



Darren Thompson, *No Place to Sit*

ENGL 1501W-005 | FALL 2018
LITERATURE AND PUBLIC LIFE
T/H 10:10-12:05 Pillsbury Hall 125B
Instructor: Dr. John Pistelli
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Storybook images are as indispensable to the basic human processes of world comprehension and self-definition (and hence personal motivation as well as purposeful group behavior) as are the formulas of physical science or the nomenclature of the social sciences. Such basic insights as may be derived from the make-believe examples of literature are, moreover, as immediately applicable to the most urgent problems of everyday life as are “scientific” solutions.

—Albert Murray, *The Hero and the Blues* (1973)

Description, Goals, and Objectives

This section of Literature and Public Life will focus on how American writers have addressed social, cultural, and political themes in fiction from the early nineteenth century to today. In short, we will treat the “and” in the course title as provoking a question: what *is* the relationship of literature to public life? How has the creative writing of this reputedly individualist nation conceptualized the relation of the self to communities and to society at large? We will explore how American fiction helps us to conceive of ourselves as citizens, subjects, or individuals; allow us to think through questions of power and identity (such as race, gender, class, and sexuality); invite us to reflect on our relationship to nature and technology; and prompt us to ethical thought about our responsibilities to others. Our course will take the form of a historical survey to show how literature has affected and been affected by shifts in political and cultural consciousness. We will move from the symbolic Romantic fiction of the early nineteenth century through the periods of realism, with its intention to document the world faithfully, and modernism, with its greater attention to psychology and language, in the early twentieth century; we will conclude with the late-twentieth-century postmodern and multicultural blending of genres and today’s development of a so-called new sincerity. We will also explore how literary works can be better understood through their authors’ biographies, their social and historical contexts, and their critical and scholarly reception. This writing-intensive course also requires you to respond to the themes of the course in formal and informal written work; and to encourage your own participation in public life, a community-engaged-learning option will give you the chance to collaborate with others on projects that serve the common good. By the end of this course, you will have become familiar with the basic formal characteristics of fiction; you will have had an introduction to the major artistic and historical currents of American literature; you will have developed writing skills in several genres (narration, exposition analysis, reflection, argumentation); and you will have had the opportunity to think through the relation between imaginative literature and everyday public life in America.

Required Books

- Toni Morrison, *Paradise* (Vintage), ISBN: 978-0804169882
- Joyce Carol Oates, ed., *The Oxford Book of American Short Stories*, second edition (Oxford UP), ISBN: 978-0199744398

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.

<i>For CEL students</i>		<i>For non-CEL students</i>	
Essays (w/service hrs.)	50%	Essays	50%
Exams	20%	Exams	20%
Participation	10%	Participation	10%
Paragraphs	10%	Paragraphs	10%
Discussions	5%	Discussions	5%
Colloquium	5%	Colloquium	5%

Essays. Students who choose the CEL track will focus their writing for their course on a 2500-word document detailing their experiences; these will combine narrative, exposition, analysis, reflection, and argument into a total account of your CEL experience. The first portion of this project (1250 words) will be collected at the midterm; the midterm and final submissions will be worth 20% each of your grade. An additional 10% of the essay grade will be devoted toward rewarding/penalizing your service hours themselves. Students who do not choose the CEL option will write two formal research papers in this course, each worth 25%. 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 in connection with contemporary social and political issues and your own community engagement; they will thus also combine narrative, exposition, analysis, reflection, and argument.

Exams. There will be a midterm and a final exam in this course, which will ask you to identify or produce vocabulary, facts, or passages, to write short analyses, and/or to answer essay questions. As long as you attend class regularly, pay attention, take careful notes, and answer the discussion questions, you should do fine on these. They cannot be made up without a documented reason.

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.

Discussions. For each meeting, one student will be tasked with writing four discussion questions for the class to consider. (The day on which you will have to prepare questions will be chosen by lottery at the beginning of the semester.) These questions should be primarily interpretative, not factual—the point is to provoke a conversation about the meaning or implications of the text under discussion. Please submit your questions to me before class by email on the day it is your turn.

Paragraphs. Five paragraphs in five different genres of writing—narrative, exposition, analysis, reflection, argumentation—will be submitted at various points and in response to specific prompts (given in the course schedule).

Colloquium. For both CEL students' overall essay and non-CEL students' final essays, you will prepare a 10-minute presentation to the class detailing either your essay's argument or your journal's description of your CEL 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.

