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Teaching Philosophy

The questions of what literature is, what it does, and who it serves are never purely academic in my teaching. Instead, my goal in any course is to give my students the tools to explore the ambiguities that give texture and color to literary history. To do this, I design my courses to give students a structured and inclusive space in which to ask questions, express confusion, recognize difference, and reflect on the meanings and uses of literature and literacy. Rather than treat “literature” as a restrictive space of sacralization and expertise, I work hard to find creative ways to reflect back my students’ own creativity when it comes to their encounters with texts. By incorporating lessons in reading practice with lessons on reading’s histories, I help students understand how the methods of literary study—reading and writing—are powerful meaning-making tools.

To prime students to think critically not only about what they are reading, but also about how they read and why, I include a “reading policy” section on my literature course syllabi. I consider this policy, which explains my expectations for the reading that I ask student to do, a central part of my efforts to make my classrooms more accessible spaces for students of different educational backgrounds and abilities, especially those for whom a syllabus full of longer texts may seem unfamiliar or intimidating. My reading policy acknowledges that reading takes time, even as it asks them to do all of the reading. I explain that this investment of time and attention affords certain benefits (and even pleasures!) that are crucial to the overall aims of our course, not least of which is simply learning to make time for immersive activities like reading. To this end, I also explain my preference for reading in paper formats rather than on screens, a policy that I supplement with links to relevant research on reading in different media. By starting my courses with a frank conversation about reading, I have found that I can not only help my students refine and reflect on their reading practices, but I can also revise my own assumptions about how students engage with texts. As my policy gives students explicit permission to skim, to get caught up in the plot, to love or hate characters, or even to get bored, it also gives them implicit permission to fit our course reading into their lives however they can and to share those experiences. I had one student share with the class the dissonance she felt as she read *Woman Warrior* while working a busy Saturday night shift at a campus pizzeria, and another who, after listening to *The Sound and the Fury* on her hour-long commute to and from campus, had an oblique perspective on the novel’s play with form. Rather than discount these experiences as idiosyncratic or digressive, I make space for them in class discussion as a reminder that one of the best parts of “reading” is that it does not look the same for everyone. Consequently, my reading policy has provided me and my students with vivid lessons in the value of diversity, as the abundant reading practices that students bring to bear ultimately yield more engaged and engaging insights into the texts we read together.

My reading policy is designed to acknowledge the different forms of work that go into reading, but it also serves as a foundation upon which I can build student competence and confidence in the particular work of crafting literary readings. While I invite students to read however they can, I do insist that they come to every class prepared to discuss one moment from the day’s assigned reading in depth. I help students prepare for this discussion through a daily low-stakes notecard assignment. For each class period, I ask students to write down a single quotation from the day’s reading on one side of an index card and a reflective analysis of the quotation that fills the other side. The quotation can be anything that the student finds interesting, challenging, confusing, or remarkable. These notecards give students repeated practice in the first steps of any close reading—training their attention on a single part of a text—while also acknowledging that I do not expect them to read *every* line of a novel or story this way. By asking students to focus on quotations that resonate with them

personally, I also reinforce the idea that “close reading” is not simply a catalogue of literary devices, but a way of accounting for the complexity of a text’s effects on a reader. As with the reading policy, my instruction also benefits from the notecard assignment, as it provides me a constant stream of feedback from students. I can share patterns I see in the moments or themes that students are selecting, or bring up reactions or interpretations that may merit more unpacking in class. I also value being able to hear from and respond to students who otherwise shy away from sharing their thoughts out loud in a larger classroom setting. This iterative exercise in selectively attentive reading thus helps me show students how to develop more reflective reading habits that can serve as a springboard for both informal discussions and more formal analyses of texts.

My instruction in intensive reading practices is always balanced with lessons that introduce students to broader questions about the material lives of books and literary history, frameworks that further spur student thinking about how the political and cultural stakes of “literature” develop, change, and persist over time. In a lesson on Nella Larsen’s *Passing*, for instance, I introduce students to the interpretive dilemma posed by the novel’s two published endings: one that encourages a reading of Clare’s sudden fall as “Death by misadventure,” the other that ends more malevolently, “Then everything was dark.” For many students, the idea that a modern, mass-mediated novel exists simultaneously in two states is a disorienting introduction to textual uncertainty, so I help students come to terms with the novel’s variable endings by framing the issue in more familiar terms. First, we read and discuss a scholarly essay that considers the mystery of the novel’s two endings in terms of the conditions of African American female authorship in the 1920s. With this historical story in mind, students then work in groups to analyze some of the covers and blurbs that appear on modern versions of the novella. These extra-authorial paratexts are more familiar to students than the concept of a “crux,” and yet many students note that they have not thought much before about how such residues of the publishing and marketing process may affect their reading of what is between the covers. Inviting students to read *Passing* by its cover thus helps complicate notions of authority, textuality, and reputation, especially at the intersection of race and gender. I have developed similar lessons around the material histories of other novels: for example, asking students to consider how publishers’ ads for *Native Son* framed the novel differently in mainstream versus African American newspapers, or using an online resource like the University of Virginia’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin & American Culture* multimedia archive to bring students into virtual contact with the novel’s complicated material legacies. With this mixed approach that considers not just “texts,” but also “books,” I provide students with a model for performing their own smaller-scale research projects in which they can marry textual analysis with more contextual questions about how “literature” is produced and consumed.

The students who come through my classrooms are all readers and writers, but they are by no means the same in how they use reading and writing to negotiate their different relationships to literature and to the world. By eschewing a one-reading-fits-all philosophy of literature and by building frameworks for attentive curiosity, I make my classroom a space in which students can learn how to ask and pursue questions that matter to them about reading, writing, and history.

English 362.001
Winter 2017
MW 11:30am-1pm
2306 Mason Hall

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Office: 4216 Angell Hall
Office Hours: M 2-4pm
or by appointment

The American Novel: Classics and Controversies

In his 1986 essay “Why Read the Classics?”, Italo Calvino writes of this ubiquitous literary designation, “The classics are books that exert a peculiar influence, both when they refuse to be eradicated from the mind and when they conceal themselves in the folds of memory, camouflaging themselves as the collective or individual unconscious.” In other words, classics are books that not only stick around, but also end up dominating—or even structuring—our cultural conversations.

This course will consider the cultural work that “classics” have done in an American literary context, where this label has been applied to novels that capture a moment, challenge the past, or call for a reimagined future. By diving into these novels, their historical contexts, and the circumstances of their publication, circulation, and reception, we will consider how some novels seem so deeply moored in the debates of their times, while others seem to transcend particularities and attain the status of “classic.” Throughout, we will explore the role of different bodies of cultural authority—ranging from publishers, readers, critics, prize committees, book clubs, and literature class syllabi—that shape our sense of American literary history and, indeed, of what counts as “American literature.” We will also reflect more generally on the novel genre as a literary form that American authors have repeatedly used to observe, to remember, to protest, and to argue for change.

Course Learning Goals:

- explain some of the ways in which the cultural category “classics” has emerged and evolved over the past 150 years of American literary history
- develop and articulate close readings of texts through clear, persuasive prose
- identify and analyze how authors have used the novel to respond to social, cultural, and political themes
- recognize and reflect on institutional frames around “American literature” that shape students’ own reading practices and assumptions about literature

Readings:

All books are available at campus bookstores. Please make every effort to get the editions listed below.

- F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925) [Scribner 2004, ISBN: 9780743273565]
- Anita Loos, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1925) [Penguin Classics 1998, ISBN: 9780141180694]
- Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) [Norton Critical Edition 2010, ISBN: 9780393933994]
- Richard Wright, *Native Son* (1940) [Harper Perennial 1998, ISBN: 9780060837563]

- Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior* (1976) [Vintage 1989, ISBN: 9780679721888]
- William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) [Vintage 1990, ISBN: 9780679732242]
- Toni Morrison, *Sula* (1973) [Vintage 2004, ISBN: 9781400033430]

Additional secondary readings will be available on Canvas and should be printed out and brought to class.

Course Assignments

Course Requirements:

Attendance	5%
Participation	10%
Daily quotation/reflection card	15%
Close Reading Exercise (in class)	10%
Textual Analysis Essay (4-5pp)	25%
Classics in Context Essay (9-10pp)	35%

Attendance (5%):

The attendance component of your final grade will be based solely on whether or not you show up prepared for class. **As long as you are in class, on time, with the right book in hand, you will receive full credit (10/10) for attendance.** I will take attendance at the beginning of each class period at 11:40am. If you are tardy, or if you do not have the text we are discussing with you in class, you will receive half credit (5/10) for the day. If you have your cell phone out, you will receive zero credit for the day. Every three tardies or class periods in which you do not have the right materials will count as an unexcused absence.

Absences:

- You may miss two class periods without penalty. For each unexcused absence beyond the first two, you will receive an attendance score of zero for the day.
- More than five unexcused classes will likely result in failure of the course, regardless of the work completed.
- I will excuse absences due to family emergencies, medical emergencies, or required attendance at university-sponsored events. However, you must bring a note from a doctor or health professional, a signed letter from a University team or program, or documentation of a family emergency.
- For any absence, whether excused or unexcused, I will expect you to submit a **one-page, single-spaced response to the day's reading** within one week of the missed class. For excused absences and your first two unexcused absences, you'll receive full attendance credit for turning in a response paper (10/10); for unexcused absences beyond the first two, you'll receive partial attendance credit (7/10). It is your responsibility to follow up on this work; I will not remind you when you need to make up work. You can email these responses directly to me.

Participation (10%):

In-class participation can take many forms, both generative and disruptive:

Generative participation	Disruptive participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• offering comments and observations about specific passages or moments in a text• responding to your classmates' comments• asking questions about the text or about other comments that have been raised• listening respectfully and alertly• generally being engaged and engaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• dominating discussion by speaking too much• dismissing counterarguments or resistance to your point of view• conducting side conversations while others are speaking• looking bored or disdainful• generally being a jerk

My general philosophy is that participation grades should not be merely transactional (handing out points for every comment offered in class) or punitive (punishing those who do not speak), but rather should offer a holistic sense of how you have contributed to the small community of our classroom. Thus, at the end of the term, I will grade your overall participation according to this holistic rubric: provided that you have behaved more in accordance with the “generative” column than the “dismissive” column, you’ll receive full or close-to-full credit.

A note to shy or quiet students about “participation”:

I completely understand that not everyone feels the same level of comfort contributing vocally in a class of 30 students, which is why I have built in and weighted more heavily other forms of “participation” into this course’s grading rubric (e.g., coming to class, being prepared, generating written comments). That said, I am happy to meet one-on-one to talk about strategies for joining in on larger class discussions, as I think that learning to navigate such conversation is one of the most useful skills you can develop in a seminar-style class.

Daily Quotation/Reflection Card (15%):

For every day of class, I will ask you to bring in prepared comments written out on a 3x5” index card. On one side of the card, you will copy out a quotation from that day’s reading that you found particularly interesting, challenging, confusing, or remarkable. On the other side of the card, you will explain (in complete sentences) why you zeroed in on your selected quotation. The purpose of this daily exercise is to give you a small, low-stakes space in which to start to process the day’s reading before you arrive in class. The cards will also, in effect, constitute another type of “participation grade.”

I will collect these cards at 11:40am as a way of taking attendance, so please prepare them ahead of time and **be sure to put your name on your cards!** I will also read over your cards and mark them on the following scale:

Check-plus (5/5)	A full-card’s-worth of writing that shows probing interest and reflection about your selected quotation
Check (4/5)	A half-card’s-worth of writing that shows some thinking about your selected quotation
Check-minus (3/5)	Minimal or cursory engagement with your selected quotation

You'll be able to collect your index cards from me and discuss any ideas that may arise from them in my office during office hours. I will also keep a free stash of blank index cards in my office, so please come by to pick up cards whenever you need them.

Close Reading Exercises (February 8, 10%):

Once during the term, I will ask you to complete a 40-minute in-class close reading exercise. I will select a short passage from one of the novels that we will have read, and you will read and respond to it by noting both its salient formal features as well as the ways in which it reflects, responds to, or complicates larger patterns or themes in the work as a whole.

You'll note that I am not calling this exercise a "midterm" (though it essentially functions as such). I am purposefully using the term "exercise" because the purpose is not to test you on content, but rather to evaluate how you deploy one of the core competencies of literary study: closely reading and writing on a literary text. If the note cards give you a small space in which to practice one of the first steps of this process (i.e., noticing interesting features of a text), and the essays give you a longer space in which to develop argumentative claims, then this exercise represents a middle space in which you can practice using close reading to generate questions about a text.

Textual Analysis Essay (February 24, 25%):

This shorter essay (4-5pp) will ask you to respond to one of the first three novels on our syllabus (no outside research will be required). We will discuss possible topics and approaches to this essay in class.

Classics in Context Essay (April 24, 35%):

This longer essay (9-10pp) will ask you to consider, through some small amount of original research, either the reception or afterlife of a "classic" American novel. Some of you may be more interested in the immediate historical circumstances of a text's reception: how was a particular novel first produced, marketed, shunned, praised, or debated by its fans and detractors? Some of you may be more interested in how a text has lived on past its own time: how have other authors or artists adapted or rewritten a novel, or how has a novel ended up enshrined in (or maybe banned from?) high school or college syllabi? This essay will give you leeway to develop a research question that is interesting and compelling to *you*, then will give you space to answer that question through a mix of close reading and secondary research.

Late Work:

Essays: Both essays are due by 5pm to Canvas (uploaded in .doc or .docx format). Please take note of the due dates now, and if you anticipate any difficulties in meeting deadlines, contact me within the first week of the course. Late papers will be penalized two points per twenty-four-hour period they are late. Papers more than a week late will likely receive a failing grade.

Daily index cards: Because the daily index card exercise is designed to prepare you for specific class periods, I will not accept late cards.

