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Fall 2018

Office # 3154 Tisch Hall

Office hours: M, W, 12:30-1:30

## ENG 298

### Introduction to Literary Studies: Challenging the Canon

What makes certain books “must reads,” certain writers “foundational”? What is the difference between “popular fiction” and “literature”? In answering these questions, this course challenges the assumptions behind canon formation by asking, what and who do these categories exclude? As we read a survey of literature from the medieval period to the present, we will interrogate what makes certain authors and certain texts central and what cultural and historical forces have kept other texts in the margins. Together we will explore a variety of texts from the medieval period to the present. We will read poetry, plays, short stories, and at least one novel. We will read canonical authors such as Shakespeare, highly awarded authors such as Salman Rushdie, as well work from Claudia Rankine, Herman Melville, Lin Manuel-Miranda, Sappho, Susanna Rowson, and anonymous poets. Along the way, we will work to center women writers, writers of color, and LGBTQ writers. We will read English and American writers as well as some international texts in English and in translation.

This course aims to also provide introductory familiarity with some of the core skills in critical analysis such as close reading. We will practice paying attention to stylistic and formal elements while also considering the historical, social, and cultural context surrounding each text. Discussion and active participation will be expected. This course will be writing intensive, with weekly discussion posts, several short assignments, and two major essays. There will be the opportunity to submit creative work for at least one of the short assignments. This course provides familiarity with the texts, methods, and writing techniques that are foundational to the English Major, although students from all disciplines are welcome. The primary goal of the course is to develop reading and writing habits that will serve majors and non-majors alike.

Through taking English 298, you will

- become familiar with a wide-ranging body of literature
- associate each particular text with its dominant cultural contexts as well as its place in the literary canon
- articulate the stylistic and formal features of a text and interpret them through close reading
- discuss the factors behind canon formation and the way that textual authority is constructed by particular texts and their readers
- produce short responses and essay length arguments that present analytic arguments according to the norms of academic discourse

#### Course Materials

For most of these texts, it doesn't matter which print edition you buy. For Sappho and *Hamlet*, though, as we will discuss, the editorial choices and translations make an enormous difference—please only buy the editions listed.

- Sappho, *If not, Winter* ed. Ann Carson (edition important)
- *Hamlet*, (Arden 3<sup>rd</sup> edition \*The texts of 1603 1<sup>st</sup> 1623\* ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor)
- Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* (any edition fine)
- Herman Melville, *Typee* (any edition fine)
- Arthur Conan Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia” and “The Redheaded League” (found in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* or *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*)

- Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (any edition fine)
- Claudia Rankine, *Citizen* (any edition fine)

The Following Texts will be available on the Canvas site:

- Yopie Prins, "Introduction," *Victorian Sappho*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999.
- Selected Medieval Lyric Poems
- Tom Vanderbilt, "Why is Literary Fame so Unpredictable?" *The New Yorker*, May 21 2012.
- Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton* (links to libretto and music)
- Ginsburgh, Victor and Meyers, Sheila. "Quantitative Approaches to Valuation in the Arts, with an Application to Movies." *Beyond Price: Value in Culture, Economics, and the Arts*. Ed. Michael Hutter and David Throsby. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008. 179-200.
- Raymond Williams excerpt from *Marxism and Literature* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977.

Major Assignments:

- 5 mini-essays (rename) (3-4 pages) 10 % each
- Anthology Review (2 pages): 10%
- Final Paper (7-8 pages) 20%
- 10 Canvas Posts (100-150 words) 10%
- Attendance and participation 10%

Daily Schedule

Day 1:

UNIT ONE: UNSTABLE AUTHORITY

Day 2: Sappho, select poems

Day 3: Sappho, select poems

Yopie Prins "Introduction," *Victorian Sappho* (on Canvas)

Canvas post due 10 am

Day 4: Selected Medieval Lyric (on Canvas)

Day 5: Selected Medieval Lyric (on Canvas)

Canvas post due 10 am

Day 6: Hamlet Acts 1-2

Day 7: Hamlet Acts 3-4

Canvas post due 10 am

Day 8: Hamlet Act 5, skim through Q1 text

\*2 response papers due by \_\_\_\_\_\*

## UNIT TWO: WHAT MAKES A BESTSELLER

Day 9: *Charlotte Temple*

Canvas post due 10 am

Day 10: *Charlotte Temple*

Day 11: *Typee*

Canvas post due 10 am

Day 12: *Typee*

Day 12: Doyle, "A Scandal in Bohemia"

Canvas post due 10 am

Day 14: Doyle, "The Redheaded League"

\*2 response papers due by \_\_\_\_\_\*

## UNIT THREE: ENCOUNTERING JUDGEMENT

Day 15: Tom Vanderbilt, "Why is Literary Fame so Unpredictable?"

Library Day!