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

The University of Minnesota views disability as an important aspect of diversity, and is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- If you have, or you think you have, a disability in any area such as mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical, please contact the DRC office on your campus (612-626-1333) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
- Students with short-term disabilities, such as a broken arm, can often work with instructors to minimize classroom barriers. In situations where additional assistance is needed, students should contact the DRC as noted above.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have a disability accommodation letter dated for this semester or this year, please contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have questions or concerns about your accommodations please contact your access consultant/disability specialist.

Additional information is available on the DRC website: diversity.umn.edu/disability or email drc@umn.edu with questions.

Student Academic Integrity and Scholastic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as: 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. Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Writing Support

Student Writing Support (SWS) offers free writing instruction for all University of Minnesota students—graduate and undergraduate—at all stages of the writing process. In face-to-face and online collaborative consultations, SWS consultants from across the disciplines help students develop productive writing habits and revision strategies. Consulting is available by appointment online and in Nicholson Hall, and on a walk-in basis in Appleby Hall. For more information, call 612-625-1893 or go to writing.umn.edu/sws. In addition, SWS offers a number of web-based resources on topics such as avoiding plagiarism, documenting sources, and planning and completing a writing project.

Students for Whom English is a Second Language (Department Policy)

University policy requires that undergraduate students in the same class be held to the same standards of academic performance and accomplishment. Students for whom English is a second language, however, may have difficulty with the readings, lectures, discussions, and writing assignments in a course. The University offers many resources to assist non-native speakers of English, including courses and consultations through the [Minnesota English Language Program](#), the [Center for Writing](#), the [Department of Writing Studies](#), and [International Student and Scholar Services](#).

Student Conduct Code

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community. As a student at the University you are expected to adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code. Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities." To review the University's Student Conduct Code, please see: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf

Sexual Misconduct

I want to let you know that, in my role as a University employee, I am required to share information that I learn about possible sexual misconduct with the campus Title IX office that addresses these concerns. This allows a Title IX staff member to reach out to those who have experienced sexual misconduct to provide information about the personal support resources and options for investigation that they can choose to access. You are welcome to talk with me about concerns related to sexual misconduct. You can also or alternately choose to talk with a confidential resource; the University offers victim-advocacy support professionals, health services professionals and counselors that will not share information that they learn about sexual misconduct. (This applies to teaching assistants as well.)

Offensive Material (Department Policy)

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; 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; and more—I strongly encourage that you visit the following link: <https://cla.umn.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/classroom-policies>

Community-Engaged Learning

What is community-engaged learning? Community-engaged 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. It gives you a chance to use what you are learning in the classroom to address community-identified issues, and to learn more about course topics from community members with expertise and experience. You'll not only learn about practical applications of your studies, you'll also become an actively contributing community member through the service you perform.

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. Community-engaged 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 community-engaged learning different from volunteering, where the primary emphasis is on the service being provided and the primary intended beneficiary is clearly the service recipient. In community-engaged learning, the learning is equally important, and it primarily benefits you, the learner. Think of your community 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 full credit for your work.

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

- **On-campus service:** An important component of community-engaged learning is the opportunity to engage with communities outside of campus and learn from new and different environments, so work done with and for most student organizations or campus offices or programs, even if it is unpaid, will not fulfill community-engaged learning requirements. There are some campus-based experiences that can count as community-engaged learning if the work includes partnering with off-campus communities or individuals.
- **Working with immediate family:** Community-engaged 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 community-engaged 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 supervisor.

Can paid work or work study count as community-engaged learning? Possibly, if you are working in a non-profit or governmental agency, and doing work that is essentially the same as a community-engaged learning position offered for your class. The work must also match up with the course content and learning objectives, and you will need to get your faculty member's approval to use paid work for your community-engaged learning. In addition, if you are working with an organization that is not a current CCEL partner, CCEL staff will need to verify that the organization is in compliance with U of MN policies on non-discrimination and religious service.

Does the time I spend traveling to and from my community site count towards 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 community-engaged 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 community site, like my bus fare? No. Community-engaged learning provides additional content for your class, just like any books or other materials you are required to purchase. Think of your transportation costs for community-engaged learning as if you were assigned to purchase another book for the class instead.

Does training and orientation at my organization count towards my hours? Yes. Any time that you spend at your community site, or completing any online trainings required by the organization, counts toward your hour requirement.

Does work done off-site on behalf of my organization count as hours? Yes, if your supervisor assigns and approves it. Some students have community-engaged learning projects that can be done remotely. You can count all of the hours where you are doing work that your community site has requested.

Does the U of MN's pre-service training workshop count as hours? No. You should not log 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 ESL Tutor Training). Your attendance at these workshops will be tracked in another part of the csl.umn.edu online system so your instructor can give you the appropriate credit.