Course Policies

Reading:

One of the pleasures of taking a literature course on novels is getting to immerse yourself in long, fictional works that conjure up characters and worlds. However, this pleasure has a downside: reading novels takes *time*—something that can often feel in short supply. This course is no exception: all of the novels have their pleasures, but some of them are quite long, and others are quite dense. That said, I expect you to do all of the reading for this course: in fact, I consider the biggest portion of your responsibility for this course to be simply getting through the assigned readings so that we can discuss each novel in finer detail during our class meetings.

On the reading schedule below, I have tried to signal approximately how many pages of reading are due for each class meeting, but please note that 80 pages of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* will feel significantly different from 80 pages of *The Sound and the Fury*. As you approach the novels on our syllabus, it might be helpful to consider how many different ways there are to read a piece of fiction: skimming along the surface, getting lost in the plot, feeling for the characters, stalling on the same sentence two or three times, or even skipping to the end. All of these modes of reading are valid in this course—please don't feel compelled to “close read” all the time! We will spend time in class talking through how to think about budgeting your readerly attentions, as well as how the texts themselves might be setting expectations for our reading practices. Ultimately, one of the main skills that I hope you will develop in this course is knowing how and when to shift among different modes of attentive reading based on the text and context in front of you.

Additionally, I expect that everyone read from paper versions of the novels and articles for this course, rather than electronic versions. On a practical level, using paper versions of books ensures that everyone reads from the same text (the editions listed at the top of this syllabus) and can bring a copy of the text into class for discussion. On a cognitive level, a growing body of research into reading comprehension across different media suggests that we retain key details better when reading from print, even if we prefer to read digitally (see the “Research on Reading and Technology” folder on Canvas for interesting articles on this topic). Given how close reading hinges on key details, this benefit of print far outweighs the presumed conveniences of the digital. Finally, on a philosophical level, I consider this course and its readings a welcomed departure from our usual routines of reading, which are overwhelmingly married to screens of various sizes. Just as novel reading affords certain pleasures related to imaginative immersion and sustained attention, reading from print affords our eyes and minds a break from the backlit world we increasingly inhabit.

If you have any questions or concerns about the reading policies for this course, please set up a time to come speak to me within the first two weeks of the semester. After that, I will assume that everyone is on board with this policy.

Plagiarism:

The University of Michigan is built around intellectual and academic integrity, and plagiarism (stealing/borrowing/not citing the work and/or ideas of another person and presenting them as your own) is not treated lightly. If you are caught plagiarizing—regardless of whether it's a few lines or an entire paper—you will automatically fail the assignment and, under most

circumstances, will also fail the course, regardless of how much work you've completed in the class. In addition, the case will be forwarded to the Dean of Student Affairs for disciplinary action and permanent notation in your academic record. If you ever have any questions about what might count as plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask! For more information, also see: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/plagNote.asp>

Course Communications:

We will use **Canvas** as our primary course management system. I will post notes and handouts on Canvas, as well as secondary readings. You will submit your two essays on Canvas as well.

In addition to Canvas, your @umich email accounts will be my primary point of contact with you, so please be sure to check this account regularly. I am also most easily reached via email (bevilacq@umich.edu) and invite you to send me any questions or concerns that may arise during the term. I make every effort to respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving them.

Office Hours:

I will hold office hours on Monday afternoons from 2-4pm, during which you are invited to drop in to discuss any matters relating to our course. I am also happy to arrange meetings by appointment. Whether you are enjoying a text and want to talk more about it, or are struggling with a reading or writing assignment and want to discuss strategies for negotiating this difficulty, or are just looking to check in about how the course is going, please stop by!

Starting after winter break, I will hold additional office hours to help you get started on the second essay for the course. I ask that everyone schedule at least one appointment to talk about the second essay.

In-Class Technology Use:

Cell Phones: I have a zero tolerance policy on cellphones. Please silence your cell phones and other electronic devices before class begins and keep them out of sight during class. If I see that you have your cell phone out at all during class, you will receive a zero in participation for the day.

Laptops, Tablets, and Other Electronic Devices: I ask that students do not use laptops or tablets in class. All of the readings should be brought to class in paper format (as explained above), and any notes you need to take should likewise be taken on paper (there is absolutely no need to take verbatim notes of our course meetings, and, in fact, this mode of notetaking may not really be worthwhile in any class). Laptops and tablets are distractions to everyone in a discussion-based course such as this one.

As with the reading policy, if you have specific concerns about this technology policy, please schedule a time to speak with me within the first two weeks of class. After that, I will assume that everyone is on board with this policy.

Accessibility and Accommodations:

I am committed to making this course as accessible as possible for all students. If there are ever circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as

possible (within the first two weeks of the semester) so that we can work together to develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. In some cases, you may wish to consult with the university's Services for Students with Disabilities:

<http://ssd.umich.edu/>

Mental Health Resources:

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is a free and confidential service for students who are looking for emotional and psychological support for anything from the daily rigors of college life to life-changing events like parental divorce, break-ups, grief over loss, etc. For more information: <http://www.umich.edu/~caps/>

Sweetland Writing Center:

If you would like additional feedback or assistance with your writing, the Sweetland Writing Center is a fabulous resource. Staff members and peer tutors from the Center can work with you as you draft and revise your assignments. For more information: www.lsa.umich.edu/swc

Religious Observances:

If a class session or due date conflicts with your religious holidays, please notify me ahead of time so that we can make alternative arrangements. In most cases, I will ask you to turn in your assignment ahead of your scheduled absence, but your absence will not affect your grade.

Class and Reading Schedule

NOTE: readings marked [C] are available in the “Files” section of Canvas. Readings on Uncle Tom’s Cabin are included in the back of the Norton Critical Edition [NCE], and “How Bigger Was Born” is included in the back of the Harper Perennial edition of Native Son [NS].

Jan 4 (W)	Smith, “Value/Evaluation” [Google Books, C] Calvino, “Why Read the Classics?” [C]
Jan 9 (M)	Schulz, “Why I Despise <i>The Great Gatsby</i> ” [C] <i>The Great Gatsby</i> , Ch 1-4 (80pp)
Jan 11 (W)	<i>GG</i> , Ch 5-9 (100pp)
Jan 16 (M)	NO CLASS: MLK Day (but start reading <i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i>)
Jan 18 (W)	<i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i> , all (120pp) Hammill, “The Intellectuals, the Masses and <i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i> ” [C]
Jan 23 (M)	<i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i> , Ch 1-10 (90pp)
Jan 25 (W)	<i>UTC</i> , Ch 11-18 (90pp)
Jan 30 (M)	<i>UTC</i> , Ch 19-28 (90pp)
Feb 1 (W)	<i>UTC</i> , Ch 29-37 (50pp)
Feb 6 (M)	<i>UTC</i> , Ch 38-45 (50pp) Stowe, “Appeal to the Women of the Free States” (NCE 459-461) [C]
Feb 8 (W)	Tompkins, “Sentimental Power: <i>UTC</i> and the Politics of Literary History” (NCE 539-561) [C] Cantave, “Who Gets to Create the Lasting Images? The Problem of Black Representation in <i>UTC</i> ” (NCE 582-594) [C] In-class close reading exercise
Feb 13 (M)	Baldwin, “Everybody’s Protest Novel,” “Many Thousands Gone” [C] <i>Native Son</i> , “Fear” (90pp) (there aren’t good chapter breaks in this section, so try to get through about half of it for Monday and half for Wednesday)
Feb 15 (W)	<i>Native Son</i> , “Fear”
Feb 20 (M)	<i>NS</i> , “Flight” (120pp) (there aren’t good chapter breaks in this section, so try to get through about half of it for Monday and half for Wednesday)
Feb 22 (W)	<i>NS</i> , “Flight”

Feb 24 (F)	Close reading essay due
Feb 27 (M) Mar 1 (W)	NO CLASS: Winter Break (but finish reading <i>Native Son</i>)
Mar 6 (M)	<i>NS</i> , “Fate” (160pp) Wright, “How Bigger Was Born” (<i>NS</i> 431-462) [C]
Mar 8 (W)	<i>Woman Warrior</i> , “No Name Woman,” “White Tigers” (55pp)
Mar 13 (M)	<i>WW</i> , “Shaman,” “At the Western Palace” (120pp)
Mar 15 (W)	<i>WW</i> , “A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe” (40pp)
Mar 20 (M)	Kingston, “Cultural Mis-readings by American Reviewers” [C] Chin, “The Most Popular Book in China” [C] Wong, “Autobiography as Guided Chinatown Tour?” [C]
Mar 22 (W)	<i>The Sound and the Fury</i> , “April Seventh, 1928” (75pp) Scott, “On William Faulkner’s <i>The Sound and the Fury</i> ” [C]
Mar 27 (M)	<i>SF</i> , “June Second, 1910” (100pp)
Mar 29 (W)	<i>SF</i> , “April Sixth, 1928” (80pp) Essay 2 proposal due
Apr 3 (M)	<i>SF</i> , “April Eighth, 1928” (60pp)
Apr 5 (W)	Faulkner, Nobel Lecture [C] Morrison, Nobel Lecture [C] Morrison, “black matters” [C]
Apr 10 (M)	<i>Sula</i> , Part 1 (80pp)
Apr 12 (W)	<i>Sula</i> , Part 2 (90pp)
Apr 17 (M)	Workshop for final essays
Apr 24 (M)	Final essay due

Close Reading Exercise
11:40am, Wednesday, Feb. 8

Select one of the following passages from either *The Great Gatsby*, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, or *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Take some time to read and re-read the passage, then compose a written response that identifies salient formal features of the text, considers the effects of those textual features, and connects the features and effects of this passage to other parts of the book. Ultimately your response should answer the following question: how and why is this passage important to our understanding of the novel as a whole?

You may use your copy of the text to look up and cite other moments that connect to this passage. You may not have any other notes out during this exercise.

No blue books needed.

Advice for this exercise:

- Do spend at least ten minutes reading, re-reading, taking notes, and brainstorming before you begin to write.
- Do structure your written response in paragraphs, including a very short introduction that offers a sense of how your response will unfold.
- Do write descriptively about the passage's features and effects (i.e., "show your work" and your thinking).
- Do cite other specific moments in the text that amplify or complicate your sense of the passage's effects and importance.
- Do end with a brief conclusion that ventures an answer (or even additional questions) on the issue of how this passage is important to our understanding of the novel as a whole.
- Avoid listing or cataloging every interesting feature of the passage. Instead, focus on those details that best support the connection you hope to make to other parts of the text.
- Avoid making generalized comments about the passage (i.e., "this passage reminds me of another character" or "this passage touches on Christian themes"). Instead, be specific about the details you are noticing and the connections you are making.

Evaluation:

I will use the following rubric to evaluate your written response:

Focus ___ / 5 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- your response has a specific, focused angle onto the passage- your conclusion suggests a specific significance of your angled reading of the passage to the novel as a whole <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- your response simply lists or catalogs everything without a sense of direction or purpose- your response is too general and not specific to the passage in question
Textual Analysis ___ / 25 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- your response offers detailed, descriptive exploration of the passage's formal features- you "show your work" by unpacking any specific citations you include- you connect formal features to specific effects- the specific effects you describe add up in some way to support a focused reading of the passage and novel <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- your response is a list or catalog- you talk about the passage in general terms (e.g., plot, character, setting) without pointing to specific formal features- no sense of how your selected features add to a central focus
Connections to the larger text ___ / 15 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- you use your specific reading of the passage to move into a consideration of other parts of the text- you cite specific moments from elsewhere in the text and unpack them <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- connections seem trivial or obvious (i.e., no explanation of why you are making specific connections)- you allude to general themes, but not specific passages- you allude to others characters or settings in general terms without citing specific passages
Mechanics and handwriting ___ / 5 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- your response is organized into logical paragraphs- your prose is reasonably free of errors- your handwriting is reasonably legible <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- no sense of organization- run-on or incomplete sentences- quotations not cited correctly- I can't read your handwriting!

Textual Analysis Essay
Length: 4-5pp/1300-1600 words

In-class thesis/outline workshop: Monday, Feb. 20
Final due date: Friday, Feb. 24, by 5pm

Select a short passage (no more than half a page long) from one of the first three novels on our syllabus (*The Great Gatsby*, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, or *Uncle Tom's Cabin*). Offer a close textual analysis of this passage that focuses on its particular textual features and effects, then show how your passage might help the reader notice, complicate, or reimagine other areas of the text. Your essay's central claim should capture the specific relationship between your chosen passage, its salient textual features and effects, and your understanding of the text as a whole.

Advice for this essay:

- **Choosing a passage:** An effective starting passage will not necessarily be full of flowery figurative language or obvious symbolism. Think instead of starting with a passage that seems to be *doing* something unusual. The trick here is to think beyond “diction and syntax” and to look instead for *moments of friction* in the text. Are there places where the narrator asserts himself or herself in the text in a surprising way? Are there are moments where the linguistic content and structure of the passage slow down or confuse your reading? Are there tonal shifts, thematic shifts, or shifts of point of view that seem abrupt or disorienting? Start with a question, not an answer.
- **“Close reading”:** In keeping with the idea of showing how a passage *works* (rather than what a passage contains), try to think descriptively about *how* your selected passage achieves its particular effects on the reader. Your passage may have curious sentence structures or surprising images, *but simply cataloguing these features does not make an argument!* You'll have to take the extra step of explaining *the effects* of these textual features: how does the way the text has been constructed affect the experience of reading it? Claiming that the text results in certain effects through specific textual strategies is the quickest way to generate a claim that is both debatable and supportable.
- **Connecting to other parts of the text:** The fundamental question at this point in the process is: *how does reading your particular passage in your particular way affect our understanding of the rest of the novel?* Does your explication of this particular passage help you recognize similar features and effects in other parts of the text that you may have missed before? Does this passage stand out as an outlier that sets other parts of the text into new relief? How does the particular pathway through the text that you're offering contribute to a particular understanding of the novel?
- **Scope of claims:** Because this essay relies solely on textual evidence, you will necessarily be limited in the types of claims you can make. For example, without more contextual evidence from historical sources, you cannot make claims about Anita Loos's cultural position as a female author in the 1920s, or about *Uncle Tom's Cabin's* role in starting the Civil War. However, you *can* make claims about how *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* portrays reading and writing, or about how *Uncle Tom's Cabin* uses discussions of violence. These are claims about how the text transmits ideas to the reader, which is a good starting point for this type of essay. That said, if you do want to start to connect your reading of the text to larger themes or concepts outside of the novel, save these gestures for your essay's conclusion, where you can use them to leave your reader wanting more.

