

**ENGLISH 151W: Great Works of English Literature
Spring 2018**

Kiely Hall 061

Course Overview: This course will serve as an introduction to English literature, covering works of prose, poetry, and drama, arranged chronologically from the fourteenth through the twentieth centuries. Our organizing objective in this class will be to foster critical approaches to literary and cultural themes (skills, it goes without saying, as relevant outside as inside the English lit classroom). Therefore, we will put heavy emphasis on reading critically and actively, and on writing analytically.

As a writing-intensive course, English 151W focuses on the evaluation and improvement of student writing. Through essays, reading notes, and in-class writing exercises, students will develop their own critical voices and be able to express ideas in clear, sensitive prose.

This is a general education course that satisfies the Literature requirement for the Queens Core under the CUNY General Education structure called Pathways. The course also satisfies the Reading Literature requirement under the Perspectives curriculum that was in effect at Queens before CUNY introduced Pathways.

In honor of the 200th anniversary of the first publication of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, our course will focus on texts that explore what it means to be human. By the end of this class, students should have a firm grasp of the literary traditions that inspired and drew inspiration from *Frankenstein*.

Course Objectives: We will work on many issues related to reading and writing effectively over the semester. Over the semester, students will develop their abilities to:

- Become familiar with a range of literary genres and themes in different historical periods
- Identify and apply relevant theoretical lenses used in literary criticism
- Draw and articulate meaningful connections between texts across genres and periods
- Critically respond to literature in writing with an awareness of audience, medium, and purpose

Grading:

Essay 1:	25%
Essay 2:	25%
Blog post:	25%
Glossary:	10%
Other assignments:	10%
Participation:	5%

Policies:

Attendance

If you are not in class, you cannot participate and learn. Frequent unexcused absences will result in a lowered or failing grade for the course. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late, you will be counted as absent. If you have a legitimate reason to be absent or tardy, consult with me **beforehand**.

Community of learning

Our ability to learn depends on the cultivation of a respectful environment. No racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or otherwise threatening or disrespectful behavior will be tolerated. Students who disrupt our learning will be asked to leave and marked as absent for the day.

Resources

If you need extra help with a particular topic or skill outside of class, please contact me to schedule a meeting during my office hours. If you need more sustained individual attention, please schedule an appointment with the Writing Center:

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/SupportPrograms/SupportCenter/Pages/WritingCenter.aspx>

For guidance on the structure of the academic essay, please see Gordon Harvey, “Elements of the Academic Essay,”

https://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/hwp_brief_guides_elements.pdf.

For guidance on proper citation, formatting an academic paper, and composing a works cited page, please see the MLA Handbook (8th edition), <https://style.mla.org/> or <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means presenting someone else’s work as your own. Plagiarized papers will receive a failing grade. Multiple instances of plagiarism may result in failure of the entire course and/or further disciplinary action from the college. The best way to avoid plagiarism is to cite all your sources and clearly differentiate between your words and views and those of others. If you have any questions, please contact me or review the Queens College statement on plagiarism:

<https://library.qc.cuny.edu/research/tutorials/citandbib/plagiarism.php>.

Accommodations

If you require accommodations, please let me know right away and contact the Office of Special Services in Frese Hall Room 111 so we can work together to support you. More information is available on the Special Services website:

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/StudentLife/services/specialserv/Pages/default.aspx>.

Required Texts: All texts are available for purchase through the Queens College Online Bookstore, qc.textbookx.com.

Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*

William Godwin, *Caleb Williams*

Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*

Course Schedule (subject to change)

- Tuesday January 30 Introduction and syllabus
- Thursday February 1 Introduction to Wordpress
- Tuesday February 6 John Milton, *Paradise Lost*. Read the Argument for each book and the complete text of Book 10.
* Joseph Wittreich, *Why Milton Matters*, “Preface”
- Thursday February 8 John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, continued.
* Sharon Achinstein, “Citizen Milton”
* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Unassigned Lecture Notes [Milton and *Paradise Lost*]
- Tuesday February 13 William Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, Volume 1
* William Godwin, *Political Justice*, vol. 1, book 2, chapters 1-2 and 4
- Thursday February 15 William Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, Volume 2
* Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (excerpt)
- Thursday February 22 William Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, Volume 3
* William Godwin, “Essay on Sepulchres”
- Tuesday February 27 Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*
* Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (excerpt)
- Thursday March 1 Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*
* Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (excerpt)
- Tuesday March 6 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Christabel”
* Anya Taylor, “Coleridge’s ‘Christabel’ and the Phantom Soul”
- Thursday March 8 Byron, “Darkness”
* Gillen D’Arcy Wood, “1816, The Year Without a Summer”
- Tuesday March 13 Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Mont Blanc”
* Daisy Hay, *Young Romantics* (excerpt)
- Thursday March 15 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Volume 1
* Joyce Carol Oates, “*Frankenstein*’s Fallen Angel”
- Tuesday March 20 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Volume 2
* Mary Poovey, “‘My Hideous Progeny’: The Lady and the Monster”
- Thursday March 22 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Volume 3
* Siobhan Carroll, “Crusades Against Frost: *Frankenstein*, Polar Ice, and Climate Change in 1818”