I have contacted my community site, but haven't heard back from them. What should I do? Most community site supervisors are balancing multiple projects and responsibilities. Allow 24- 48 hours before reaching out to them for a second time. Keep in mind most organizations work regular business hours so you will need to allow extra time for a response if you contact your organization over the weekend. The CCEL recommends using both phone and e-mail to get in touch with your organization. If you have tried these solutions and are still having trouble, please contact the CCEL at csl@umn.edu or 612-626-2044.

Can I switch my community-engaged learning position? If you realize during the application and orientation process or during your first couple of weeks working with an organization that it is not a good fit for you, your community-engaged learning liaison can help you find another position. If you want to move to an organization that was one of your top three choices on your original referral request form, contact the CCEL at csl@umn.edu or 612-626-2044 and ask to be moved to your next choice. If you would like to submit a request for an organization that wasn't one of your original choices, log in to the csl.umn.edu site and click "positions" in the left-hand column to access a new referral request form. Remember that as the semester goes on it will become harder to find organizations that can still bring new students on board; after the first few weeks you may not be able to switch organizations unless there is a compelling reason to do so.

I want to drop community-engaged learning completely. How do I do this? If you are in a course with optional community-engaged learning and you choose to drop your community commitment, contact your site supervisor, your course instructor, and your community-engaged learning liaison about your decision. If you are considering dropping community-engaged learning but are unsure, feel free to talk with your course instructor and/or your community-engaged learning liaison – we might be able to help address your concerns. It is important to make this decision early in the semester to ensure organizations have a clear idea of how many students are committed to their organization and to give you enough time to move to the non-community-engaged learning track of the course.

If I am having problems or concerns regarding my community-engaged learning, whom should I contact? Your site supervisor is the first person you should talk to when you have questions or concerns about your community experience. If you need additional assistance, your community-engaged learning liaison and other members of the Center for Community-Engaged Learning staff are available to assist you.

I want to keep working with my organization beyond the semester. Is this okay? What resources are available through the Center for Community-Engaged Learning? This is great! If you are interested in continuing to work with your community organization beyond the end of the semester, be in touch with your site supervisor to discuss the details of continued volunteering. Some organizations also offer community service work-study positions. The CCEL offers a number of resources for students involved in volunteer work in the community. You may consider enrolling in another community-engaged learning course or joining the [Community Engagement Scholars Program](#).

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

(all readings are contained in the required textbooks except for the final two, which can be found on the course website)

Introduction

09/04

- Introduction to the course

09/06

- Community-engaged-learning presentations

Romanticism

09/11

- Washington Irving, “Rip van Winkle”
- Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Wives of the Dead”

09/13

- Herman Melville, “The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids”
- *Expository paragraph due to Canvas: Explain the relation (literal and symbolic) between the two settings in Melville’s story.*

Realism and Naturalism

09/18

- Sarah Orne Jewett, “A White Heron”
- Charles Chesnutt, “The Sherriff’s Children”

09/20

- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper”
- *Narrative paragraph due to Canvas: Write a possible extension or conclusion to the story—what happens to the narrator after Gilman’s ending?*

09/25

- Stephen Crane, “The Little Regiment”
- Sherwood Anderson, “The Strength of God”

Modernism and Midcentury

09/27

- F. Scott Fitzgerald, “An Alcoholic Case”
- Ernest Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephants”
- *Analytic paragraph due to Canvas: Enumerate the effects of and the possible reasons for Hemingway’s omission of the story’s subject.*

10/02

- Jean Toomer, “Blood Burning Moon”
- William Faulkner, “That Evening Sun”

10/04

- Richard Wright, “The Man Who Was Almost a Man”
- Ralph Ellison, “Battle Royal”

10/09

- Ray Bradbury, “There Will Come Soft Rains”
- Shirley Jackson, “The Lottery”
- *Reflective paragraph due to Canvas: discuss what tendencies or events in modern politics “The Lottery” recalls for you and why OR discuss what relevance “The Lottery” might have to your CEL experience.*

10/11

- Paul Bowles, “A Distant Episode”
- John Cheever, “The Country Husband”

10/16

- James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”
- *Argumentative paragraph due to Canvas: What is the view of the social value of art implied by Baldwin’s story and, more importantly, do you agree or disagree and why? Feel free to explain with reference to your CEL or other relevant experience.*

10/18

- Bernard Malamud, “My Son the Murderer”
- Philip Roth, “Defender of the Faith”

Interlude

10/23

- **Midterm exam**

10/25

- In-class peer review and workshop for Essay #1

Multiculturalism, Postmodernism, and After

10/30

- Tim O’Brien, “The Things They Carried”
- Ha Jin, “Children as Enemies”

