



Käthe Kollwitz, *The Survivors* (1923)

ENGL 1501W-003 | Spring 2017  
LITERATURE AND PUBLIC LIFE  
M/W 2:30-4:25 Akerman Hall 313  
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*The incontestable importance of the world of the novel, our insistence, in fact, on taking seriously the innumerable myths with which we have been provided for the last two centuries by the genius of writers, is not fully explained by the desire to escape. Romantic activities undoubtedly imply a rejection of reality. But this rejection is not a mere escapist flight, and might be interpreted as the retreat of the soul which...creates for itself, in its disappointment, a fictitious world in which ethics reigns alone.*

—Albert Camus, *The Rebel* (trans. Anthony Bower)

This section of ENGL 1501W will be organized around the question of what, if anything, literature can do to alleviate suffering in our society. Does reading about fictional people make us more empathetic and thus more likely to support reforms to aid real people? Do literature's imaginative worlds provide models of a better, more humane civilization? Does the critical attention literary texts require from their readers make us more intelligent political and social observers? On other hand: Is reading literature mere escapism or connoisseurship that dulls the social conscience? Does the emotion provoked by art distract us from the cold, rational, systemic thinking needed to reform society? Are we attacking the freedom of the imagination or of the individual when we ask writers and artists to be accountable to the public? We will attempt to answer these difficult questions about the relationship of literature to public life by reading a selection of major modern novels that address themselves, directly and indirectly, to the question of the writer's and the reader's responsibilities when faced with war, genocide, poverty, sexual violence, totalitarianism, racism, and other social ills. These texts explore such themes through complex uses of literary form and aesthetics. Our investigation, then, will moved both inward—toward the techniques and meanings of individual works—and outward—toward those works' connections to the world around us. To serve the latter end, a community-engaged-learning option (alongside other written assignments in this writing-intensive course) will help us to describe and evaluate the relationship between our fictional and non-fictional lives.

### Required Books<sup>1</sup>

Herman Melville, *Melville's Short Novels* (Norton)  
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (Harcourt)  
Vladimir Nabokov, *The Annotated Lolita* (Vintage)  
Toni Morrison, *Sula* (Vintage)  
Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (Vintage)

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<sup>1</sup> The books are available in the University Bookstore; please purchase the specified editions. Other readings will be made available on the course website; I expect you to read these as carefully as you would study print documents and to bring them to class—in print or onscreen—on the appropriate day.

**ENGL 1501W satisfies the Literature Core requirement.**

First, the course focuses on the analysis of written works of literature with an emphasis on the overarching theme of citizenship. Second, through a study of the formal dimensions of literature, such as the function of dialogue in Plato's *The Republic* or the symbolic role of animals in Phillip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, students learn the fundamental connections between language, literary technique, and the meaning of texts. Third, the course examines the social and historical contexts of literary works beginning with Plato and then focusing on contemporary masterpieces.

**ENGL 1501W satisfies the General Core guidelines.**

Students in ENGL 1501W engage in close analysis of texts on civic life and ethics to form a basis of knowledge about citizenship and ethics, which helps them form identities as national and global citizens. Students receive an interactive lecture twice each week, and they also explore the ongoing questions and concerns the lecture raises in discussion sections that meet separately each week.

**ENGL 1501W satisfies the Civic Life and Ethics theme.**

Using primarily fictional texts as mirrors of different societies, ENGL 1501W requires students to explore how characters in these societies have developed with or against each other, sometimes in verbal conflict or debate, thereby embodying opposing ethical principles. The course encourages students to develop, deepen, and challenge their personal values through not only intellectual and literary contact with the texts, but also innovative assignments which catapult their personal beliefs into the public sphere. Every writing assignment provides students with opportunities to identify and apply their knowledge of ethical problems they discover in texts, which the instructor helps them connect with problems happening now in American society.