Format: 1” margins, 12-point font, double-spaced, .doc or .docx. Please follow MLA guidelines for in-line parenthetical citations and block-quoting (if necessary).

Due dates: We will workshop thesis statements and outlines in class on **Monday, Feb. 20**. Final essays are due by 5pm on **Friday, Feb. 24** on Canvas.

Evaluation: I will use the following rubric to evaluate your essay:

<p>Argument (20 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - your essay has a clear, compelling, debatable thesis statement (i.e., your thesis makes your reader go, “huh, I hadn’t thought of that before, but I will need to be convinced”) - your argument relies on nuance, complexity, and moments of friction in the text - your argument is specific and supportable with evidence from the text <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - thesis cannot be supported solely with evidence from the text (i.e., reaches too far beyond the text to make historical claims) - thesis is simplistic or obvious (i.e., your reader thinks, “well duh”) - thesis has vague, abstract words (e.g., “society,” “culture,” “history,” “gender”)
<p>Structure (20 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - your essay is organized into paragraphs - the structure builds logically toward your central claim - transitions between paragraphs signal the development of your argument - each paragraph has one (and only one!) topic - you provide your reader with a “roadmap” and “signposts” throughout <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of a sense of logical order - paragraphs simply follow the plot of the novel, rather than the arc of your argument - lack of transitions, clear topic sentences, and other “signpost” elements - overly long paragraphs that try to do too much - overly short paragraphs that lack adequate evidence and analysis
<p>Evidence and Analysis (50 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - your essay’s claims are supported by evidence from the text - textual evidence is artfully incorporated into your own prose - textual evidence is fully “unpacked” - textual evidence is properly cited - all evidence builds to support your central claim <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - too much plot summary, not enough analysis - too many quotations, not enough explanation - quotations are not effectively integrated into your own prose - individual pieces of evidence are not connected back to your central claim
<p>Mechanics (10 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - your essay has a title that orients your reader to your work - your essay is properly formatted - your essay is free of typos - your prose demonstrates some sense of individual voice and style <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a title that is generic, cryptic, or missing - typos to the point of distraction for the reader - awkward prose, usually diagnosed by looking for overly long sentences, wordy phrasings, too much passive voice, or a thesaurus-dependent diction that works against you to obscure your meaning

Classics in Context Essay
Length: 9-10pp/3000-3400 words

Proposal due: Wednesday, Mar. 29, by 11:30am
Workshop draft: Friday, April 14, by 5pm
In-class workshop: Monday, April 17
Final due date: Monday, April 24, by 5pm

Taking one of the texts on our syllabus as a starting point, generate a research question that considers some aspect of the material, institutional, or cultural life (or afterlife) of the text. Your question might stem from one of the “angles” listed below, or it might emerge from some other issue that has piqued your interest this semester. Use your research question to build up a group of source materials, then write an essay that presents your findings and ventures an argumentative answer to your guiding question.

Possible angles:

- **Re-writings and Adaptations:** All the books on our syllabus have been adapted into different forms, most notably films and plays, but also other works of fiction. To name just two examples, Sara Benincasa’s *Great* (2014) turns *Gatsby* into a young adult novel with two female leads, while Percival Everett’s *Erasure* (2001) reimagines *Native Son* as an exploitatively sentimental tale of inner city life. Your essay might analyze how one of the texts on our syllabus has been re-imagined, re-written, or re-formatted by another artist.
- **Value/evaluation:** All the books on our syllabus have valued and evaluated by different groups of people and institutions through different means and for different ends. The results of these evaluative projects are varied: some texts have won prestigious literary awards, some have been banned from schools and libraries—some have managed both! Your essay might analyze one aspect of how a text on our syllabus has been evaluated by a specific group, institution, or community.
- **Reception and response:** All the books on our syllabus have unique reception histories that speak to the multifarious ways in which readers have interpreted and used these “classic” books. Your essay might consider how a community of readers—critics, reviewers, scholars, teachers, book clubs, “ordinary” readers, etc.—have read and responded to one of these texts.
- **Paratexts:** All the books on our syllabus exist in their own constellations of “paratexts”: book covers, blurbs, introductions, author’s notes, critical editions, etc. Your essay might analyze how the paratextual apparatus around one of our texts has contributed to its meaning and reputation.
- **Pedagogy:** All the books on our syllabus (to greater and lesser extent) are taught in high school and university literature classrooms. As such, they are also the subjects of guides and lesson plans designed to help teachers frame these works for students. Your essay might analyze some of the pedagogical materials surrounding one our texts.

Sample guiding research questions:

- How have films of *The Great Gatsby* rendered the novel’s treatment of Nick as narrator?
- How have different scholars dealt with the problematic racial politics of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*?
- How does a novel like *Erasure* re-write and respond to the form and themes of *Native Son*?
- How did early reviews and interviews shape Maxine Hong Kingston’s image as author and the subsequent reception and reputation of *The Woman Warrior*?

Advice for this essay:

- **Pick something fun.** The purpose of this essay is to give you an opportunity to pursue a question that matters to *you*, so pick a text and topic that will genuinely hold your attention!
- **Start with a question.** If you start your paper with an answer, you may find it hard to proceed. Focus instead on starting with a question that can then guide how you conduct your research and writing.
- **Manage the scope of your research by being specific.** Your initial research question may feel hopelessly large, so try to find ways to limit your question so that it can be answered in 9 to 10 pages. For example, instead of writing on *every* review of a novel, limit yourself to two or three that offer differing views on the same issue or trace a change in attitudes toward the text over time.
- **Be wary of the compare/contrast trap.** If you choose to write on an adaptation or re-imagining of one of our texts, be careful not to fall into the rut of a compare/contrast paper. Rather than pointing out similarities and differences between two versions of the same story, consider instead the effects of these changes. For example, a significant change in a film version of a book may make you reconsider your reading of the book itself.
- **I am here to help!** Please do not hesitate to ask for help at any step of the process: generating a question, narrowing your question so that it is more specific, locating appropriate sources, reading or analyzing sources that are unfamiliar or new, structuring your essay, developing a claim, etc.

Format: 1" margins, 12-point font, double-spaced, .doc or .docx. Please follow MLA guidelines for in-line parenthetical citations and block-quoting (if necessary). Be sure to include a Works Cited page.

Due dates:

- **Proposal:** Submit a 300-word proposal to Canvas by 11:30am (before class) on **Wednesday, March 29**. Your proposal should include your guiding research question, a brief description of how you came to this question, and a sketch of some of the sources you will use (or will look for) to answer your question.
- **Workshop draft:** We will use our last class meeting (Monday, April 17) to workshop drafts of your essays in class. Please have a draft ready to share with a small group by 5pm on **Friday, April 14**.
- **Final due date:** Turn in an electronic version of your essay to Canvas by 5pm on **Monday, April 24**.

Research help:

UM Library collections: <http://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu>

For scholarly essays on literature and literary history:

MLA International Bibliography: <http://search.proquest.com/mlaib/accountid=14667>

start here for any search for scholarly work on a literary text or topic

JSTOR: <http://jstor.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu>

Project MUSE: <http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>

For book reviews:

Book Review Index Plus: <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/start.do?p=BRIP&u=umuser&authCount=1>

start here, especially for more recent books

Lexis Nexis: <http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopic/lnacademic/>

ProQuest News & Current Events: <http://search.proquest.com/news/index?accountid=14667>

American Periodicals: <http://search.proquest.com/americanperiodicals/accountid=14667>

specifically for periodicals up to 1940

*For even more help, see these **UM Library reference guides:***

News Sources: <http://guides.lib.umich.edu/news>

Reception History: <http://guides.lib.umich.edu/c.php?g=283018&p=1885733>

For specific books:

Collected resources for Uncle Tom's Cabin: <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/sitemap.html>

Faulkner at Virginia: <http://faulkner.lib.virginia.edu/>

Evaluation: I will use the following rubric to evaluate your essay:

<p>Guiding Question (10 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - your essay has a clear guiding question to which you offer a potential answer - your question leads to specific sources and analytical methods - your question is compelled by a clear <i>motive</i> (i.e. you articulate a clear reason for posing your question) <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - essay lacks a clearly articulated guiding question - essay lacks a sense of motive or why the question matters
<p>Argument (15 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - your essay has a compelling, debatable thesis statement that responds to your question (i.e., your thesis makes your reader go, “huh, I hadn’t thought of that before, but I will need to be convinced”) - your argument relies on nuance, complexity, and moments of friction in the sources you use - your argument is specific and supportable with evidence from the sources you use <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - thesis does not answer your guiding question - thesis is obvious, simplistic, or vague
<p>Structure (15 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - your essay is organized into paragraphs - the structure builds logically toward your central claim - transitions between paragraphs signal the development of your argument - each paragraph has one (and only one!) topic - you provide your reader with a “roadmap” and “signposts” throughout <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of a sense of logical order - paragraphs simply follow the plot of the novel, rather than the arc of your argument - lack of transitions, clear topic sentences, and other “signpost” elements - overly long paragraphs that try to do too much - overly short paragraphs that lack adequate evidence and analysis
<p>Evidence and Analysis (50 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - your essay’s claims are supported by evidence from appropriate sources - evidence is presented in an appropriate balance of summary, paraphrase, and quotation - all evidence is fully “unpacked” - all evidence builds to support your central claim <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - imbalance among summary, paraphrase, and quotation - evidence is presented without sufficient analysis - individual pieces of evidence are not connected back to your central claim
<p>Mechanics (10 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - your essay has a title that orients your reader to your work - your essay is properly formatted - your sources are properly cited and included in a Works Cited section - your essay is free of typos - your prose demonstrates some sense of individual voice and style <p><i>Common problem areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - title is generic, cryptic, or missing - issues with citation - typos to the point of distraction for the reader - awkward prose, usually diagnosed by looking for overly long sentences, wordy phrasings, too much passive voice, or a thesaurus-dependent diction that works against you to obscure your meaning

English 124.001
Fall 2017
MWF 8-9am
4211 AH

Dr. Kathryn Bevilacqua
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Office: 4174 Angell Hall
Office Hours: Tu 10-12, W 1-3
and by appointment

Academic Writing and Literature: Unreliable Narratives

Course Description:

This course studies the intersection between critical thinking and persuasive writing, and, using literary texts as the point of reference, takes as its goal the development of the student's skill at writing cogent expository and argumentative prose.

Section Description:

In this class, we will read poems, short stories, and a short novel that feature distinctive—potentially deceptive—narrative points of view. From encounters with untrustworthy first-person narrators to multiply-voiced stories with ambiguous turns, we will consider how and why authors choose to build stories around unreliable or complex points of view. These explorations of the inner workings of story-telling will lead us to consider how fictional approaches to audience, authority, and authenticity can apply to your own expository writing.

Through class discussion, readings that include literary critical essays, writing exercises, and peer review activities, we will focus on both *the mechanics of argumentative writing* (developing a strong thesis, supporting your claims with evidence, evaluating and incorporating outside sources, identifying your audience, producing clear and concise prose) and *the mechanics of the writing process itself* (brainstorming, prewriting, drafting, revising, responding to others, receiving feedback). By the end of the semester, you will be equipped with a suite of strategies for negotiating your relationship to a variety of audiences, strategies that will help you throughout your college career and beyond.

Learning Goals for English 124/125:

1. To cultivate practices of inquiry and empathy that enable us to ask genuine questions, engage thoughtfully and rigorously with a wide range of perspectives, and create complex, analytic, well-supported arguments that matter in academic contexts and beyond.
2. To read, summarize, analyze, and synthesize complex texts purposefully in order to generate and support writing.
3. To analyze the genres and rhetorical strategies that writers use to address particular audiences for various purposes and in various contexts.
4. To develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing.
5. To develop strategies for self-assessment, goal-setting, and reflection on the process of writing.

Texts:

- Course Pack (download and print from Canvas)
- Jesmyn Ward, *Salvage the Bones* (Bloomsbury, 2011, ISBN: 1608196275)

Reading Community Project:

This semester, our class will participate in a new community reading initiative designed to foster more conversation and collaboration across different sections of English 124/125. We will be reading *Salvage the Bones* by Jesmyn Ward, a Michigan MFA alumna, along with six other sections taught by three other instructors. As each class works with the novel separately, we will also come together through writing to share, respond, and reflect on our different experiences with the novel. Elements of cross-class collaboration will include:

- Sharing and responding to short, written responses with students in other sections
- Reflecting on the experience of taking into account different points of view on the novel
- Participating in a possible on-campus conversation with Ward

Our goals for this cross-class project are to create a sense of shared endeavor across English 124/125 sections by providing students with a larger, more varied audience for their reading and writing.

Course Requirements

Grading:

Your final course grade will be calculated according to the following rubric:

Formal essays	70%
1. Reading as argument 1 (2-3pp/700-900 words)	10%
2. Reading as argument 2 (4-5pp/1300-1600 words)	15%
3. Reading two sources (7-8pp/2200-2600 words)	20%
4. Re-reading/Re-vision (8-9pp/2600-3000 words)	25%
Peer review workshops and comments	10%
Reading responses and mini-workshops	10%
Attendance	5%
Participation	5%

Rubrics for formal essays, short assignments, peer review feedback, workshops, and in-class participation are posted on Canvas.