11/01

- Raymond Carver, “Are These Actual Miles?”
- Louise Erdrich, “Fleur”
- **Essay #1 due to Canvas by 11:59PM**

11/06

- Toni Morrison, *Paradise*, “Ruby,” “Mavis,” “Grace”

11/08

- Toni Morrison, *Paradise*, “Seneca”

11/13

- Toni Morrison, *Paradise*, “Divine,” “Patricia”

11/15

- Toni Morrison, *Paradise*, “Consolata,” “Lone,” “Save-Marie”

11/20, 11/22

- No class

11/27

- David Foster Wallace, “Good People”
- Jhumpa Lahiri, “Hell-Heaven”

11/29

- Kristen Roupenian, “Cat Person” (online)
- Zadie Smith, “Now More Than Ever” (online)

Conclusion

12/04

- **Final exam**
- In-class writing workshop/conferences for Essay #2

12/06

- **Essay #2 presentations**

12/11

- **Essay #2 presentations**
- Course evaluations

12/15

- **Essay #2 due to Canvas by 11:59PM**

ENGL 1501W – Discussion Question Assignment

For each meeting, one student will be assigned—by lottery at the beginning of the semester—to submit four questions for class discussion based on the day’s assigned reading. These questions should not be merely factual—e.g., *what happens at the end of the story?*—but raise questions of interpretation and meaning—e.g., *what does the story’s ending suggest about [X] thematic issue?* or *why does the story allude to [Y] political event?* You may also ask questions connecting the text at hand to topical events (though you might in this case avoid grandstanding) or even to your service-learning experience. On the day your questions are due, you will be asked to lead the class discussion; I also ask that you submit the questions to me via email (you can just paste them into the body of the message) before the class meeting.

ENGL 1501W – Paragraph Assignment

At various points during the semester, as specified on the syllabus, you will be required to submit a paragraph as a writing exercise in each of five modes of writing: exposition, narrative, analysis, reflection, and argumentation. On the day this assignment is due, please submit it to Canvas before the class meeting. I may project the paragraphs for peer critique, so please be prepared to share with the whole room and not just me. These will be graded on a check-plus (2 points), check (1 point), or check-minus (0 points) basis for a total of 10 points. The paragraphs should be at least 6 sentences; the criteria for each mode of writing is as follows:

- **Exposition:** Expository writing conveys information. Its essence is the communication of facts. Often, it takes the form of a summary: a condensation of a larger body of knowledge into an overview. Unlike narrative, time is not a factor, but logic may remain so (see logic words above). Expository style tends to be drier, as it usually does not have action to relate, but you can compensate for this with a rich vocabulary drawn from the facts you are communicating as well as with verbs that put the facts into motion (you might write that the author whose views you are summarizing *assaults a cliché* or *vaults to her conclusion*, for example).
- **Narrative:** A narrative tells a story. Its essence is the communication of a meaningful sequence of connected events in time. Narrative writing should emphasize both the passage of time (words like *then*, *when*, *next*, *before*, *after*, *earlier*, *later* should appear) and the logic of the events' connection (here you should say *because*, *therefore*, *consequently*, *as a result of*, etc.) Events imply action, so active verbs should predominate in a narrative.
- **Analysis:** Analytical writing enumerates. Its essence is the explanation of how parts form wholes. Logic remains an issue and in fact replaces the function of time in narrative writing: an analysis says *first*, *second*, *next*, *finally*. Along with your enumeration should come explanation: what is the effect of these parts? how do they create the whole they make up?
- **Reflection:** Reflective writing is, unlike the above, personal and subjective. This does not mean it takes leave of facts, nor even that it may not mobilize narrative, exposition, analysis, and argumentation where appropriate, but that it is allowed to be autobiographical rather than objective, lyrical rather than impersonal, and partial rather than non-partisan. Here you are not only allowed but encouraged to say *I*.
- **Argumentation:** Argumentative writing makes a claim. As with reflective writing, it is *your* claim, but unlike reflective writing, it aims to convert your view into objective knowledge. It should begin with a thesis—a one-sentence statement of your position. The thesis should be followed not by lyrical rumination but by *proof*, which may take the form of exposition or analysis, this time tied to an overarching argument rather than offered for its own sake. In fact, argumentative writing simply *is* exposition and analysis organized as fair, objective support for your own considered stance: reflection solidified.