\*Anthology Review due \_\_\_\_\_\*

Day 16: *Midnight's Children*

Day 17: *Midnight's Children*

Canvas post due 10 am

Day 18: *Midnight's Children*

Day 19: *Midnight's Children*

Canvas post due 10 am

Day 20: *Midnight's Children*

Day 21: *Midnight's Children*

\*response paper due by \_\_\_\_\_\*

## UNIT FOUR: "WHO TELLS YOUR STORY"

Day 22: *Hamilton* Act I (read and listen)

Day 23: *Hamilton* Act 2 (read and listen)

Canvas post due 10 am

Day 24: *Hamilton*: second listen

Day 25: *Citizen*

Canvas post due 10 am

Day 26: *Citizen* pgs:

\*response paper due by \_\_\_\_\_\*

Day 27: Ginsburgh and Weyers

Day 28: Raymond Williams

Day 29:

\*final paper due \_\_\_\_\_\*

### Attendance Policy

- As this is a discussion based course, it is crucial that you are present to participate in the conversation.
- You may miss two classes without a valid excuse and receive no penalty. After 2 absences, you will lose one point from your final grad for each additional absence. Please let me know as soon as you know that you will miss class and we can determine if it qualifies as an excused absence (the ideal is to have a doctor's note or some sort of documentation).
- Out of respect for your time, we will begin class punctually; I will count three late arrivals (more than 5 minutes) as one absence. If you are coming from another class and getting here on time is an issue, please let me know.

### Participation

We learn best when we are actively engaged in a classroom, when we are not just listening, but speaking. This class will be a space where we can try out new ideas and think through some issues together—in order for this to be the most effective, I expect every one of you to contribute to our conversation.

Participation can take many forms, including:

- reading a section of the text out loud
- offering a comment or reflection about the readings during class
- posing a question or responding to others' questions
- identifying a passage or section that you find difficult to understand
- sharing an insight from your writing assignment
- posting an observation or question on our online course site
- making links between our discussions and events in the wider world
- listening carefully and respectfully to other students' contributions.

Effective participation also means being an engaged reader, marking up your text and taking notes as you read.

### Computer Policy

- I would prefer that you use a print copy for all reading. Research shows that we absorb material better in print and I want you to be able to take notes and mark up your readings. If, for financial or accessibility reasons, an e-book is better, please let me know.
- On select days we may use computers in class—I will alert you of those days ahead of time so that you may prepare. I can provide access to a laptop if you do not have one.
- Cell phones provide a large distraction, both for you and your peers. As such, there will be a no cell phone policy in our space. If I see you using a phone, I will count you as absence for the day. Of course, if there is an emergency situation, just let me know that something is happening and you will be excused.

### Late Policy

Any late work will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day that it is late unless you talk with me BEFORE the assignment is due. Late canvas posts will not be accepted.

### Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is defined by the University of Michigan as “academic dishonesty may be understood as any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community. At a first offense, if it is minor, I will ask you to fix the issue immediately in order to receive a grade (improper formatting of citation). Any major offense (not citing a source, directly copying another’s words) or a repeated offense will be treated as a plagiarism case. You will be subject to one of the following consequences:

- You will fail the assignment and may fail the course.
- I will report the incident to the Director of the English Department Writing Program.
- I will also forward your case, with an explanatory letter and all pertinent materials, to the LSA Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.
- The Dean will determine an appropriate penalty, which may involve academic probation and/or community service.
- If you commit plagiarism while you are already on probation for plagiarism, you may be asked to leave the University.

### Office Hours

I am always around in my office, 3154 Tisch Hall, during my office hours, M W 12:30-1:130. I welcome you to come and chat with me at any point in your writing and reading process. I am happy to talk through ideas, troubleshoot writing issues, and go over past assignments. If you cannot make it into my office hours, just shoot me an email and I am happy to set up an appointment with you.

### Accommodations

- If you have a disability and need an accommodation to participate in this class or to complete course requirements, please ask Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to provide documentation of the accommodations that you need. Then, please share this documentation with me as soon as possible, preferably within the first few weeks of class. I will treat as private and confidential any information that you share.
- If you suspect that you may have a disability and would like to be tested, Services for Students with Disabilities can provide free screenings and referrals to low-cost diagnostic services.
- Here is the contact information for Services for Students with Disabilities:
  - location: G-664 Haven Hall
  - phone: 734-763-3000
  - website: <http://ssd.umich.edu/>
- If you do not have a documented disability but feel like you would benefit from further educational support for other reasons, please contact me. I greatly value inclusivity within the classroom and will work with you to find strategies and resources to ensure that you get the most out of this class.

## Diversity Resources

- This classroom constitutes a community, and in order to have a successful community, it is essential that *all* members of the community feel respected. I'll do my best to run class in a way that allows all voices to equally participate and feel comfortable in our space. If there is ever an instance where you do not feel comfortable or welcome for any reason, I urge you to talk with me about it.
- Here is the contact information for the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:
  - <https://odei.umich.edu/>
  - [odei-info@umich.edu](mailto:odei-info@umich.edu)
  - (734)-764-3982
  - Fleming Administration Building/ 503 Thompson St

## Mental Health Resources

- If you experience challenges that negatively affect your learning, such as anxiety, depression, interpersonal or sexual violence, difficulty with eating or sleeping, grief/loss, and alcohol or drug problems, the following several confidential services might be helpful:
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 734-764-8312
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) 24-Hour Crisis Line: 734-936-3333
- Psychiatric Emergency Services: 734-996-4747.

## Writing Resources

- The Sweetland Center for Writing—located at 1310 North Quad—is an amazing, free resource! If you would like additional feedback or assistance as you're planning, drafting, or revising your writing assignments, you can schedule an individual appointment with a Sweetland faculty member, drop in for a peer-tutoring session, correspond online with a peer tutor, or submit your work online to receive feedback within 72 hours.
- For more information, please visit: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/undergraduate>.