Course Syllabus

Section 02W

ENGL 3000

RESEARCH & METHODOLOGY

BEING TOGETHER

DR. FINCK

FALL 2020

Meeting: Tuesdays & Thursdays | Pafford 307 | 5:30 PM - 6:45 PM
Asynchronously online, w/ synchronous meetings by request
This class serves two important purposes in the major: 1) it introduces students to representative approaches to scholarship in the field of literary studies, and 2) it equips students with the tools to develop timely and relevant literary research projects of their own. To accomplish these aims, we will practice applying a series of analytical frameworks to literary texts, including poems, short fiction, and one novel, as students cultivate good, critical reading habits and sharpen their research skills. Required for the major and minor in English. Only six hours of upper division work may be taken before the completion of this course. Not offered in the summer session.

This semester’s course combines the central themes of kinship, relationship, and community formation with theories of the interpersonal and the social to ask, What really brings us together? What divides us? What distinguishes us from other forms of life? Emphasizing such discourses as Marxism, queer & gender studies, postcolonial and race studies, trauma and affect theories, posthumanism, and ecocriticism, this approach draws out the role of literary studies in collective projects of social, economic, and environmental justice.

Prerequisites:
ENGL 1101 and ENGL 1102
Materials Needed

Texts:


All other readings will be made available via Course Den. (I promise we are not just reading two books by white dudes.)

Learning Outcomes

Students will learn to:

- Recognize the essentials of representative critical approaches that they will encounter in the major;
- Apply representative critical approaches to explain elements of their reading;
- Interpret their reading in the context of basic research as performed in the disciplines of English studies;
- Apply discipline-specific methods to discuss and write about literary texts;
- Argue, in thesis-driven and research-supported analytical prose, for a basic interpretation of literary texts.

Evaluation

Criteria:

Engagement (Did you do the things?) - 15%
Weekly writing/discussions & skills workshops (How well did you do the things?) - 20%
2 short skills-based papers (15% each) - 30% total
1 short video presentation of your research w/ a bibliography - 15%
1 research project - 20%

Short descriptions of these assignments appear below. Detailed assignment sheets will be distributed and discussed, along with other resources, in advance of each requirement.
Grading Scale:

A+ = 98 | A = 95 | A- = 92
B+ = 88 | B = 85 | B- = 82
C+ = 78 | C = 75 | C- = 72
D+ = 68 | D = 65 | D- = 62
F = Insufficient Credit

WRITE WITHOUT FEAR.

EDIT WITHOUT MERCY.
Throughout the duration of the course, you will be working on your own, independent literary research project. This project will be entirely of your own design and can derive from one of your short papers, your contributions to our weekly discussions, a particular reading you liked and wish to spend more time with, or somewhere else entirely, like another course you are taking, so long as it clearly engages skills and texts from this course.

It is very important that these projects genuinely interest you because one of the habits we are cultivating through this assignment is a self-motivated, sustained practice of researching and writing about your ideas. In other words, this assignment requires you to be able to work on it a little at a time, over a long period of time, which is how academic research projects take shape.

However, the assignment does come with a few checkpoints during the semester to keep you focused:

1) Completion of the Library Den skills course by 9/27

2) A bibliography and brief video presentation of your research, to be shared with the class, due 11/18

3) The final paper, submitted at the end of the course

I would love to meet with each and every one of you individually—in person or remotely—to discuss these projects, so don’t hesitate to request meetings with me early and often in this process!

1400 words
Paper 1: Object Lessons Essay

Object Lessons are intellectual exercises that investigate a single object through a variety of approaches in order to reveal something unexpected about that object in its relation to culture.

Your Object Lessons Essay, then, will focus on a particular object of your choosing, examining that object according to the theoretical precepts laid out in Part 1 of *Ten Lessons in Theory*. We will define "object" broadly for the purposes of this assignment, and you will be free to select which of the first five lessons from the text you will use to guide your examination.

850 words

Paper 2: "Good Trouble" Essay

In a 2018 tweet, the late Rep. John Lewis urges us to "get in good trouble, necessary trouble" as a means of fighting despair and changing what is untenable about the world around us. Likewise, *Ten Lessons* posits that theory and criticism co-articulate a series of "trouble-making transformations" of "common knowledge" that are useful to such projects.

