*

February 9: Lecture/Discussion: *Rubyfruit Jungle*; Intro to *Candide*

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V

February 14: Reading Test; Lecture; Small-Group Discussion of *Candide* (Chapters 1-13)

February 16: Lecture/Discussion of *Candide*; Essay Two (Collaborative) Assigned

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VI

February 21: Reading Test; Lecture; Small-Group Discussion of *Candide* (Chapters 14-30)

February 23: Lecture/Discussion of *Candide*

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VII

- Monday February 27: George Saunders Reads on Drake Campus! -

February 28: After Hearing *In Persuasion Nation*

*March 1: CLASS WILL NOT MEET

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VIII

March 6: Essay Two (1000-1200) Draft Due; CARNIVAL OF THE ESSAYS

March 8: Issues in: *Rubyfruit Jungle* and *Candide*; (COLLABORATIVE) ESSAY TWO (~1200) DUE AT 8PM

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IX

March 13: Reading Test; Lecture; Small-Group Discussion of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

March 15: Discussion/Lecture: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*; Essay Three (Collaborative, Video) Assigned

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X

SPRING BREAK! 😊

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XI

March 27: Lecture; Small-Group Discussion of *Promethea*

March 29: Discussion/Lecture: *Promethea*

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XII

April 3: Video Essay Draft Due (~3 minutes); LIT CRIT FILM FESTIVAL

April 5: Issues in: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* and *Promethea*;
(Collaborative, Video) Essay Three (5-10 minutes) Due at 8pm

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XIII

April 10: Reading Test; Lecture; Small-Group Discussion of *Coming, Aphrodite!*

April 12: Lecture/Discussion: *Coming, Aphrodite!*; Essay Four Assigned

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XIV

April 17: Reading Test; Lecture; Small-Group Discussion of *The Things They Carried* (stories TBA)

April 19: Discussion/Lecture: *The Things They Carried*

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XV

April 24: Reading Test; Lecture; Small-Group Discussion of *The Things They Carried* (stories TBA)

April 26: Discussion/Lecture: *The Things They Carried*

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XVI

May 1: Essay Five (1000-1200) Draft Due, ESSAY TRIATHLON

May 3: Issues in: *Coming, Aphrodite!* and *The Things They Carried*; Final Exam Q&A;
Essay Four (~1200) Due at 8pm

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XVII

FINAL EXAM: MONDAY, MAY 7 12:00-1:50PM