Letter grades correspond to the following numerical scale:

94.0 - 100	A	74.0 – 76.9	C
90.0 – 93.9	A-	70.0 – 73.9	C-
87.0 – 89.9	B+	67.0 – 69.9	D+
84.0 – 86.9	B	64.0 – 66.9	D
80.0 – 83.9	B-	60.0 – 63.9	D-
77.0 – 79.9	C+	59.9 & Below	E

Note: You must receive a minimum of a C- in this class to fulfill your first-year writing requirement.

Assignments:

Formal essays [70%]:

This course is structured around four major essay assignments:

Reading as argument 1	2-3 pages 700-900 words	Draft: Sept 18 Revision: Sept 22	10%
Reading as argument 2	4-5 pages 1300-1600 words	Draft: Oct 13 Revision: Oct 20	15%
Reading two sources	7-8 pages 2200-2600 words	Proposal: Nov 1 Draft: Nov 17 Revision: Nov 22	20%
Re-reading/Re-vision	8-9 pages 2600-3000 words	Proposal: Nov 29 Draft: Dec 8 Revision: Dec 18	25%

We will use each essay to discuss the various components of the writing process, including brainstorming ideas, proposing a topic, drafting a first pass, responding to peer critiques, and revising. For most essays, drafts and revisions are due on Fridays at 5pm. Drafts should be submitted to the [Google Drive folder](#) for each essay, while revisions should be submitted via [Canvas \(Assignments\)](#). I will grade these essays on a 100-point scale according to a rubric included with each essay assignment.

Essay descriptions:

- **Reading as argument 1 (10%):** In this very short essay (2-3pp), you will use close reading methods to generate a compelling question and claim about a short poem.
- **Reading as argument 2 (15%):** In this shorter essay (4-5pp), you will use close reading methods to generate a compelling question and claim about a short story.
- **Reading two sources (20%):** This longer essay (7-8pp) builds on the textual analytical skills of the first two essays while introducing a new element of difficulty: a second text. Using a second source of your choosing, you will advance a nuanced claim about some element of the novel *Salvage the Bones*.
- **Re-reading/Re-vision (25%):** In this final essay assignment, you will perform extensive revisions to your third essay that will deepen and nuance your original essay's claims.

Peer Review [10%]:

Each of your formal essay drafts will go through a peer review process designed to help you identify areas for revision and further work. Workshops will take place during class in groups of three, and you will have a different group for each essay. To prepare for each in-class workshop, you will read and provide marginal comments and a brief end-note on your group-mates' drafts. You will also fill out a peer review worksheet that summarizes your responses for your group-mates. You will leave your comments and end-notes directly on your group members' drafts in our class [Google Drive folder](#). These comments are due before class on the day of workshop.

Your peer review grade will consist of two components: your written feedback and your participation in workshop. I will grade your written feedback for each essay on a scale of 0-5 points. Your workshop grade will contain an element of self-evaluation, as I will ask you to evaluate your group's performance on a 5-point scale; I will then incorporate this score into a grade based on my observations of your group's participation in class. (See grading rubric on Canvas.)

Reading Responses and Mini-Workshops [10%]

One of my objectives in English 124 is to help you make purposeful reading and writing a regular habit. Over the course of the semester, I will ask you to write short reading responses (300-500 words) about the readings on our syllabus and to post them to the Canvas "Discussions" section. These responses are meant to be pithy and precise: you should focus on a specific part of the reading, not simply your general impressions of the piece. Approaches to the response paper include (but are not limited to):

- Offering a close reading of a small part of the text
- Tracing a particular rhetorical move through the reading
- Anticipating resistance to the author's claim
- Raising a question about some part of the reading

Each post will be graded on a scale of 0-5 points. I will provide written feedback on your first posted response. (See grading rubric on Canvas.)

In addition to using these reading responses to practice essential skills of reading and writing, we will also use them to conduct six mini-workshops that will allow us to focus on issues of argumentation, grammar, mechanics, and style. Every student will have one of their reading responses workshoped in class over the course of the term. You will sign up for mini-workshop dates (marked on the course schedule below) during the first week of classes, and I will post a schedule so that you know whose responses to read on a given day. I will evaluate your contributions to the mini-workshops using the same peer review workshop rubric for formal essays.

Attendance [5%]:

The attendance component of your final grade will be based solely on whether or not you show up prepared for class. **As long as you are in class, on time, with the right text in hand, you will receive full credit (10/10) for attendance.** I will take attendance at the beginning of each class period. If you are tardy, or if you do not have the text we are discussing with you in class, you will receive half credit (5/10) for the day. If you have your cell phone out, you will receive zero credit for the day. Every three tardies or class periods in which you do not have the right materials will count as an unexcused absence.

Absences:

- I expect you to attend every class.
- **You may not miss workshop days.**
- You may miss two non-workshop classes without penalty. For each unexcused absence beyond the first two, you will receive an attendance score of zero for the day. Missing more than five classes will likely result in you failing the course, regardless of work completed.

- I will excuse absences due to family emergencies, medical emergencies, or required attendance at university-sponsored events with appropriate notice or documentation.

Participation [5%]:

The success of a seminar-style class such as this depends on your consistent attendance and daily participation. This means completing the day’s reading assignments, taking notes on them, and bringing them with you to class. In-class participation can take many forms, both generative and disruptive:

Generative participation	Disruptive participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offering comments and observations about specific passages or moments in a text • responding to your classmates’ comments • asking questions about the text or about other comments that have been raised • listening respectfully and alertly • generally being engaged and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dominating discussion by speaking too much • dismissing counterarguments or resistance to your point of view • conducting side conversations while others are speaking • looking bored or disdainful • generally being a jerk

My general philosophy is that participation grades should not be merely transactional (handing out points for every comment offered in class) or punitive (punishing those who do not speak), but rather should offer a holistic sense of how you have contributed to the small community of our classroom. Thus, at the end of the term, I will grade your overall participation according to this holistic rubric: provided that you have behaved more in accordance with the “generative” column than the “disruptive” column, you’ll receive full or close-to-full credit.

A note to shy or quiet students about “participation”:

I completely understand that not everyone feels the same level of comfort contributing vocally in a class of 18 students, which is why I have built in other forms of “participation” into this course’s grading rubric (e.g., coming to class, being prepared, generating written comments). That said, I am happy to meet one-on-one to talk about strategies for joining in on larger class discussions, as I think that learning to navigate such conversation is one of the most useful skills you can develop in a seminar-style class.

Late Work:

Due dates for drafts, peer review comments, response papers, and revised essays are marked in bold throughout the reading schedule below. Please take note of them now, and if you anticipate any difficulties in meeting deadlines, contact me within the first week of the course. Late policies for specific graded assignments are as follows:

- *Peer review:* Any late peer reviews will result in a zero on the assignment. I have made this penalty more substantial than some of the other late work penalties because your peers are relying on you to help them think about and improve their writing. Therefore, it is in everyone’s best interest for you to complete your formal peer reviews on time.
- *Revised papers:* I will deduct 3% from your paper’s final grade for every 24-hour period that the paper is late. Papers more than a week late will receive a failing grade.

- *Response papers:* I will deduct 1 point from your response paper's grade for every 24-hour period that the response is late.

Course Policies

Plagiarism:

The University of Michigan is built around intellectual and academic integrity, and plagiarism (stealing/borrowing/not citing the work and/or ideas of another person and presenting them as your own) is not treated lightly. If you are caught plagiarizing—regardless of whether it's a few lines or an entire paper—you will automatically fail the assignment and, under most circumstances, will also fail the course, regardless of how much work you've completed in the class. In addition, the case will be forwarded to the Dean of Student Affairs for disciplinary action and permanent notation in your academic record. If you ever have any questions about what might count as plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask! For more information, also see: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/plagNote.asp>

Course communications:

We will use **Canvas** as our primary course management system. I will post all assignments and in-class handouts on Canvas, and you will submit your revised essays and response papers on Canvas as well.

In addition to Canvas, we will also use **Google Drive** for collaborative assignments such as peer review. Everyone will have access to a shared Google Drive folder where you will submit your essay drafts and peer review comments.

Finally, your **@umich.edu email** accounts will be my primary point of contact with you, so please be sure to check this account regularly. I am also most easily reached via email (bevilacq@umich.edu) and invite you to send me any questions or concerns that may arise during the term. I make every effort to respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving them.

Office Hours:

I will hold weekly office hours, during which you are invited to drop in to discuss any matters relating to our course. I am also happy to arrange meetings by appointment. Whether you are enjoying a text and want to talk more about it, or are struggling with a reading or writing assignment and want to discuss strategies for negotiating this difficulty, or are just looking to check in about how the course is going, please stop by!

In-Class Technology Use:

Cell Phones: I have a zero-tolerance policy on cellphones. Please silence your cell phones and other electronic devices before class begins and keep them out of sight during class. If I see that you have your cell phone out at all during class, you will receive a zero in attendance for the day.

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Mental Health Resources: <http://umich.edu/~mealth/>

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If a class session or due date conflicts with your religious holidays, please notify me ahead of time so that we can make alternative arrangements. In most cases, I will ask you to turn in your assignment ahead of your scheduled absence, but your absence will not affect your grade.

Class and Reading Schedule

All course readings other than Salvage the Bones are available on Canvas and must be printed out and brought to class.

Unit 1: Close Reading			
	<i>Daily theme</i>	<i>Reading due</i>	<i>Writing due</i>
Sept 6, W	Introductions	Course syllabus	
Sept 8, F	What is close reading?	Ryan, “Sharks Teeth” Bunn, “How to Read Like a Writer”	marked-up poem
Sept 11, M	Genre and form	Ryan, “Repetition,” “Living With Stripes,” “Thin,” “Chart,” “The Woman Who Wrote Too Much” “The Art of Close Reading” [handout]	close reading [print and bring to class]
Sept 13, W	Rethinking grammar	Curzan, “Says Who?” Wiens, “I Won’t Hire People Who Use Poor Grammar”	response [Canvas]
Sept 15, F	Mini-workshop #1	Mini-workshop pieces	
Sept 18, M	Why workshop?	Chamberlin, “Workshop is Not for You” Sample close reading essay	mark up sample essay Essay 1 draft due by 5pm
Sept 20, W	Workshop: Essay 1	Peer review group essays <i>Focus on argument and structure</i>	peer review materials due before class
Sept 22, F	Workshop: Essay 1	Peer review group paragraphs <i>Focus on sentence-level clarity</i>	1¶ from Essay 1 for focused workshop
Essay 1 revision due Friday, September 22 by 5pm			
Unit 2: Reading as Argument			
	<i>Daily theme</i>	<i>Reading due</i>	<i>Writing due</i>
Sept 25, M	Genre and form	Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily”	
Sept 27, W	Reader response	Crosman, “How Readers Make Meaning”	response [Canvas]

Sept 29, F	Mini-workshop #2	Mini-workshop pieces	
Oct 2, M	Motivated reading	Melczarek, "Narrative Motivation in Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily'" "Motivating Moves" [handout]	reverse outline of article
Oct 4, W	Reading uncertainty	Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"	response [Canvas]
Oct 6, F	Mini-workshop #3	Mini-workshop pieces	
Oct 9, M	Close reading and fiction	Treichler, "Escaping the Sentence: Diagnosis and Discourse in 'The Yellow Wallpaper'"	reverse outline of article
Oct 11, W	Structuring a close reading	Woods, "Gilman's Message to Proponents of 19 th -century Patriarchal Ideas" <i>2015/16 Excellence in First-Year Writing prize winner</i>	marked-up sample essay
Oct 13, F	Reading and representation	Morrison, "Black Matters" McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege"	Essay 2 draft due by 5pm
Oct 16, M	NO CLASS: Fall Break		
Oct 18, W	Workshop: Essay 2	Peer review group essays <i>Focus on argument and structure</i>	peer review materials due before class
Oct 20, F	Workshop: Essay 2	Peer review group paragraphs <i>Focus on sentence-level clarity</i>	1 ¶ from Essay 2 for focused workshop
Essay 2 revision due Friday, October 20 by 5pm			
Unit 3: Reading and Writing in Comparison			
	<i>Daily theme</i>	<i>Reading due</i>	<i>Writing due</i>
Oct 23, M	Genre and form	<i>Salvage the Bones</i> 1-3	response [Canvas]
Oct 25, W	Library Resources	This class will meet in Shapiro 4059	
Oct 27, F	Mini-workshop #4	Mini-workshop pieces	
Oct 30, M	Characterization	<i>Salvage the Bones</i> 4-6	response [Canvas]
Nov 1, W	Close reading and fiction	Marotte, "Pregnancies, Storms, and Legacies of Loss in Jesmyn Ward's <i>Salvage the Bones</i> "	reverse outline of article Essay 3 proposal due by 5pm
Nov 3, F	NO CLASS: Conferences about Essay 3		
Nov 6, M	Using a "lens"	<i>Salvage the Bones</i> 7-9 <i>The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture</i> , "Blood Sports"	response [Canvas]
Nov 8, W	Structuring a comparison	Lloyd, "Creaturely, Throwaway Life after Katrina: <i>Salvage the Bones</i> and <i>Beasts of the Southern Wild</i> "	reverse outline of article
Nov 10, F	Mini-workshop #5	Mini-workshop pieces	
Nov 13, M	Climax and conflict	<i>Salvage the Bones</i> 10-12	
Nov 15, W	Forms of knowledge	Frontline, <i>The Storm</i> http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/storm/	
Nov 17, F	Authority and point of view	Solnit, "Snakes and Ladders" Ward, "We Don't Swim in our Cemeteries"	Essay 3 draft due by 5pm
Nov 20, M	Workshop: Essay 3	Peer review group essays <i>Focus on argument and structure</i>	peer review materials due before class
Nov 22, W	Workshop: Essay 3	Peer review group paragraphs <i>Focus on sentence-level clarity</i>	1 ¶ from Essay 3 for focused workshop
Essay 3 revision due Wednesday, November 22 by 5pm			

Unit 4: Revision and Reflection			
	<i>Daily theme</i>	<i>Reading due</i>	<i>Writing due</i>
Nov 24, F	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break		
Nov 27, M	Revision as Rebuilding	Ricks, “The Secret Life of a Book Manuscript”	response [Canvas]
Nov 29, W	Re-reading like a re-writer	Re-read essay for revision	revision proposal due by 5pm
Dec 1, F	Mini workshop #6	Mini-workshop pieces	
Dec 4, M	Elements of argument	Worthen, “Stop Saying ‘I Feel Like’” Cameron, “Just Don’t Do It”	reflection [Canvas]
Dec 6, W	Planning for revision	Your DSP essay	marked-up DSP essay [print and bring to class]
Dec 8, F	Writing for the future	Transfer worksheet	Essay 4 draft due by 5pm
Dec 11, M	Workshop: Essay 4	Peer review group essays	peer review materials due before class
Essay 4 revision due Monday, December 18 by 5pm			

Supplemental readings and resources are available on Canvas in the “Files” section.