Using one of the contemporary critical lenses we discuss in the course, including historical materialism, queer & gender studies, postcolonial & race studies, trauma & affect theories, posthumanism, and ecocriticism, this essay will put literary scholarship in conversation with social, economic, and environmental justice movements.

850 words
Course Policies

Etiquette

“Netiquette” is a set of rules for behaving acceptably in an online environment—an online classroom, in this case. In an online learning environment, some of the generally accepted rules for communicating digitally will still apply; however, some will be slightly different from those with which you might be familiar. The following bullet points cover some basics to communicating in an online classroom:

- Be sensitive to the fact that you’re interacting with live human beings via this technology, and human beings possess different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, different abilities, and different political and religious beliefs. It’s okay to have intellectual disagreements or debates related to course content—in fact, it’s encouraged—but failure to do so respectfully will not be tolerated by me or the community. Personal attacks and/or racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, or classist comments carry a one-strike policy here. This isn’t Reddit.

- Use good taste when composing your responses in discussions with others. Profanity, which I personally enjoy, should be avoided in the context of writing responses and workshop commentary, both because you cannot anticipate the reactions of your peers and because it is wise to use all writing you do in this environment as an opportunity to practice developing a professional communication style. Also consider that slang can be misunderstood or misinterpreted, so be careful with it. Don’t, for instance, use all capital letters when composing your responses as this is considered shouting on the Internet and is regarded as impolite or aggressive. It can also be stressful on the eye when trying to read your message.

- Be careful when using acronyms. If you use an acronym it is best to spell out its meaning first, then put the acronym in parentheses afterward, for example: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). After that you can use the acronym freely throughout your message. Use clear and consistent grammar and spelling, and avoid using text-messaging shortcuts. Should you require additional help with this, please visit Purdue’s OWL (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html).

Communication

Though I will often communicate with you about course content and assignments using Course Den and welcome you to do the same, please email only from your UWG account to discuss final grades (because FERPA) or with time-sensitive questions or requests, as I am often likely to see this correspondence sooner. Though I will often reply to your emails promptly, please allow 24 hours for a response during the week (48 hours over the weekend) before sending a follow-up email or message and plan accordingly. Remember that email is another opportunity to practice good writing techniques—always include a greeting and a closing with your name. Also, be sure to proofread for clarity, spelling, and grammar. Studies show that well-written, courteous emails are better received and more likely to lead to rapid and favorable replies than those that are hastily written or inappropriate in tone.
Submission of Assignments

Required reading assignments should be completed on/by the date they are listed in the Course Schedule.

Weekly writing assignments should be submitted following each reading assignment and will be assessed weekly.

All major, written assignments should be submitted on Course Den in the appropriate Assignment folder or Discussion location by midnight on dates they are due in the Course Schedule. Emailed files will not be accepted, except in the case of verified server failure (i.e. system-wide Course Den maintenance). Major assignments need to be completed in or converted to .DOCX or .PDF formats. I grade in Turnitin, which does not accept other file formats, and so your assignments will not be accepted if they are in another format, like Pages or .TXT, even though these are common file types.

Late work is accepted on a case-by-case basis, but only in extreme circumstances and with proper communication between student and instructor. Please note that this is not an entirely asynchronous online course, so you will not be permitted to submit all of your work at the last minute. Some activities will require collaboration with other students, so you must keep pace with the class.

Preparedness

Learning to take detailed notes and annotate texts is crucial to succeed in most college classes, and this one, though it takes place online, is no exception. You are expected to take notes as you read independently and to structure your responses to texts around those notes, referring to specific ideas and passages from course materials. Though I will not be monitoring this stage in your writing process, it will be apparent from the quality of your work whether you kept good notes on the thoughts and questions you had as you read. I recommend highlighting or underlining ideas and language you find interesting or that seem important to you, concepts you do not understand, vocabulary with which you are unfamiliar and will need to look up, and moments in course readings that demonstrate useful writing skills. Use different colors or symbols to indicate which of these each moment you’ve marked reflects. For this reason, printing the readings from Course Den is recommended, though you can annotate digitally with many document viewers.
University Policies

**Academic Support**

Accessibility Services: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact Accessibility Services (https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php).