**ENGL 1501W and Student Learning Outcomes**

ENGL 1501W teaches students to identify and define good citizenship in the world and to pose solutions for our country and world. The readings expose students to and require them to understand diverse philosophies and cultures, including Greek philosophy of which they may be completely unfamiliar. Being a course in literature dealing sometimes with speculative worlds, ENGL 1501W develops creativity in students in the belief that creativity is necessary to world-changing leaders capable of great and imaginative solutions. Dedicated to the notion of citizenship, ENGL 1501W naturally helps students acquire skills for effective citizenship and encourages them to speculating about ways they can make a difference in the world.

**ENGL 1501W is a Writing Intensive course.**

This course meets the Council on Liberal Education guidelines for a Writing Intensive course. This means that the course:

- integrates writing into course content, through writing assignments that work toward specific course objectives and writing activities that take place throughout the semester
- provides explicit instruction in writing
- requires a cumulative minimum of 2,500 words of formal writing apart from any informal writing activities and assignments
- includes at least one formal assignment that requires students to revise and resubmit drafts after receiving feedback from the course instructor
- requires that at least one-third of each student's final course grade must be tied to written work and that a student cannot pass the course and fail the writing component

## Assignments

### Grade breakdown.

#### *For service-learning students*

Participation	20%
Quizzes	20%
Journals	50%
Colloquium	10%

#### *For non-service-learning students*

Participation	10%
Quizzes	20%
Essays	60%
Colloquium	10%

*Participation.* I do not directly give an attendance grade but I do take roll. Be advised that there will be in-class exercises, assignments, and activities in this course that you will miss if you are absent. If you cannot be in class for any reason, please ask a classmate rather than the instructor for notes or a summary. If illness or other problems require you to miss more than a normal amount of class (1 or 2 meetings), please let me know. If you miss more than 2 meetings without a documented reason, your course grade may be affected. If you miss more than 4 meetings, you may be in danger of failing the course. Participation includes speaking up in class at least once a week, contributing to in-class activities, and/or attending my office hours or otherwise getting in touch with me. For service-learning students, an additional 10% for participation will be devoted toward your service hours themselves.

*Quizzes.* There will be brief quizzes, mostly short and information-based, given at the beginning of class from time to time throughout the semester. They will ask you to identify or produce vocabulary, facts, or passages and possibly to write short explanations of their significance. I will not try to trick you, since the main point is recall. As long as you attend class regularly, pay attention, and take careful notes, you should do fine on these. I have not listed them on the syllabus, but they won't be pop quizzes—I will give you fair warning. They cannot be made up.

*Journals.* Students who choose the service-learning track will focus their writing for their course on journals detailing their experiences, probably following a narrative template (first impressions, doing the work, reflections). These journals will be collected at the midterm, and you will then be given an opportunity to share your journals with other students in a peer review process. At the conclusion of the course, students will compile them into a portfolio, which will also include an overall *literary* assessment of your service-learning experience and how it connected for you to the course materials. See the course schedule for due dates. Journals should be submitted electronically in .doc or .docx formats and the name of your file should follow this format: yourlastname-journal.doc (example: pistelli-journal.doc). Late assignments will not be accepted without a documented reason. More detailed criteria for this assignment will be given later in the course.

*Essays.* Students who do not choose the service-learning option will write two formal research papers in this course. I will provide prompts and detailed assignments for these as the class progresses, but in general, they will be designed to give you practice in the basics of literary analysis (close reading, thesis development, research, etc.) in connection with contemporary social and political issues and your own community engagement. For the first essay, you will participate in a peer-review workshop before handing in a final draft to me. The first essay will be worth 20% of your grade and the second will be worth 40%. See the course schedule for due dates. Essays should be submitted electronically in .doc or .docx formats and the name of your file should follow this format: yourlastname-essay#.doc (example: pistelli-essay3.doc). Late assignments will not be accepted without a documented reason. More detailed criteria for this assignment will be given later in the course.

*Colloquium.* For service-learning students' final portfolio and non-service-learners' final essay, you will prepare a 10-minute presentation to the class detailing either your essay's argument or your journal's description of your service experience in a conference format; you will also be required to take questions from your classmates. This assignment will be graded both on your project's quality and on your public presentation of the material. More detail will be provided later in the course.