English 125.071
Fall 2017
MWF 11am-12pm
2475 MH

Dr. Kathryn Bevilacqua
bevilacq@umich.edu
Office: 4174 Angell Hall
Office Hours: Tu 10-12, W 1-3
and by appointment

Writing and Academic Inquiry: Campus Genres

Course Description:

This class is about writing and academic inquiry. Good arguments stem from good questions, and academic essays allow writers to write their way toward answers, toward figuring out what they think. In this course, students focus on the creation of complex, analytic, well-supported arguments addressing questions that matter in academic contexts. The course also hones students' critical thinking and reading skills. Working closely with their peers and the instructor, students develop their essays through workshops and extensive revision and editing. Readings cover a variety of genres and often serve as models or prompts for assigned essays; but the specific questions students pursue in essays are guided by their own interests.

Section Description:

A university, like any large institution, is conceived in, managed through, and powered by written documents: from mission statements and learning outcomes, to department websites and course syllabi, to press releases and student newspapers, to club emails and student-made signs. This course will take as part of its "coursepack" the vast, dispersed, and contested corpus of textual artifacts that make up the University of Michigan. Together in our reading and writing, we will consider the following questions: What written forms and rhetorical gestures help constitute the university community? How do "campus genres" communicate the university's values, policies, and priorities? What types of work do different members of the university community perform through reading and writing? How do students manage this glut of documentation and carve out their own expressive spaces?

Through class discussion, readings from a variety of genres, writing exercises, and peer review activities, we will focus on both *the mechanics of argumentative writing* (developing a strong thesis, supporting your claims with evidence, evaluating and incorporating outside sources, identifying your audience, producing clear and concise prose) and *the mechanics of the writing process itself* (brainstorming, prewriting, drafting, revising, responding to others, receiving feedback). By the end of the semester, you will be equipped with a suite of strategies for negotiating your relationship to a variety of audiences, strategies that will help you throughout your college career and beyond.

Learning Goals for English 124/125:

1. To cultivate practices of inquiry and empathy that enable us to ask genuine questions, engage thoughtfully and rigorously with a wide range of perspectives, and create complex, analytic, well-supported arguments that matter in academic contexts and beyond.

2. To read, summarize, analyze, and synthesize complex texts purposefully in order to generate and support writing.
3. To analyze the genres and rhetorical strategies that writers use to address particular audiences for various purposes and in various contexts.
4. To develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing.
5. To develop strategies for self-assessment, goal-setting, and reflection on the process of writing.

Texts:

- Course Pack (download and print from Canvas)

Course Requirements

Grading:

Your final course grade will be calculated according to the following rubric:

Formal essays	70%
1. Close Reading (3-4pp/900-1300 words)	10%
2. Open Letter (4-6pp/1300-1900 words)	15%
3. Comparative Analysis (7-9pp/2200-3000 words)	20%
4. Research-based revision (7-9pp/2200-3000 words)	25%
Peer review workshops and comments	10%
Reading responses	10%
Attendance	5%
Participation	5%

Rubrics for formal essays, short assignments, peer review feedback, workshops, and in-class participation are posted on Canvas.

Letter grades correspond to the following numerical scale:

94.0 - 100	A	74.0 – 76.9	C
90.0 – 93.9	A-	70.0 – 73.9	C-
87.0 – 89.9	B+	67.0 – 69.9	D+
84.0 – 86.9	B	64.0 – 66.9	D
80.0 – 83.9	B-	60.0 – 63.9	D-
77.0 – 79.9	C+	59.9 & Below	E

Note: You must receive a minimum of a C- in this class to fulfill your first-year writing requirement.

Assignments:

Formal essays [70%]:

This course is structured around four major essay assignments:

Close Reading	3-4 pages 900-1300 words	Draft: Sept 18 Revision: Sept 22	10%
Open Letter	4-6 pages 1300-1900 words	Draft: Oct 6 Revision: Oct 13	15%
Comparative Analysis	7-9 pages 2200-3000 words	Proposal: Oct 27 Draft: Nov 10 Revision: Nov 17	20%
Research-based Revision	7-9 pages 2200-3000 words	Proposal: Nov 27 Draft: Dec 8 Revision: Dec 15	25%

We will use each essay to discuss the various components of the writing process, including brainstorming ideas, proposing a topic, drafting a first pass, responding to peer critiques, and revising. For most essays, drafts and revisions are due on Fridays by 11pm. Drafts should be submitted to the [Google Drive folder](#) for each essay, while revisions should be submitted via [Canvas \(Assignments\)](#). I will grade these essays on a 100-point scale according to a rubric included with each essay assignment.

Essay descriptions:

- **Close Reading (10%):** In this brief essay (3-4pp), you will practice “reading like a writer” to identify and describe the textual features and rhetorical strategies of an official UM “mission” text.
- **Open Letter (15%):** In this shorter essay (4-6pp), you will compose an open letter that addresses an issue that matters to a specific campus audience. You will practice deploying the classical rhetorical moves of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* as your letter makes motivated claims for a particular understanding or course of action.
- **Comparative Analysis (20%):** In this longer essay (7-9pp), you will consider two texts together—either two examples of the same campus genre or two examples of documents that take differing rhetorical approaches to a shared issue or audience. Using the analytical skills developed in the first two essays, you will advance a nuanced claim stemming from the pairing of your two sources.
- **Research-based Revision (25%):** In this final essay assignment, you will perform extensive revisions to one of your previous essays. Your revisions should deepen and nuance the claims you made in your original essay.

Peer Review [10%]:

Each of your formal essay drafts will go through a peer review process designed to help you identify areas for revision and further work. Workshops will take place during class in groups of three, and you will have a different group for each essay. To prepare for each in-class workshop,

you will read and provide marginal comments and a brief end-note on your group-mates' drafts. You will leave your comments and end-notes directly on your group members' drafts in our class Google Drive folder. These comments are due before class on the day of workshop.

Your peer review grade will consist of two components: your written feedback and your participation in workshop. I will grade your written feedback for each essay on a scale of 0-5 points. Your workshop grade will contain an element of self-evaluation, as I will ask you to evaluate your group's performance on a 5-point scale; I will then incorporate this score into a grade based on my observations of your group's participation in class. (See grading rubric on Canvas.)

Reading Responses [10%]

One of my objectives in English 125 is to help you make purposeful reading and writing a regular habit. Over the course of the semester, I will ask you to write short response papers about the readings on our syllabus and to comment on other students' response papers. These written conversations, posted in the Canvas "Discussions" section, will extend our in-class discussions while also providing you with an additional opportunity to read and respond to the writing of others.

The reading response component of your grade will consist of three distinct components: two response papers, four comments on others' response papers, and an oral presentation at the end of the semester.

- **Response paper:** Twice during the semester, you will be responsible for composing a 500-word response paper about one of the readings on our syllabus, due before class on the day corresponding to the reading. These response papers should focus on a specific part of the reading, not simply your general impressions of the piece. Approaches to the response paper include (but are not limited to):
 - Offering a close reading of a small part of the reading
 - Tracing a particular rhetorical move through the reading
 - Anticipating resistance to the author's claim
 - Raising a question about some part of the reading

Each post will be graded on a scale of 0-5 points. I will provide written feedback on your first posted response. (See grading rubric on Canvas.)

- **Comments:** Four times during the semester, you will be responsible for reading another student's response paper, reviewing any comments already left to the author of the original paper, and composing a 200-word response of your own, published on Canvas under the original response. Two of these comments must be posted by October 30, and all four must be posted by November 24. One of your comments can be left in response to comments on one of your original response papers. Each response will be graded on a scale of 0-5 points. (See grading rubric on Canvas.)
- **Presentation:** At the end of the term, you will take one of your original response papers and its thread of comments and, in a brief (5 minute) in-class presentation, offer a summary of the discussion that your response provoked. After presenting, you will have a few minutes to field questions from your classmates. These presentations will be graded on a separate rubric. (See grading rubric on Canvas.)

In addition to using these response papers to practice essential skills of reading and writing, I may also use them in class to spark conversation about our readings and to discuss ongoing issues of grammar, mechanics, and style.

Attendance [5%]:

The attendance component of your final grade will be based solely on whether or not you show up prepared for class. **As long as you are in class, on time, with the right text in hand, you will receive full credit (10/10) for attendance.** I will take attendance at the beginning of each class period. If you are tardy, or if you do not have the text we are discussing with you in class, you will receive half credit (5/10) for the day. If you have your cell phone out, you will receive zero credit for the day. Every three tardies or class periods in which you do not have the right materials will count as an unexcused absence.

Absences:

- I expect you to attend every class.
- **You may not miss workshop days.**
- You may miss two non-workshop classes without penalty. For each unexcused absence beyond the first two, you will receive an attendance score of zero for the day. Missing more than five classes will likely result in you failing the course, regardless of work completed.
- I will excuse absences due to family emergencies, medical emergencies, or required attendance at university-sponsored events with appropriate notice or documentation.

Participation [5%]:

The success of a seminar-style class such as this depends on your consistent attendance and daily participation. This means completing the day’s reading assignments, taking notes on them, and bringing them with you to class. In-class participation can take many forms, both generative and disruptive:

Generative participation	Disruptive participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offering comments and observations about specific passages or moments in a text • responding to your classmates’ comments • asking questions about the text or about other comments that have been raised • listening respectfully and alertly • generally being engaged and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dominating discussion by speaking too much • dismissing counterarguments or resistance to your point of view • conducting side conversations while others are speaking • looking bored or disdainful • generally being a jerk

My general philosophy is that participation grades should not be merely transactional (handing out points for every comment offered in class) or punitive (punishing those who do not speak), but rather should offer a holistic sense of how you have contributed to the small community of our classroom. Thus, at the end of the term, I will grade your overall participation according to this holistic rubric: provided that you have behaved more in accordance with the “generative” column than the “disruptive” column, you’ll receive full or close-to-full credit.

A note to shy or quiet students about “participation”:

I completely understand that not everyone feels the same level of comfort contributing vocally in a class of 18 students, which is why I have built in other forms of “participation” into this course’s grading rubric (e.g., coming to class, being prepared, generating written comments). That said, I am happy to meet one-on-one to talk about strategies for joining in on larger class discussions, as I think that learning to navigate such conversation is one of the most useful skills you can develop in a seminar-style class.

Late Work:

Due dates for drafts, peer review comments, response papers, and revised essays are marked in bold throughout the reading schedule below. Please take note of them now, and if you anticipate any difficulties in meeting deadlines, contact me within the first week of the course. Late policies for specific graded assignments are as follows:

- *Peer review:* Any late peer reviews will result in a zero on the assignment. I have made this penalty more substantial than some of the other late work penalties because your peers are relying on you to help them think about and improve their writing. Therefore, it is in everyone’s best interest for you to complete your formal peer reviews on time.
- *Revised papers:* I will deduct 3% from your paper’s final grade for every 24-hour period that the paper is late. Papers more than a week late will receive a failing grade.
- *Response papers:* I will deduct 1 point from your response paper’s grade for every 24-hour period that the response is late.

Course Policies

Plagiarism:

The University of Michigan is built around intellectual and academic integrity, and plagiarism (stealing/borrowing/not citing the work and/or ideas of another person and presenting them as your own) is not treated lightly. If you are caught plagiarizing—regardless of whether it’s a few lines or an entire paper—you will automatically fail the assignment and, under most circumstances, will also fail the course, regardless of how much work you’ve completed in the class. In addition, the case will be forwarded to the Dean of Student Affairs for disciplinary action and permanent notation in your academic record. If you ever have any questions about what might count as plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask! For more information, also see: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/plagNote.asp>

Course communications:

We will use **Canvas** as our primary course management system. I will post all assignments and in-class handouts on Canvas, and you will submit your revised essays and response papers on Canvas as well.

In addition to Canvas, we will also use **Google Drive** for collaborative assignments such as peer review. Everyone will have access to a shared Google Drive folder where you will submit your essay drafts and peer review comments.

Finally, your **@umich.edu email** accounts will be my primary point of contact with you, so please be sure to check this account regularly. I am also most easily reached via email

(bevilacq@umich.edu) and invite you to send me any questions or concerns that may arise during the term. I make every effort to respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving them.

Office Hours:

I will hold weekly office hours, during which you are invited to drop in to discuss any matters relating to our course. I am also happy to arrange meetings by appointment. Whether you are enjoying a text and want to talk more about it, or are struggling with a reading or writing assignment and want to discuss strategies for negotiating this difficulty, or are just looking to check in about how the course is going, please stop by!

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If you want to report an alleged violation, you can contact the Office for Institutional Equity (OIE) at institutional.equity@umich.edu. The OIE works to create a campus environment that is inclusive, respectful, and free from discrimination and harassment. Your report to OIE will not be confidential.

Please note: As an instructor, I am responsible for helping to create a safe learning environment on campus, and I may be required to report information about sexual misconduct or a crime that may have occurred on UM's campus.