Center for Academic Success: The Center for Academic Success (http://www.westga.edu/cas/) provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu.

University Writing Center: The University Writing Center (https://www.westga.edu/writing/) assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu.

**Online Courses**

UWG takes students’ privacy concerns seriously: technology-enhanced and partially and fully online courses use sites and entities beyond UWG and students have the right to know the privacy policies of these entities. For more information on privacy and accessibility for the most commonly used sites, as well as technology requirements visit the UWG Online site (https://uwgonline.westga.edu/).

Students enrolled in online courses can find answers to many of their questions in the Online/Off-Campus Student Guide (http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php).

If a student is experiencing distress and needs help, please see the resources available at the UWG Cares (http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/) site. Online counseling (https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/index.php) is also available for online students.
Honor Code

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student’s conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student’s account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the Student Handbook (https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpsa/handbook-code-of-conduct.php).

UWG Email Policy

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to check his or her email.

ELL Resources

If you are a student having difficulty with English language skills, and/or U.S. culture is not your home culture, specialized resources are available to help you succeed. Please visit the E.L.L. resource page for more information.
Credit Hour Policy

The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

Mental Health Support

If you or another student find that you are experiencing a mental health issue, free confidential services are available on campus in the Counseling Center. Students who have experienced sexual or domestic violence may receive confidential medical and advocacy services with the Patient Advocates in Health Services. To report a concern anonymously, please go to UWGcares.

COVID-19

Online Instruction: Students should be aware and plan ahead for the possibility of having to complete all courses online. This means talking with your instructors about what minimum technical requirements (software and hardware) will be required should your class move online or a student's personal needs dictate. This also includes making plans for internet access at whatever location participation may occur.

Face Coverings: Effective July 15, 2020, University System of Georgia institutions, including the University of West Georgia, will require all faculty, staff, students, and visitors to wear an appropriate face covering while inside campus facilities/buildings where six feet social distancing may not always be possible. Face covering use will be in addition to and is not a substitute for social distancing. Face coverings are not required in campus outdoor settings where social distancing requirements are met. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area. Reasonable accommodations may be made for those who are unable to wear a face covering for documented health reasons.

For more information about UWG COVID-19 guidance for students visit the Student FAQ webpage (https://www.westga.edu/student-services/health/coronavirus-info/return-to-campus/students-faq-return-to-campus.php).
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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>8/12-8/16</th>
<th>Introductions</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Scan the syllabus and familiarize yourself with the location of materials on Course Den.</td>
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<td>Watch my introduction video, and create and upload your own introduction video by Sunday, 8/16, at midnight.</td>
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<th>Week 2</th>
<th>8/17-8/23</th>
<th>What is Theory?</th>
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<td>Complete Weekly Writing #1.</td>
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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>8/24-8/30</th>
<th>Gender &amp; Performativity</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Read &quot;Lesson One: 'The world must be made to mean'&quot; in Calvin Thomas's Ten Lessons in Theory and Judith Butler's &quot;Performative Acts and Gender Constitution&quot; (PDF on Course Den).</td>
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<td>Complete Weekly Writing #2.</td>
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<th>Week 4</th>
<th>8/31-9/6</th>
<th>Psychoanalysis (Sort Of)</th>
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<td>Read &quot;Lesson Two: 'Meaning is the polite word for pleasure'&quot; in Calvin Thomas's Ten Lessons in Theory and Lauren Berlant's &quot;Cruel Optimism: On Marx, Loss and the Senses&quot; (PDF on Course Den).</td>
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<td>Complete Weekly Writing #3.</td>
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<th>Week 5</th>
<th>9/7-9/13</th>
<th>Structuralism/Poststructuralism</th>
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<td>Read &quot;Lesson Three: 'Language is by nature fictional'&quot; in Calvin Thomas's Ten Lessons in Theory and watch Beyoncé’s &quot;Formation&quot; (link on Course Den). Optional: Check out the short piece on René Magritte's The Treachery of Images (link on Course Den).</td>
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<td>Review the assignment sheet and other resources for Paper 1.</td>
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<td>Complete Weekly Writing #4.</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>9/14-9/20</td>
<td>Queer Theory</td>
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| Read "Lesson Four: 'Desire must be taken literally''" in Calvin Thomas's *Ten Lessons in Theory* and J. Jack Halberstam's "The Queer Art of Failure" (PDF on Course Den). Optional supplemental reading: Leo Bersani's "Is the Rectum a Grave?"
| Complete Weekly Writing #5. |