**Grades**

- *Grading Policy.* A (90-100): Outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements B (80-90): Significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements C (70-80): Meets the course requirements in every respect D (60-70): Worthy of credit, even though it fails to meet course requirements fully F (0-60): Work was not completed
- *Incompletes.* A grade of incomplete ("I") is given only in a genuine and documented emergency, and *only* for work which is due during the last weeks of the course. You must make arrangements for an incomplete before the last day of class.

**Disability Accommodations**

Any student with a documented disability condition who needs to arrange accommodations should contact the instructor and Disability Services (612-626-1333) at the beginning of the semester.

**Scholastic Dishonesty**

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University.

**Student Writing Support**

Students can get one-to-one-consultations on any course paper or writing project at Student Writing Support. Student Writing Support has several campus locations, including the main location in 15 Nicholson Hall. See <http://writing.umn.edu/> for details about locations, appointments, and online consultations.

**Student Conduct**

To avoid disruptions, please observe the following policies. Turn phones off and put them away before coming to class. During class, your attention should be directed toward whomever is speaking or to your assigned task. I strongly discourage use of laptops and other devices during class time (unless appropriate) as they tend to isolate the user and distract others; if you have a pressing need to use one, please come and talk to me about it.

**Offensive Material**

In this course, students will be required to read words or view images that they may consider offensive. The ideas expressed in any given text do not necessarily reflect the views of the instructor, the English Department, or the University of Minnesota. Course materials have been selected for their literary, cultural, and/or historical value, in order to achieve specific learning objectives and course goals. These materials are meant to be examined in the context of intellectual inquiry and critical analysis, as appropriate for a university-level course. If you are easily shocked and/or offended, please contact the instructor to discuss whether this course is suitable for you.

**Other Policies**

For extensive information about UMN policy regarding the above topics and others—Student Conduct Code; Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Class Room; Scholastic Dishonesty; Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences; Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials; Grading and Transcripts; Sexual Harassment; Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action; Disability Accommodations; Mental Health and Stress Management; and Academic Freedom—I strongly encourage you to visit the following link:

[http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/SYLLABUSREQUIREMENTS\\_APPA.html](http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/SYLLABUSREQUIREMENTS_APPA.html)

**What is service-learning?** Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Students use what they learn in the classroom to address community-identified issues. They not only learn about practical applications of their studies, they also become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform.

**What does service-learning look like at the University of Minnesota?**

- Students either work individually or in small groups with a community-based organization to address a community need;
- Students work with one organization over the course of the semester, either in a direct service role or on a specific project tied to the content of their academic course;
- The experience is relationship-based;
- Students' work with the organization will be ongoing throughout the semester, averaging 2-3 hours per week for approximately 30 hours (a minimum of 20 hours total is required).

**Why participate in service-learning?** Many people learn as well or better by doing as by reading or listening. Education is a function not only of lectures and books, but also of experience, and especially of connecting what one reads and hears with ongoing experiences and observation. Service-learning provides a hands-on approach to learning while also contributing the public good.

**Why am I getting credit for volunteering?** Attendance and participation in class sessions may form part of your final grade for a class, but typically most of your grade comes from other assignments that allow you to demonstrate what you have learned from lectures, readings, discussions, etc. Service-learning works the same way – your instructor may determine part of your course grade by the time you spend working with an organization, but more significantly, you are receiving credit for the learning connected to your experience in the community. This makes service-learning different from volunteering, where the primary emphasis is on the service being provided and the primary intended beneficiary is clearly the service recipient. The learning in service-learning is equally important, and it primarily benefits you, the learner. Think of your service-learning experience as a text you are learning from, but instead of reading it, you are living it. Unless you are able to articulate and connect what you learn from your course texts, from lectures, and from your experience in the community to the course concepts to your instructor in an acceptable way, you will not get credit for your work.

**What doesn't count for service-learning?** Here are some examples of when volunteer or community work may not be used to fulfill a service-learning requirement for a course. If you have any questions about what does or doesn't count, contact your faculty member and your service-learning coordinator.