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Class and Reading Schedule

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Unit 1: Reading Like a Writer			
	<i>Daily theme</i>	<i>Reading due</i>	<i>Writing due</i>
Sept 6, W	Introductions	Course Syllabus UM Mission Statement and Vision Statement	
Sept 8, F	What is close reading?	UM Mission Statement and Vision Statement Bunn, “How to Read Like a Writer”	marked-up mission statement [print and bring to class]
Sept 11, M	Watching like a writer	“University of Michigan Bicentennial: Always Leading. Forever Valiant” [video]	response paper #1 [Canvas]
Sept 13, W	Genre and form	Zetlin, “9 Worst Mission Statements” Kenny, “Your Company’s Purpose”	bring in mission statement for essay
Sept 15, F	Rethinking grammar	Curzan, “Says Who?” Wiens, “I Won’t Hire People Who Use Poor Grammar”	response paper #2 [Canvas]
Sept 18, M	Why workshop?	Chamberlin, “Workshop is Not for You” “The Art of Close Reading” [handout] Sample essay	mark up sample essay Essay 1 draft due by 5pm
Sept 20, W	Workshop: Essay 1	Peer review group essays <i>Focus on argument and structure</i>	peer review materials due before class
Sept 22, F	Workshop: Essay 1	Peer review group paragraphs <i>Focus on sentence-level clarity</i>	1¶ from Essay 1 for focused workshop
Essay 1 revision due Friday, September 22 by 11pm			
Unit 2: Finding Your Audience			
	<i>Daily theme</i>	<i>Reading due</i>	<i>Writing due</i>
Sept 25, M	Understanding rhetorical situations	King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” Rhetorical Situations [website]	response paper #3 [Canvas]
Sept 27, W	Motivating moves	McCoy, “An Open Letter to President Schlissel” Students of CAPS in Action, “Faculty must address mental health” “Motivating Moves” [handout]	response paper #4 [Canvas]
Sept 29, F	Why argue?	Cioffi, “Argumentation in a Culture of Discord” “John Stewart on Crossfire” [video]	response paper #5 [Canvas]
Oct 2, M	Defining audience	Gaipa, “Breaking into the Conversation”	Diagram of your open letter “ballroom”
Oct 4, W	Authority and audience	Weiss, “To (All) the Colleges That Rejected Me” Shang, “An Open Letter to Suzy Lee Weiss”	response paper #6 [Canvas]
Oct 6, F	Addressing resistance	Newkirk, “The Myth of Reverse Racism”	Essay 2 draft due by 11pm
Oct 9, M	Workshop: Essay 2	Peer review group essays <i>Focus on argument and structure</i>	peer review materials due before class
Oct 11, W	Workshop: Essay 2	Peer review group paragraphs <i>Focus on sentence-level clarity</i>	1¶ from Essay 2 for focused workshop

Oct 13, F	Reflecting on genre	Marche, "An Open Letter to Open Letter Writers: Stop Writing Open Letters"	
Essay 2 revision due Friday, October 13 by 11pm			
Unit 3: Reading and Writing in Comparison			
	<i>Daily theme</i>	<i>Reading due</i>	<i>Writing due</i>
Oct 16, M	NO CLASS: Fall Break		
Oct 18, W	Defining a "lens"	Bawarshi, "The Syllabus" Deruy, "The Complicated Process of Adding Diversity to the College Syllabus"	marked-up syllabus from another class [print and bring to class]
Oct 20, F	Library Resources	This class will meet in Shapiro 4059	
Oct 23, M	Authority and evidence	Reid, "My Body, My Weapon, My Shame"	response paper #7 [Canvas]
Oct 25, W	Using a "lens"	Walsh, "I Trusted 'Em"	response paper #8 [Canvas]
Oct 27, F	Motivating Moves	Sample comparative analysis essay	marked-up comparative analysis essay Essay 3 proposal due by 11pm
Oct 30, M	NO CLASS: Conferences about Essay 3 Respond to two response paragraphs by Monday, October 30		
Nov 1, W	Fiction and argument	Packer, "Drinking Coffee Elsewhere"	response paper #9 [Canvas]
Nov 3, F	Authority and evidence	McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege"	response paper #10 [Canvas]
Nov 6, M	Comparison and argument	Hamilton and Armstrong, "The (Mis)Education of Monica and Karen"	response paper #11 [Canvas]
Nov 8, W	Using a "lens"	Gladwell, "The Order of Things"	response paper #12 [Canvas]
Nov 10, F	Workshop: Essay 3 titles and introductions	Peer review group titles and introductions Intro and title worksheet	intro ¶ from Essay 3 for focused workshop Essay 3 draft due by 11pm
Nov 13, M	Workshop: Essay 3	Peer review group essays <i>Focus on argument and structure</i>	peer review materials due before class
Nov 15, W	Workshop: Essay 3	Peer review group paragraphs <i>Focus on sentence-level clarity</i>	1 ¶ from Essay 3 for focused workshop
Nov 17, F	Reflecting on writing	Katsikas, "Same Performance, Better Grades" Zhang, "Making Peace with Imperfection"	
Essay 3 revision due Friday, November 17 by 11pm			
Unit 4: Revision and Reflection			
	<i>Daily theme</i>	<i>Reading due</i>	<i>Writing due</i>
Nov 20, M	Big ideas	Appiah, "What is the Point of College?"	response paper #13 [Canvas]

Nov 22, W	Personal narrative and reflection	Coates, "Acting French"	
Nov 24, F	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break		
	Respond to four response paragraphs by Friday, November 24		
Nov 27, M	Re-reading like a re-writer	Ricks, "The Secret Life of a Book Manuscript" Re-read essay for revision	revision proposal due by 11pm
Nov 29, W	Elements of argument	Worthen, "Stop Saying 'I Feel Like'" Cameron, "Just Don't Do It"	
Dec 1, F	Planning for revision	Your DSP essay	marked-up DSP essay [print and bring to class]
Dec 4, M	Reading Response presentations	Response threads by presenters	
Dec 6, W	Reading Response presentations	Response threads by presenters	
Dec 8, F	Reading Response presentations	Response threads by presenters	Essay 4 draft due by 11pm
Dec 11, M	Workshop: Essay 4	Peer review group essays	peer review materials due before class
Essay 4 revision due Friday, December 15 by 11pm			

Supplemental readings and resources are available on Canvas in the "Files" section.

The Twentieth-Century U.S. Novel

In this course, we will consider how American writers used the form of the novel to reflect and respond to the major cultural and historical developments of the twentieth century. As our readings trace the major literary historical developments of the period (naturalism, realism, modernism, and postmodernism), they will also allow us to consider how the novel provided a malleable literary form for protest, reflection, reform, reconciliation, provocation, and more. By the end of the term, students will not only have read a diverse selection of novels from the period, but will also have a more developed sense of the kinds of the questions and critiques that novels can raise about history, modernity, and the very nature of a nation.

Course Learning Objectives:

- read and appreciate a selection of twentieth-century U.S. novels
- describe and analyze different elaborations of and challenges to the novel as a generic form
- consider different ways of accounting for the novel's relationship to culture, politics, and history
- develop and articulate in writing argumentative readings of literary texts

Assignments and Assessments:

- Daily notecards: write a quotation from the day's reading on the front of a 3x5" index card and a response on the back (15% of final grade)
- Close reading essays (5-7pp): generate a compelling question and claim about a text that is supported with textual evidence (2 @ 25% each)
- Take-home final (35%)

Readings and Schedule:

Week 1: Realism and social change

Edith Wharton, *House of Mirth* (1905)

Week 2: Forms for modernity

Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives* (1909) [excerpts]

Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) [excerpts]

Jean Toomer, *Cane* (1923)

Week 3: A lost generation?

Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929)

Weeks 4-5: The novel as epic

William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936)

Weeks 6-7: The novel goes to Hollywood

Nathanael West, *Day of the Locust* (1939)

Vera Caspary, *Laura* (1942)

Weeks 8-9: Modernist innovation

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952)

Week 10: Modern discontents

Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966)

Week 11: The politics of form

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1977)

Week 12: Atmospheric postmodernism

Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (1985)

Weeks 13-14: The century turns

Toni Morrison, *Paradise* (1997)

“Golden Multitudes”: American Best-sellers

On its surface, the term “best-seller” seems simple enough: a best-seller is a book that sells—a lot. Over the course of American literary history, however, best-sellers have done more than line the pockets of their publishers, and the term has grown to be more than marker of mere commercial success. For example, Horatio Alger’s best-selling boys’ books, most notably *Ragged Dick* (1868), gave the country an idiom—“rags-to-riches”—through which to imagine an idealized American economic subjectivity. Pearl S. Buck’s *The Good Earth* (1931) offered American readers an empathetic vision of cross-cultural exchange with pre-Communist China during the height of interwar isolationism. Barack Obama, a then-unknown senator from Illinois, used his best-selling *Dreams From My Father* (2004) to cannily lay the groundwork for his historic election as President in 2008. And, if legend is to be trusted, Abraham Lincoln himself remarked that Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 best-seller *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* did nothing short of launch the Civil War.

This class will consider the history of the American best-seller from the early days of the republic to the modern era, as we follow in the footsteps of millions of readers by diving into books that took the nation by storm. As we read the most popular books of bygone eras (some of which remain popular—or at least well-known—today), we will consider what these books’ popularity might tell us about their particular moments in history. What types of authors, subjects, distribution channels, and reading conditions make for a best-seller? How else can we gauge reader response to books in the past beyond sales and circulation statistics? With the help of essays on cultural and literary criticism, we will also consider how the rubric of a “best-seller” might help us complicate common distinctions between art and commerce, between high and mass culture, among “literature” and other genres of fiction and non-fiction, and among different modes of reading (for education, for difficulty, for pleasure, for immersion, for escape, etc.). Along these lines, we will ask how best-sellers—often relegated to the margins of “serious” literary study—might test the limits of traditional tools for literary study, including close reading. How and why should we take read seriously books that were meant to be read for fun? Finally, as we read “best-sellers” from over 200 years of American literary history, we will reflect on the transhistorical meaning and value of this particular literary category. How have changes in the material lives of books—production technologies, circulation networks, ways of writing, finding, buying, and reading books—changed the meaning of the term “best-seller”? What bigger historical claims remain to be made about the work of “best-sellers” in American literary and cultural history?

Course Learning Objectives:

- describe the types of cultural work the label “best-seller” has been asked to do over the long course of American literary history
- describe different forms of literary popularity related to “best-seller” status
- recognize and question the types of assumptions that attach to “best-sellers” and their authors
- develop and articulate argumentative readings of literary and critical texts

- use close reading and historical research methods to identify and analyze how literary works respond to social, cultural, and political themes

Assignments and Assessments:

- Daily notecards: write a quotation from the day’s reading on the front of a 3x5” index card and a response on the back (15% of final grade)
- Vernacular criticism report (3-5pp): find and respond to an informal, non-professional critical response to a text (20%)
- Close reading argument (4-6pp): generate a compelling question and claim about a text that is supported with textual evidence (25%)
- Final essay (10-12pp): generate and pursue a research question on a text or author discussed in class (40%)

Readings and Schedule:

Week 1: Seducing readers

Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* (1794)

Cathy Davidson, “The Life and Times of *Charlotte Temple*: The Biography of a Book,” *Reading in America: Literature and Social History* (ed. Davidson)

Weeks 2 and 3: Selling social change I

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852)

Barbara Hochman, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Reading Revolution* [excerpts]

Week 4: Selling nostalgia

Edith Wharton, *Age of Innocence* (1920)

Hutner, Introduction to *What America Read: Taste, Class, and the Novel, 1920-1960*

Week 5: Selling difference

Pearl S. Buck, *The Good Earth* (1930)

Week 6: Hard-boiled mass culture

Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (1929)

Adorno and Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception”

Weeks 7 and 8: Selling social change II

Richard Wright, *Native Son* (1940)

Nicholas T. Rinehart, “Native Sons; or, How ‘Bigger’ Was Born Again,” *Journal of American Studies*, 2017.

Week 9: Selling scandal

Grace Metalious, *Peyton Place* (1956)

Ardis Cameron, “Blockbuster feminism: *Peyton Place* and the uses of scandal” in *Must Read: Rediscovering American Bestsellers* (eds. Churchwell and Smith)

Weeks 10 and 11: Literary best-sellers I

Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (1977)

Week 12: Literary best-sellers II

Jonathan Franzen, *The Corrections* (2001)

Week 13: Selling mystery

Elena Ferrante, *My Brilliant Friend* (2011)

The Materiality and Marketing of Women's Writing

This course will consider the long history of the ways in which women's words, lives, stories, and bodies have been packaged and sold to readers. From captivity narratives to "chick lit," we will examine how writing by/for/about women has been collated as a particular kind of literary product whose forms, meanings, and materials reflect and respond to larger intersectional issues related to cultural and political representation. Our investigations will center on novels and memoirs that have circulated in the literary ecology of the United States over the last 300 years, with secondary readings in feminist literary theory, literary history, book history, and cultural criticism.

In addition to the reading and writing students will do in our classroom context, the final project in this course will give students the opportunity to consider how the history our course traces has been amplified, augmented, and altered by a new medium for the dissemination of knowledge about women's writing. As students work collaboratively to create or edit a Wikipedia page about a piece of women's writing related to this course, they will gain first-hand experience with the possibilities, challenges, and ethics of writing about women's writing for a wider readership.