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<th>Week 7</th>
<th>9/21-9/27</th>
<th>Critical Race Theory</th>
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<td>Read &quot;Lesson Five: 'You are not yourself''&quot; in Calvin Thomas's <em>Ten Lessons in Theory</em> and Joshua Bennett’s &quot;Being Property Once Myself: Blackness and the End of Man&quot; (PDF on Course Den).</td>
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<td>Complete Weekly Writing #6.</td>
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<td>Complete Library Den skills course by Sunday, 9/27, at midnight.</td>
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<th>Week 8</th>
<th>9/28-10/4</th>
<th>Writing About Literature</th>
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<td>Read &quot;Lesson Seven: 'There is no document of civilization that is not at the same time a document of barbarism''&quot; in Calvin Thomas's <em>Ten Lessons in Theory</em>. We will use this premise as an introduction to <em>Cloud Atlas</em>, which we will begin next week.</td>
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<td>Paper #1: Object Lessons Essay due on Course Den by Sunday, 10/4, at midnight.</td>
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<th>Week 9</th>
<th>10/5-10/11</th>
<th>Postcolonial Studies &amp; Trauma</th>
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<td>Begin <em>Cloud Atlas</em>. Read the first part of &quot;The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing&quot; (pp. 3-39), keeping in mind the terms and concepts from Lesson Seven (last week's reading).</td>
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<td>Review the assignment sheet and other resources for Paper 2.</td>
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<td>Complete Weekly Writing #7.</td>
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<th>Week 10</th>
<th>10/12-10/18</th>
<th>Affect Theory</th>
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<td>Read the first part of &quot;Letters from Zedelghem&quot; in <em>Cloud Atlas</em> (pp. 43-86) and Sara Ahmed's &quot;Not in the Mood&quot; (PDF on Course Den).</td>
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<td>Complete Weekly Writing #8.</td>
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<th>Week 11</th>
<th>10/19-10/25</th>
<th>Ecocriticism</th>
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<td>Read the first part of &quot;Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery&quot; (pp. 89-142) and Donna Haraway's &quot;Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Cthulucene: Making Kin&quot; (PDF on Course Den).</td>
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<td>Complete Weekly Writing #9.</td>
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Week 12
10/26-11/1
Posthumanism

Now that you know how *Cloud Atlas* works, I propose skipping "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish," and going straight to the first part of "An Orison of Sonmi-451" (pp. 185-236). You can read Tim Cavendish if you have time, but this week's conversation will not require in-depth knowledge of that chapter. We will, however, continue to talk about the Haraway essay from last week.

Complete Weekly Writing #10.

Week 13
11/2-11/8
Synthesis

Read "Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After" (pp. 239-309) in *Cloud Atlas*.


Week 14
11/9-11/15
Cloud Atlas Zoom Party!

Finish *Cloud Atlas*.

Attend optional synchronous discussion of *Cloud Atlas* as a theoretical novel (details forthcoming).

Week 15
11/16-11/22
Presentations

Bibliographies and Video Presentations of your research are due by midnight on Wednesday, 11/18. Post them to the designated discussion in Course Den by this deadline. By Sunday, 11/22, watch, comment on, and upvote some of your peers' presentations.

Week 16
11/23-11/29
Thanksgiving

There are no new assignments for this week. Work on your Research Projects during the first part of the week, and enjoy your break during the second.

Week 17
11/30-12/6
Research Projects

There is no final exam in this class.

Research Projects are due on Course Den by Tuesday, 12/1, at midnight.