- **On-Campus Service:** An important component of service-learning is the opportunity to engage with communities outside of campus and learn from new and different environments, so work done with and for a student organization or campus office or program, even if it is unpaid, will not fulfill service-learning requirements. There are some on-campus experiences that can count as service-learning if the work includes partnering with off-campus communities or individuals.
- **Work Study or Paid Work:** The spirit of service-learning is that it is unpaid work that benefits the community and enhances student learning. This is also a matter of fairness: while many students work, most students are not able to apply their paid work experiences to fulfilling service-learning requirements.
- **Working with immediate family:** Service-learning activities must adhere to all University policies. This includes the policy on Managing Nepotism and Personal Relationships, which prohibits individuals from teaching or supervising the employment of any member of their family or their partner. Since you are doing service-learning as part of an academic course, it would likewise be inappropriate for a member of your family or a significant other to serve as your service-learning supervisor.

**Does the time I spend traveling for service-learning count toward my required hours?** No, just as time spent traveling to and from class does not count as instructional time, and time spent traveling to and from a job is not compensated. When you schedule service-learning into your weekly activities, you need to allow enough time to get to and from your organization, but you should only record the hours you spend working at the organization.

**Can I be reimbursed for the costs of traveling to my service-learning site, like my bus fare?** No. Service-learning provides additional content for your class, just like any books you are required to purchase. Think of your transportation costs for service-learning as if you were assigned to purchase another book for the class instead.

**What if I'm doing service-learning in multiple courses this semester?** Most students in this situation want to know, "can I use the same placement for both courses?" The answer is often yes, as long as the work you'll be doing at your service-learning site has a clear connection to the course content for both classes. If you are in this situation, **contact your service-learning coordinator as soon as possible** and copy your instructors on the message to begin the process of making sure your organization is approved for both classes and discussing how many total hours of service-learning will be expected of you during the semester (students in this situation are asked to do more than the minimum number of hours required for one class). **You should only record the hours you spend at the organization once in the online system**, and your service-learning coordinator will also make sure that both of your instructors know how many hours you have completed by the end of the semester. If one of these courses is an internship, field experience or required for a professional license, it is unlikely you will be able to reduce your total hours and/or combine placements.

**Should I record the hours I spent at my pre-service training workshop?** You should record any time spent attending orientation and/or training sessions at your organization, but **do not record the hours you spend attending a pre-service training workshop offered on campus by the Center for Community- Engaged Learning** (Community Involvement in Practice, Critical Perspectives on Community Involvement, or the MLC Tutor Training), **even if your instructor is allowing you to count your workshop attendance toward your total hours for the semester**. All hours you record in the online system are submitted to your organization for your supervisor's approval, and s/he has no way of knowing whether or not you attended a training on campus. Your attendance at the pre-service training will be tracked in another part of the online system so your instructor can give you the appropriate credit.

**Academic integrity applies to community work done for academic credit** Any of the following actions constitute academic dishonesty within a community-based learning context and will be addressed in the same way as any other act of academic dishonesty. Incidents may also be referred to the [Office for Community Standards](#).

1. Misrepresenting hours completed at a community site or spent working on a community project. This includes documenting hours done in previous semesters or with an unauthorized organization.
2. Writing reflections or completing other assignments about events or activities the student did not actually participate in or attend at their community site. This includes drawing on community work done in previous semesters or with an unauthorized organization.

**The University of MN [Student Conduct Code](#) also applies to student behavior while doing community work for academic credit** Violations or potential violation of the student conduct code applies in any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or is related to University activities. Any potential violations reported to CCEL liaisons from community partners will be forwarded to the Office for Community Standards to be addressed.

**Accommodations for students registered with disability resource center doing community-engaged learning** If you are registered with the Disability Resource Center and use reasonable accommodations in your courses, you may also want to explore what accommodations may be useful in your community-engaged learning. CCEL staff can work with you on how to bring up accommodation needs at a community learning site, or assist you in finding a site that meets your health and/or accessibility needs. We can work closely with your instructor and/or your

Access Consultants to discuss the type of work environment and structure you need to be successful during your community experience. Additionally, we also strongly suggest having a conversation with your community supervisor in order to allow them to understand what you need to be successful.