- Tuesday March 27 **Essay 1 Workshop**
- Thursday March 29 **Essay 1 Due**
Mary Shelley, “On Ghosts”
* Robert Mitchell, “Suspended Animation, Slow Time, and the Poetics of Trance”
- Tuesday April 10 Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Chapters 1-5
* Vladimir Nabokov, “A Phenomenon of Style”
- Thursday April 12 Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Chapters 6-10
* Anne Stiles, “Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde* and the Double Brain”
- Tuesday April 17 Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, Parts 1-4
* Ihab Hassan, “Prometheus as Performer: Toward a Posthumanist Culture?”
- Thursday April 19 Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, Parts 5-7
* Lawrence Buell, “Toxic Discourse”
- Tuesday April 24 Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, Parts 8-11
* Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology* (excerpt)
- Thursday April 26 Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, Parts 12-15
* Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny”
* Masahiro Mori, “The Uncanny Valley”
- Tuesday May 1 Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, Part 1
* Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (excerpt)
- Thursday May 3 **Essay 2 Proposals Due**
Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, Part 2
* John Marks, “Clone Stories: ‘Shallow are the souls that have forgotten how to shudder’”
- Tuesday May 8 Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, Part 3
* Keith McDonald, “Days of Past Futures: ‘Never Let Me Go’ as ‘Speculative Memoir’”
- Thursday May 10 **Workshop Essay 2**
- Tuesday May 15 **Essay 2 Due**
In-class viewing, *The Bride of Frankenstein*

Assignments

Blog Post

Each week, one or two students will be responsible for reading and introducing supplementary materials related to our class reading. Each student will compose a blog post on their reading. This blog post is due 48 hours* before the related class discussion.

Blog posts receiving full credit will be 900-1,200 words and include:

- A summary of the reading that introduces the material in a manner appropriate to the audience (your classmates);
- A critique of the supplemental material that suggests alternate interpretations or points to places where the author's argument might be elaborated or expanded in new directions;
- An examination of meaningful connections to the related reading and to other readings this semester;
- At least three discussion questions.

Every student will read each blog post carefully and submit a substantive response to at least ten blog posts by the end of the semester. This will count as part of your grade categorized under "Other Assignments."

* Exception: The two blog posts related to our reading of *Paradise Lost* will be due 24 hours before the class discussion.

Glossary

Each student will contribute two entries to our collaborative digital glossary. These entries are due one week after the student's blog post is submitted.

Glossary entries receiving full credit will be 250-500 words and include:

- Proper MLA-style citation for all sources consulted;
- A clear, succinct definition of the term;
- An illustrative example from our class reading;
- At least two links to related terms in the glossary.

Other Assignments

Other assignments, which total 10% of your final grade, will include:

- At least ten substantive responses to your peers' blog posts;
- In-class assignments including free-writes, group work, quizzes, and low-stakes creative projects.

In-class work must be completed in class and cannot be made up. Each student can miss up to two in-class assignments and still receive full credit for this portion of the final grade.

Essay 1

In a 5-7 page essay analytical essay, use a close reading of up to three interrelated passages from any one primary reading from this unit to analyze the relationship the narrative constructs between language and power.

Essay 2

Interpret the relationship between any two texts from this unit

-OR-

Re-interpret (or repurpose) any text from this unit to create your own narrative.

This interpretation can take any form you choose: you may choose to write a standard 5-7 page college essay (that is, respond using text), or you may choose to use other forms and materials appropriate to your interpretation.

Every interpretation, regardless of media, must be accompanied by a 3-4 page reflection explaining:

- The *purpose* of your project (the interpretation it advances);
- How the *form* of your project serves that purpose;
- The *methods* you employed in realizing your project;
- The *audience* you intend for your project and the *conditions* under which you intend this audience to encounter your project; and
- The *process* that led from the project's conception to its completion.

This can be an individual project or a collaborative project, but if you choose to collaborate, each student in the group must compose the reflection independently.

If your project requires class time (for a performance, for example), you must email me by May 8 with an estimated runtime.

Proposals addressing the first four points in the reflection are due May 3. By May 10, you should have completed enough of your project to identify potential hurdles to its completion. Please bring to class on May 10 your project-in-process (or draft essay), along with an updated proposal.

The final deadline for completed projects is May 15.

Glossary terms

Abject
Allegory
Allusion
Ambiguity
Anthropocene
Archetype
Canon
Couplet
Darwinian
Deconstruction
Doppelgänger
Dystopia
Ecocriticism
Enjambment
Epic poetry
Epistolary
The Fall
Feminist literary criticism
Frame narrative
French Revolution (1789)
Galvanism
Globalization
Gothic
Hermeneutics
Imagery
Linnaean
Metaphor
Metonymy
Motif
Narrative
Narrator
The Northwest Passage
Ontology
The Other
Poetic foot
Poetic meter
Posthumanism
Prometheus
Psychoanalytic literary theory
Queer theory
Romanticism
Scansion
Sublime
Supernatural
Symbolism
Sympathy
Travel literature
The uncanny
The uncanny valley
Unreliable narrator
Utopia
Victorian (literary period)