ENGL 1501W – Midterm and Final Essay Assignment (1250 words each)

For non-service-learning students:

Please write an essay on how one of the course texts¹ relates to an event, topic, person, or space in contemporary public life. The general form of the essay should be that of an argumentative essay: you are making a claim about how your chosen text helps you to understand an aspect of real life. You should, therefore, state your claim near the beginning and spend the rest of the paper providing reasons why we should believe you. These reasons should include examples and quotations from the texts (cited by page number) and citations of material you have researched, sourced as appropriate.

To gather material from public life to which to compare your text, you have several options:

- Read at least three news stories from reputable sources and discuss the relevance of the course text to the events they depict
- Read at least two editorial or opinion articles (from two differing points of view—though not necessarily left vs. right; intra-left or intra-right disputes are an option) about a pressing social or political issue and discuss how the course text helps you to understand the issue²
- Visit a public space or event (performance, lecture, rally, protest, etc.) and explain how your reading of the text informs or is informed by this experience
- Interview a public figure or stranger or two people from different generations or different places about public life or the issues raised by the course text and compare their views to those of the text

For one of the essays, I would like to you choose options one or two, while for another, I would like you to choose three or four. Please submit solid evidence of your research with your essay; this might take the form of links to relevant news articles, personal photographs of spaces or events, or recordings or transcripts of interviews. Please preserve the anonymity of anyone whose identity you do not have permission to disclose.

Your essay will also involve an interpretation of the text you are discussing and the issues in public life to which you hope to relate it. Therefore, I also require you to consult and cite at least five sources; these should be either books (Wilson Library is your most likely source) or peer-reviewed articles in scholarly journals (many of which can be found by searching databases such as MLA International Bibliography, JSTOR, Project Muse, and others). These sources can either be literary criticism on your chosen author/text or scholarship on the relevant public-life issue under discussion in fields such as history, sociology, political science, etc.

¹ The first essay should be about a text assigned in the first half of the semester and the second essay should be about a text read in the second half.

² For the first two options, please consult me if you are unsure as to the appropriateness of a source. I would prefer you to rely on Internet or print publications that have some mainstream legitimacy, such as generally-cited newspapers, magazines, and websites. This is not, however, meant to be an ideological test. If I believe you have selected an inappropriate source, I will make every effort to point you toward a substitute of similar ideological character but better reputation for reliability.

Please cite all your sources in MLA format and include a “Works Cited” page as the final page of your essay.

For service-learning students:

Please write a 1250-word reflection on your service-learning experience. This assignment will primarily be in the genre of personal writing; you will describe, in the first person, your service-learning activities along with what you have learned or thought about them. You might begin with a recounting of why you chose to do service learning and to sign up with your particular organization—here I expect a clear explanation of the organization and its mission. You might also describe your preparation, anticipation, and orientation—how did the university and the organization get you ready to serve? what did you expect? were your expectations met? Then you might describe your early experiences: what was it like when you first arrived? what kinds of people did you meet, what responsibilities were expected of you, and how do you think you are doing? Finally, what, overall, are you learning about our society or about general socio-political questions from this experience? You are, in other words, writing a narrative of your experiences alongside a reflection on—or, as you prefer, argument about—their meaning.

Both the midterm and the final reflections should discuss the relevance of one of the course texts to your experience: how has reading the text helped you to understand what you have seen and heard and done? by contrast, how has what you have seen and heard and done made you question the truth or authority of the text? (Please cite texts by page number in MLA format.)

Please do not disclose the real names, identities, or identifying information of any individuals you write about or work with; use pseudonyms or generalities instead.

For all students:

In general, please write in clear, edited prose; your style may be lively and even conversational, but should maintain a basic level of academic or professional formality. While I will not break down your essays into the modes of narrative, exposition, etc., I will look for evidence that you are using various modes where appropriate.

Late essays will be lowered by one letter grade for each 24-hour delay in submission. A grade of *A* will not be awarded to any submission that does not meet the criteria (word count, correct number of sources, etc.) designated above.

All essays should be submitted before 11:59PM on the due date through the relevant assignment portal on the course website.

ENGL 1501W – Presentation Assignment

Please prepare a 5-7 minute presentation of your final writing project. If you are writing a research paper, you should summarize your thesis and evidence; if you are writing a service-learning reflection, you should explain the organization with which you've worked, summarize your experience there, and reflect on what you've learned, preferably with reference to at least one literary text. You should use visual aids (a slideshow) as well as simply speaking; you should speak as if extemporaneously rather than reading from notes. The minimum time for your presentation is 5 minutes; please keep time and do not exceed 7. Prepare also for a brief Q&A—your entire presentation will probably last about 10 minutes. You will be graded on your adherence to the time frame, use of visual aids, the quality of your organization of information, and your public speaking (volume, eye contact, response).