**Confidentiality and Privacy Issues in community work** Be aware that through your community-engaged learning, you may come to know information about individuals that is covered by policies and ethical guidelines about confidentiality. You should speak to your community supervisor about how confidentiality obligations apply to you. Examples of how these issues might arise in your community engagement include:

1. Photography: You should never take photos of anyone at your community organization without first knowing the organization's policy for obtaining consent.
2. Personal Identifiers: Be careful about revealing information that could be used to personally identify individuals you work with at your community organization. This includes changing the names of people at your organization when submitting assignments for class.

**Criminal background checks are required for many community organizations** If the organization's volunteer application asks about any convictions and you have a criminal record, be honest. Failure to state convictions that are then uncovered in a background check will likely result in your immediate dismissal from the organization. If you are concerned that your record could disqualify you from the approved community-engaged learning options, please be proactive and discuss your options with your community-engaged learning liaison.

**Non-Discrimination in community work** According to the University of Minnesota Board of Regents policy on *Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action*, the University shall,

Provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

All CCEL partner organizations have verified that the engagement opportunities they offer to students are in compliance with this policy. If your faculty member allows community-engaged learning at an organization that is not a CCEL partner, CCEL staff will contact the organization to ensure their compliance with this non-discrimination policy before it will be approved for class credit.

**Religious Service** Faith-based organizations, including religious institutions such as churches, mosques, synagogues, or temples, can be community-engaged learning sites as long as they comply with the U of MN's non-discrimination policy. However, service done as part of an academic course cannot include any of the following religious activities: providing religious education/instruction, worship activities, or any form of proselytizing.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**(\*) = text is located on the course website (*moodle.umn.edu*)**Prologue. The Case for Literature**

09/06

- Introduction to the course

09/11

- Community-engaged-learning presentations

09/13

- Julianne Chiaet, "Novel Finding: Reading Literary Fiction Improves Empathy" (\*)
- Joseph Frankel, "Reading Literature Won't Give You Superpowers" (\*)
- Lee Siegel, "Should Literature Be Useful?" (\*)

**1. Isolatoes: The Individual and Society in Melville**

09/18

- Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener"

09/20

- Leo Marx, "Melville's Parable of the Walls"

09/25

- Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*, pp. 34-65

09/27

- Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*, pp. 65-102

10/02

- Herman Melville, *Billy Budd*, chapters 1-15

10/04

- Herman Melville, *Billy Budd*, chapters 16-31

**2. War/Roses: Beauty and Atrocity in Woolf**

10/09

- Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, pp. 3-70

10/11

- Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, pp. 70-130

10/16

- Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, pp. 130-191

10/18

- Stephen Daldry, *The Hours* (in-class screening)

10/23

- In-class peer review for Essay #1 (bring two print copies to class)

### 3. Glamor of Evil: Art and Morality in Nabokov

10/25

- Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, pp. 3-79

10/30

- Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, pp. 79-142
- Essay #1 due to Moodle by 11:59PM

11/01

- Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, pp. 229-309

11/03

- Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, pp. 229-309
- Vladimir Nabokov, "On a Book Entitled *Lolita*"

11/06

- Martin Green, "Tolstoy and Nabokov: The Morality of *Lolita*" (\*)
- Roxana Robinson, "Against *Lolita*" (\*)

### 4. A People's History: Community and Anarchy in Morrison

11/08

- Toni Morrison, "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" (\*)
- Toni Morrison, The Nobel Lecture in Literature (\*)

11/13

- Toni Morrison, *Sula*, Part One

11/15

- Toni Morrison, *Sula*, Part Two

11/20

- Gurleen Grewal, "Freedom's Absent Horizon: *Sula*" (\*)

11/22

- No class

### 5. Carers: Posthumanist Ethics and Aesthetics in Ishiguro

11/27

- Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*

11/29

- Mark Romanek, *Never Let Me Go* (in-class screening)

12/04

- In-class writing workshop/conferences for Essay#2

### Epilogue. The Case for Literature, Reprised

12/06

- Essay#2 presentations

12/11

- Essay#2 presentations
- Course evaluations

12/15

- Essay #2 due to Moodle by 11:59PM