Course Learning Objectives:

- identify and describe major themes and concerns related to the marketing of women's writing
- develop and articulate argumentative readings of literary and critical texts
- address and reflect on the challenges of writing about course themes for a larger, non-academic audience through a final Wikipedia editing project

Assignments and Assessments:

- Daily notecards: write a quotation from the day's reading on the front of a 3x5" index card and a response on the back (15% of final grade)
- Position papers (3 @ 500 words each): due throughout the term and shared online with the whole class (15%)
- Close reading argument (4-6pp): generate a compelling question and claim about a text that is supported with textual evidence (25%)
- Final Wikipedia project: working in groups of two or three, students will collaboratively create or edit a Wikipedia page on a piece of women's fiction; individually write a 4-5pp essay that explains their rationale, research, and process; and present their new page in a brief in-class presentation (45%)

Readings and Schedule:

Week 1:

Annette Kolodny, "Dancing through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism," *Feminist Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1980)

Meg Wolitzer, "The Second Shelf: On the Rules of Literary Fiction for Men and Women," *NYT* (30 Mar. 2012)

Lori Ween, "This Is Your Book: Marketing America to Itself," *PMLA*, vol. 118, no. 1 (2003): 90-102

Week 2:

Mary Rowlandson, *A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682)

David Hall, "Readers and Writers in Early New England," *A History of the Book in America*, vol. 1 (2000)

Pamela Lougheed, "'Then Began He to Rant and Threaten': Indian Malice and Individual Liberty in Mary Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative," *American Literature* vol. 74, iss. 2 (2002)

Week 3:

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)

William L. Andrews, "The Changing Moral Discourse of Nineteenth Century-Century African American Women's Autobiography: Harriet Jacobs and Elizabeth Keckley," *Decolonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography* (1992)

Weeks 4-5:

Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (1868-9)

Richard Broadhead, *Cultures of Letters* (1993) [excerpts]

Barbara Sicherman, *Well-Read Lives* (2010) [excerpts]

Week 6:

Nella Larsen, *Passing* (1929)

John K. Young, "Teaching Texts Materially: The Ends of Nella Larsen's *Passing*," *College English*, vol. 66, no. 6 (2004)

James C. Davis, *Commerce in Color: Race, Consumer Culture, and American Literature, 1893-1933* (2007) [excerpts]

Week 7:

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)

Hurston, "How It Feels To Be Colored Me" (1928), "What White Publishers Won't Print" (1950)

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. "Zora Neale Hurston and the Speakerly Text"

Alice Walker, "Looking for Zora"

Weeks 8-9:

Maxine Hong Kingston, *Woman Warrior* (1976)

Frank Chin, "The Most Popular Book in China"

Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong, "Autobiography as Guided Chinatown Tour?"

Kingston, "Cultural Mis-Readings by American Reviewers"

Weeks 10-11:

Edwidge Danticat, *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994)

Cecilia Konchar Farr, *Reading Oprah: How Oprah's Book Club Changed the Way America Reads* (2005) [excerpts]
Adlai Murdoch, "Being Haitian in New York: Migration and Transnationalism in Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory*," *Echoes of the Haitian Revolution: 1804-2004* (2008)
Kimberly Cabot Davis, "Oprah's Book Club and the Politics of Cross-Racial Empathy" (2004)

Week 12:

Terry McMillan, *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* (1996)
Kevin Rodney Sullivan (dir.), *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* (1998)

Week 13:

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (2006)
Valerie Rohy, "In the Queer Archive: Fun Home," *GLQ*, vol. 16, no. 3 (2010)
Lisa Zunshine, "What to Expect When You Pick up a Graphic Novel," *SubStance*, vol. 41, no. 1 (2011)
Michael Warner, "Uncritical Reading," *Polemic* (2006)

Week 14:

Group project presentations

Revolutions in the Word: Introduction to Book History and Textual Studies

This course will introduce students to the questions, methods, and stakes of the interdisciplinary fields of the history of the book and textual studies. We will consider how manuscripts, books, and other textual objects have been implicated in histories of social, cultural, economic, political, and technological change. Course readings will include many of the founding works in book history and textual studies, as well as more recent work that has challenged the field to broaden the kinds of textual production and consumption that count in book history. In visits to Special Collections, students will gain hands-on experience with the textual objects that have generated this history. By the end of the course, students will understand why it is worth judging books and other textual objects not only by their contents and covers, but also by the materials they require, the labors they entail, and the networks of exchange they facilitate.

Course Learning Objectives

- describe the major questions, debates, and methods of book history and textual studies
- recognize and discuss the major material, technological, and cultural developments that have defined “books” and “reading” over the last six hundred years
- analyze and assess examples of book historical and textual scholarship
- practice navigating Special Collections and deploying the vocabulary of textual studies in a written assignment

Assignments and Assessments

- Daily notecards: write a quotation from the day’s reading on the front of a 3x5” index card and a response on the back (20% of final grade)
- Libro-descriptive essay (3 pages): describe a special collections item to practice deploying the vocabulary of bibliography and textual studies (20%)
- Position papers (3 @ 500 words each): due throughout the term and shared online with the whole class (30%)
- Take-home final: due at the end of term (30%)

Readings and Schedule:

The Book History Reader, 2nd ed., edited by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (Routledge, 2006).

Course pack with additional readings

Unit 1: Frameworks

Week 1: What is the History of the Book?

Darnton, “What is the History of Books?” [in *Book History Reader*]

Adams and Barker, “A New Model for the Study of the Book” [*BHR*]

Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production” [*BHR*]

Week 2: What is Textual Scholarship?

McKenzie, “The Book as an Expressive Form” [*BHR*]

Greetham, Introduction and “Making the Text: Bibliography of Manuscript Books”, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* (1992)

Darnton, “The Importance of Being Bibliographical,” *The Case for Books* (2009)

Library visit: manuscript culture and its legacies through the age of print

Unit 2: Chronologies and Technologies

Week 3: Before Gutenberg

Ong, “Orality and Literacy” [BHR]

Müller, “The Body of the Book” [BHR]

Stock, *The Implications of Literacy* [selections]

Week 4: A Printing Revolution?

Eisenstein, “Defining the Initial Shift: Some Features of Print Culture” [BHR]

Johns, “The Book of Nature and the Nature of the Book” [BHR]

De Grazia and Stallybrass, “The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* vol. 44, no. 3 (1993)

Library visit: early printed books

Week 5: Industrial Books

Wittmann, “Was there a Reading Revolution at the End of the Eighteenth Century?,” *A History of Reading* (1999)

Banham, “The Industrialization of the Book: 1800-1970,” *A Companion to the History of the Book* (2007)

Nord, “Benevolent Books: Printing, Religion, and Reform,” *A History of the Book in America*, vol. 2 (2010)

Liberatore, “Governing by the Book: Mediterranean Travel and Sanitary Prophylaxis in the Nineteenth-Century,” *The Global Histories of Books* (2017)

Libro-descriptive essay due

Week 6: Modern Books

Radway, “A Feeling for Books” [BHR]

King, “‘A priceless book to have out here’: Soldiers Reading Shakespeare in the First World War,” *Shakespeare* vol. 10, no. 3 (2014)

Mercer, “The Paperback Revolution: Mass-circulation Books and the Cultural Origins of 1968 in Western Europe,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* vol. 72, no. 4 (2011)

Rebecca Rego Barry, “The Neo-Classics: (Re)Publishing the ‘Great Books’ in the United States in the 1990s,” *Book History* vol. 6 (2003)

Library visit: the paperback revolution

Unit 3: People and Institutions

Week 7: Authors and Authority

Barthes, “The Death of the Author” [BHR]

Foucault, “What is an Author?” [BHR]

Rose, “Literary Property Determined” [BHR]

Chartier, “Figures of the Author,” *The Order of Books* (1994)

Week 8: Readers (Past)

“First Steps Toward a History of Reading,” *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (1990)

Chartier, “Labourers and Voyagers” and “The Practical Impact of Writing” [BHR]

Grafton and Jardine, “Studied for Action: How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy,” *Past & Present* no. 129 (1990)

McHenry, “Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies” [BHR]

Towheed, Crone, and Halsey, “Examining the Evidence of Reading: Three Examples from the Reading Experience Database, 1450-1945,” *Reading in History: New Methodologies from the Anglo-American Tradition* (2010)

Library visit: readers leave their marks

Week 9: Middle Men

Pawley, “Beyond Market Models and Resistance: Organizations as a Middle Layer in the History of Reading,” *Library Quarterly* vol. 79, no. 11 (2009)

McGill, “The Matter of the Text: Commerce, Print Culture, and the Authority of the State in American Copyright Law,” *American Literary History* vol. 9, no. 1 (1997)

Kuitert, “The Literary Agent as ‘Broker’ A Case Study on the Latin American ‘Boom’ and the Book Market in the Netherlands,” *Quaerendo* vol. 45, no. 3-4 (2015)

Low, “‘Read! Learn!’: Globalisation and (G)localisation in Caribbean Textbook Publishing,” *The Global Histories of Books* (2017)

Week 10: Readers (Present)

De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) [selections]

Flint, “Reading Practices” [BHR]

Radway, “Interpretive Communities and Variable Literacies,” *Daedalus* vol. 113, no. 3 (1984)

Sweeney, “Books as Bombs: Incendiary Reading Practices in Women’s Prisons,” *PMLA* (2008)

Willis, “Keeping Promises to Queer Children: Making Space (for Mary Sue) at Hogwarts,” *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet* (2006)

Unit 4: Borders and Boundaries

Week 11: The Global Book

Boehmer, Introduction, *The Global Histories of Books* (2017)

McKenzie, “The Sociology of a Text: Orality, Literacy and Print in Early New Zealand” [BHR]

Shah, “‘Bringing Spring to Sahbai’s Rose-Garden’: Persian Printing in North India after 1857,” *The Global Histories of Books* (2017)

McDonald, “Semper Aliquid Novi: Reclaiming the Future of Book History from an African Perspective,” *Book History* vol. 19 (2016)

Library visit: non-Western texts

Week 12: Beyond Books

Howsam, “Where Is the Book in History?,” *Old Books and New Histories* (2006)

West, “The Magazine Market” [BHR]

Patten, “When is a Book not a Book?” [BHR]

Rubery, *The Untold Story of the Talking Book* [selections]

Week 13: What is the Future of the Book?

Duguid, "Material Matters," [*BHR*]

Striphas, *The Late Age of Print* [selections]

Modeling the Book: Book History in Theory and Practice

In his 1982 essay, “What is the History of Books?”, Robert Darnton offers an origin story for the then-nascent field of “book history.” As scholars in disparate fields pursued questions about textual communication, they found themselves in “a no-man’s-land located at the intersection of a half-dozen fields of study.” There, “they decided to constitute a field of their own and to invite in historians, literary scholars, sociologists, librarians, and anyone else who wanted to understand the book as a force in history.” Thirty years after Darnton’s seminal essay, the field of book history remains a lively interdisciplinary crossroads, and scholars from diverse institutional bases continue to find the methods and lenses of book historical research invaluable in answering their questions about the social and material meanings of texts.

This seminar will consider “the book” not only as a force in history (as Darnton claims), but also as one of the major tools of humanistic inquiry—a tool whose creation, use, circulation, and materiality are the subjects of great scrutiny and theorization. Following Darnton’s model of a “communications circuit,” our readings are organized around three major nodes of this circuit: Author, Text, and Reader. As we read works that theorize the identity and agency of authors, texts, and readers, we will also explore recent scholarship that use historical, anthropological, sociological, and literary methods and evidence to put these theories to the test. The texts we read will not only challenge us to think critically about the ways in which books and readers have been theorized and studied, but will also model many of the approaches that scholars working from different disciplinary bases have used to render “the book” with analytical sensitivity and sharpness. While most of the works examined in this course draw from Western Europe and the United States, students are heartily encouraged to pursue this seminar’s questions and methods in other national and geographical contexts in their final projects.

Course Learning Objectives:

- compare the ways that a variety of disciplines (including history, literary studies, anthropology, and sociology) develop research questions around ideas of authors, readers, books, and texts
- identify and critique the guiding questions and methods of scholarship from a variety of national, historical, and geographical frames
- reflect on the methodological benefits and challenges of working in an interdisciplinary framework such as book history
- develop and complete a research project that models a sophisticated understanding of the theories and methods discussed in this course

Assignments and Assessments:

- Position papers (3 @ 500 words each): due throughout the term and shared online with the whole class (20% of final grade)
- Leading discussion: working in groups of two or three, students will be responsible for leading half of one seminar (an outline for discussion, including major points or questions to address, will be due in advance of class meeting) (15% of final grade)

- Seminar participation: coming to class prepared (with readings in hand), contributing to discussion by offering ideas, asking questions, listening respectfully (15% of final grade)
- Final Project (50% of final grade)
 - Prospectus: a one-page description of your project, including guiding research questions and potential sources, due by the end of Week 7 (5%)
 - Presentation: a 10-minute (4-5 pages of double-spaced writing) presentation of your major findings and claims, due in the last two weeks of class meetings (10%)
 - Paper: a 20-page research paper, due one week after the last class meeting. (35%)

Readings and Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction: Modeling the Book

Robert Darnton, “What is the History of Books?” (1982)

Roger Chartier, “Laborers and Voyagers: From the Text to the Reader” (1992)

Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) [selections]

Christine Pawley, “Beyond Market Models and Resistance: Organizations as a Middle Layer in the History of Reading” (2009)

Unit 1: Authors

Week 2: Theories of the Author

Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author” (1967)

Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” (1969)

Roger Chartier, “Figures of the Author” in *The Order of Books* (1994)

David D. Hall, “Contingencies of Authorship,” from *Ways of Writing* (2012)

Visit to library special collections to explore possible resources for final project.

Week 3: Forms of Authorship

Ann Fabian, *Unvarnished Truth* (2000)

Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, “John Marrant Blows the French Horn: Print, Performance, and the Making of Publics in Early African American Literature (2012)

June Howard, “‘Her Very Handwriting Looks as if She Owned the Earth’: Elizabeth Jordan and Editorial Power” (2006)

Ellen Gruber Garvey, “Strategic Scrapbooks: Activist Women’s Clipping and Self-Creation,” from *Writing With Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War through the Harlem Renaissance* (2013)

Week 4: Case Study: Alan Paton

Alan Paton, *Cry, The Beloved Country* (1948)

Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital” (1986)

Sarah Brouillette, *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace* (2007) [selections]

Graham Huggan, Introduction in *The Postcolonial Exotic* (2001)

Rita Barnard, “Oprah’s Paton, or South Africa and the Globalization of Suffering” (2004)

Joseph Slaughter, “Humanitarian Reading” (2009)

Unit 2: Texts

Week 5: Revolutionary Print

Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (1983/2005) [selections]

Adrian Johns, “The Book of Nature and the Nature of the Book” from *The Nature of the Book* (1998)

Margreta De Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, “The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text” (1993)

Jeffrey Todd Knight, “Making Shakespeare’s Books: Assembly and Intertextuality in the Archives” (2009)

Week 6: Movable Text

Matt Cohen, *The Networked Wilderness* (2009)

D.F. McKenzie, “The Sociology of a Text” (1999)

Barry O’Connell, “Literacy and Colonization: The Case of the Cherokees” (2010)

Anna Brickhouse, “Mistranslation, Unsettlement, La Navidad” (2013)

Week 7: Printing, Reprinting, Circulation, Distribution: The U.S. Case

David Nord, “Benevolent Books: Printing, Religion, and Reform” (2010)

Meredith McGill, “The Matter of the Text: Commerce, Print Culture, and the Authority of the State in American Copyright Law” (1997)

Barbara Hochman, “*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in the National Era: An Essay in Generic Norms and the Contexts of Reading” (2004)

Greg Barnhisel, “Cold Warriors of the Book: American Book Programs in the 1950s” (2010)

Christine Pawley, “Blood and Thunder on the Bookmobile: American Public Libraries and the Construction of ‘the Reader,’ 1950-1995” (2007)

Rebecca Rego Barry, “The Neo-Classics: (Re)Publishing the ‘Great Books’ in the United States in the 1990s” (2003)

Prospectus for final project due by the end of Week 7.

Unit 3: Readers

Week 8: Readers Real, Imagined, Implied, Ideal

Stanley Fish, “Literature in the Reader” (1970)

Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (1978) [selections]

Robert Darnton, “First Steps Toward a History of Reading” (1990)

Cunningham and Stanovich, “What Reading Does for the Mind” (1998)

Leah Price, “Reading: The State of the Discipline” (2004)

Week 9: Case Study: Imagined Communities

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983)

Roger Chartier, “Communities of Readers” in *The Order of Books* (1994)

Anindita Ghosh, “An Uncertain ‘Coming of the Book’: Early Print Cultures in Colonial India” (2003)

Hortensia Calvo, “The Politics of Print: The Historiography of the Book in Early Spanish America” (2003)

Trish Loughran, Introduction from *The Republic in Print: U.S. Print Culture in the Age of Nation Building, 1770–1870* (2009)

Week 10: Historical Readers

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms* (1980/1992)

Elizabeth McHenry, “Forgotten Readers: African-American Literary Societies and the American Scene” (1998)

Janice Knight, “The Word Made Flesh: Reading Women and the Bible” (2007)

Edmund King, “‘A priceless book to have out here’: Soldiers Reading Shakespeare in the First World War” (2014)

Week 11: Contemporary Readers

Megan Sweeney, *Reading is My Window* (2010)

Janice Radway, “Interpretive Communities and Variable Literacies” (1984)

Elizabeth Long, *Book Clubs* (2003) [selections]

Wendy Griswold, “The Reading Class,” from *Regionalism and the Reading Class* (2008)

Michael Warner, “Uncritical Reading” (2004)

Week 12: Remodeling the Book

Matthew Kirschenbaum, *Mechanisms* (2012)

Leah Price, “From The History of a Book to a ‘History of the Book’” (2009)

Leslie Howsam, Introduction from *Old Books and New Histories: An Orientation to Studies in Book and Print Culture* (2006)

Padmini Ray Murray and Claire Squires, “The Digital Publishing Communications Circuit” (2012)

William St. Clair, “The Political Economy of Reading” (2012)

Weeks 13 and 14

Final project presentations

Student Feedback on Teaching Reflective Statement

In my ten semesters of teaching both literature and composition courses at Michigan, my students have consistently recognized my interest in the material I teach, my enthusiasm for student ideas, my patience in working with students on a one-on-one basis, and my commitment to fostering a classroom environment that encourages open, thoughtful, and compassionate discussion. Even as I have gained a reputation for setting high standards, I have also been praised for providing students many different forms of support to help them meet those expectations. Students have commented that I am “always willing to explore new ideas,” which leads to “enthusiastic and exciting” discussions. Students also value the “real, practical, and interactive ways” we engage with the course material, including what one student referred to as “hands-on activities” that allow students to build and practice reading and writing skills. Furthermore, students routinely mention how helpful my office hours are, as well as the time and care I put into grading and responding to written work. By prioritizing student ideas and contributions in a way that makes discussions “open” and “comfortable,” I am able to help students “take risks with [their] writing” and develop skills that transfer “beyond English classes.”

Receiving feedback from my students has also helped me identify opportunities for improvement in my teaching. Some of my students, especially earlier in my teaching career, asked for more structure in class discussions. I have since made it a point to signal to students in as many ways as possible the goals of each given class. My syllabus includes a list of topics for each class day’s discussion, and I begin every class meeting by writing one guiding question and two or three concrete learning objectives on the corner of the board. Providing these elements of structure still allows for what one student characterized as “natural discussions,” while reminding both me and my students of the business of the day. Along similar lines, students have also asked for more clarity in written assignments, and while I have resisted making my assignments too prescriptive, I have found other ways to communicate my expectations to students. To scaffold formal essays, I have developed worksheets on generating a close reading, motivating a question, situating yourself in a conversation, comparing texts, and structuring an argument. These worksheets make explicit the different types of conceptual moves that go into setting up an effective essay and guide students through that process without doing the thinking for them. I have also adjusted how I give written feedback on student writing. Rather than summarize my comments in a long closing note, I now include a table-based rubric that provides targeted feedback on argument, structure, evidence and analysis, and mechanics. Not only is this feedback easier for students to digest, but it gives them a clearer sense of where they can improve on future assignments.

Below are representative comments from student evaluations that convey a range of responses to my teaching. Along with enrollment figures and response rates for each class, I have also included the average numerical response to the question, “Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher” (answered on a 1-5 scale). I have organized the feedback in reverse chronological order, with courses in which I was “Instructor of Record” appearing before the two lecture courses for which I was a discussion section leader. I am happy to provide full reports upon request.

Winter 2017

English 362 – American Novel: Classics and Controversies (instructor of record)

Enrollment: 29 students, 1 section; 21 students completed evaluations

Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher: 4.55/5 (university median: 4.73)

Kathryne was an exceptional instructor. I really enjoyed how she incorporated the "ecosystem" surrounding each novel into the class. She was very informed on the subject matter and I enjoyed the book selections as well as supplemental readings.

I really enjoyed reading some interesting books that I might have not found or sought out on my own. I also really enjoyed learning about some of the immediate reactions to some of the books

It was a very good class. It was a bit more lecture-y than I was expecting, but the instructor always had interesting and new perspectives with which to view the text, as well as fascinating insights coupled with the appropriation of the students' opinions so that the lecture aspect of the class didn't feel one-sided or heavy handed.

Kathryne was very knowledgeable and approachable. She was funny and presented relevant questions to us as students. She was helpful in office hours, though I do think a little tough on grading (I'm biased, of course). Sometimes I felt discussions were a bit awkward because students didn't often contribute to class discussion, but I felt that overall, she handled this as best as she could and tried to ask questions that would spark some sort of interest.

Winter 2016

English 124 – Academic Writing & Literature (instructor of record)

Enrollment: 17 students, 1 section; 15 students completed evaluations

Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher: 4.96/5 (university median: 4.67)

“Really great instruction; Kathryne is accommodating in many ways, from making extra office hours to extending deadlines. Looked forward to going to class each day, I felt like I needed to be adequately prepared for discussion, but also expected to leave class with a new view or an increased understanding of whatever assigned text we had read each day.”

“Kathryne Bevilacqua is an excellent English teacher, her rapier wit and broadsword-like bluntness are both appreciated.”

“Fantastic quality. I thoroughly appreciated Ms. B and her instruction within this course. I always found her teaching presence direct and obvious what she was attempting to teach us during each session. I would definitely recommend her as a mentor to anybody interested in taking an English course.”

“I really enjoyed all of the discussion because it made me think about our coursework in new ways and built a fun sense of community within the classroom. The essay work was incredibly helpful and I feel like my academic writing has improved greatly.”

Fall 2015

English 124 – Academic Writing & Literature (instructor of record)

Enrollment: 18 students, 1 section; 17 students completed evaluations

Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher: 4.00/5 (university median: 4.67)

“Kathryne was a great teacher who kept her students focused and engaged in what she was teaching. She was very helpful outside of class as well.”

“I thought overall the course was good. I thought Kathryne pushed us to be better writers, which is what you want from an English teacher. I feel as though some of the grading was quite subjective in the class which made it very difficult throughout the semester.”

“The majority of the class was just discussion and for the most part it flowed nicely, plus office hours were always very helpful.”

“This class is challenging and has a lot of work. However, peer workshops are very helpful.”

Winter 2014

English 124 – Academic Writing & Literature (instructor of record)

Enrollment: 18 students, 1 section; 10 students completed evaluations

Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher: 4.88/5 (university median: 4.58)

“I loved the discussions we had in class. Although many times it was not on topic, I felt safe to speak in class!”

“SHE WAS LITERALLY THE BEST!!! I liked the fact that she valued our opinions and didn't make us feel like students. If anything, I would ask for her to make the essay prompts a bit more clear.”

“The most valuable aspect of this class was the openness everyone got to experience during discussions. Because of how open the class atmosphere was, we were all able to actively participate in conversations with each other and also with the instructor. Without having the fear of being judged by other students and the authoritative figure, we were open and enthusiastic to share our thoughts about various topics. In the end, I personally got to appreciate how much I was able to get to know a lot of people in my class and to discuss with others freely and creatively.”

“I feel like if we wrote like Faulkner we would fail the class. But I did understand that the instructor was trying to show us how important literature was, and to introduce us to some harder text that we may not have seen.”

Fall 2013

English 124 – Academic Writing & Literature (instructor of record)

Enrollment: 18 students, 1 section; 15 students completed evaluations

Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher: 4.25/5 (university median: 4.63)

“Kathryne is a great teacher who clearly enjoys what she does. Works outside of class to make class experience better.”

“Overall the instruction was good. Some assignments were confusing and required a good amount of explanation. But in class the discussion of texts and paper workshops were very helpful in showing me what my writing should look like.”

“Kathryne made class interesting and made an effort to wake people up in the morning without being obnoxious about it like some other GSIs are. The instruction was great.”

“I think Kathryne was very good at explaining the texts. She was always available at her office hours which I really appreciated.”

Winter 2013

English 125 – Writing & Academic Inquiry (instructor of record)

Enrollment: 17 students, 1 section; 17 students completed evaluations

Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher: 4.65/5 (university median: 4.61)

“Kathryne was awesome. She made sure that we were learning and writing well while also making sure that we bonded as a class and felt comfortable. I actually really look forward coming to this class every Tuesday and Thursday.”

“Really helped me take risks with my writing and learn how to revise efficiently.”

“Overall, I liked the structure of this course. At times the discussions and instruction seemed a little random, but I think this produced better conversation. I think the informality of the course allowed the students to freely express their thoughts on the topics we discussed.”

“I think we might have been held to too high of standards at times.”

Fall 2012

English 125 – Writing & Academic Inquiry (instructor of record)

Enrollment: 16 students, 1 section; 14 students completed evaluations

Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher: 4.36/5 (university median: 4.61)

“I really thought Kathryn cared about how we did in this course. I thought my writing really improved, and learned a lot about writing expectations in college.”

“I like that we covered many general writing topics that can be used beyond English classes.”

“She really took the time to grade my papers, offering valid criticism which helped me as a writer.”

“I liked how she was able to improvise.”

“Kathryn could be slightly more prepared for class, since there were a few days when she did not have many plans and we did not progress as quickly as a class. Overall, though, she was an excellent teacher and set high standards for us as students, which overall made us better writers.”

Winter 2012

English 368 – Jacobean Shakespeare (discussion section leader)

Enrollment: 37 students, 2 sections; 18 students completed evaluations

Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher: 4.38/5 and 4.58/5 (university median: 4.60)

“Kathryn was awesome. She was great at running discussions, she was clever, had a great sense of humor and was, more than anything else, insightful. I wouldn't hesitate to take another course where she is my GSI.”

“The classroom was made into a very comfortable environment and I felt encouraged to voice my ideas. Office hours help was very beneficial. Kathryn was very accessible, related to students and had a good sense of humor.”

“Discussion was always enthusiastic and exciting. Kathryn was always willing to explore new ideas and share her own with the class, and provided interesting supplementary materials. Definitely my favorite GSI this semester.”

Fall 2011

English 313 – Children’s Literature (discussion section leader)

Enrollment: 48 students, 2 sections; 30 students completed evaluations

Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher: 4.14/5 and 4.56/5 (university median: 4.59)

“She was interested in the material and always upbeat in discussion and tried to get people to participate. I went to her office hours multiple times and thought she was very helpful in writing my papers.”

“She offered real, practical, and interactive ways to break down and understand the complicated and many themes brought up in lecture. I enjoyed that her sense of humor and understanding of students' needs made Kathryn very approachable to students and students' questions.”

“Kathryn was an excellent GSI--she made class fun and interesting, and the group work in class was very helpful, as was meeting during office hours to discuss topics for the paper. The written feedback on the graded papers was also incredibly helpful and helped show what we could work on in future papers.”

“She divided up discussion sections well between small group work and large group work, answered students' questions, held extra office hours, and gave a lot of feedback on papers. It was also cool how she arranged the class to sit in a circle even though the room had built-in tables in rows--I really think this circle setting encouraged more people to talk.”

“Led good discussions that were interesting. However, very tough grader but was willing to meet outside of class to help students”