

English 105
F (MWF)
1-1:55 pm

Prof. T. Howe
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Office Phone: 458-8762
Payne Hall 22
Office Hours
& by appointment

Composition and Literature: Villains, Criminals, and Outsiders

Course Description: Why are literary villains repeatedly depicted as ethnic “Others,” women, social outcasts, or those whose sexual preferences deviate from a presumed norm? In *Unbreakable*, a recent film by Manoj Shyamalan, Samuel L. Jackson explains the representational logic of the comic book villain by pointing out the “elongated head” and “protruding lips” of the evildoer, his “darker skin” and “animalistic appearance.” Clearly, these can be read as offensive physical stereotypes of ethnicity. What do you think the *hero* of this film looks like? Would you be surprised to know the hero is Bruce Willis? This course will approach the subject of composition through critical analysis of a variety of texts and genres representing the intersection of difference and criminality, paying attention also to the role of the outsider: Shakespeare’s *Othello*; McCarthy’s *Child of God*; short stories by Willa Cather, Susan Glaspell, William Faulkner, and Sheridan Le Fanu, among others; the 1944 film *Laura*, directed by Otto Preminger. The primary goal of this class is to develop skills necessary for the effective, thoughtful study of fiction in all its guises. Written work for this course will be intensive; it will include short response papers, quizzes on reading and language use, and five workshopped essays.

Texts: Shakespeare, *Othello*; McCarthy, *Child of God*; *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing* (available at W&L bookstore); Coursepack (available from English Department)

Website: Course BlackBoard site, <http://blackboard.wlu.edu>

Grade Breakdown:	20%	Participation, Attendance, Brief Writing Assignments/Quizzes, Workshops, Conferences
	10%	Essay 1
	15%	Essay 2
	15%	Essay 3
	20%	Essay 4
	20%	Essay 5

Attendance is mandatory. You have three “free” absences. After that, your final grade will go down a letter-grade for each day missed.

The 24-Hour Rule states that you may not come to me with questions or complaints about any given grade until 24 hours have lapsed since its return. You must come with specific questions and/or thoughtful replies to my comments.

Plagiarism: “Plagiarism” derives from the Latin “plagiarius,” meaning “kidnapper.” To plagiarize, as to kidnap, is a kind of stealing, and it is a fundamental transgression of both the Honor System and our intellectual community. Students are responsible for understanding the rules of appropriate citation and for turning in their own intellectual work. Any instance of plagiarism will meet with immediate disciplinary action. If you have any questions about this matter, including uncertainties about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult a writing handbook or ask me.

Assignments and Due Dates: All assignments must be typed and double-spaced, using a standard 12-point serifed font like Times New Roman. Margins must be reasonable, no more than 1.25 inches. Papers must include course information and a title at the top of the first page, not on a separate cover page. Any paper over two pages should be numbered. All writing assignments, unless otherwise specified, should be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. Due dates are strict: late work will be penalized, and very late work may not be accepted. Any requests to change a due date should be discussed with me well in advance of the original deadline.

Readings: Always read with a pen in your hand. Often, I will hand out reading guides filled with questions or topics to look out for as you read; mark these and any other points you find interesting. Ways to mark your text up vary, but you can use stars, question marks, exclamation points, or brief ideas in the margins; underline or highlight; or circle anything interesting. You might also like to asterisk the top or bottom corners of pages on which you’ve noted particularly significant points for ease of later recovery. I also like to keep lists with topics and page numbers on inside of the front and back covers. **An unmarked up text, in my opinion, is an unread text, because reading—real reading—involves *engaging with the text.*** Readings must be completed by the beginning of the class period during which we will discuss them. The syllabus indicates both discussion topics and assigned homework. If you have any questions or concerns about your reading habits, please ask me.

Writings—Drafts: A draft for this class, while it does not have to be perfectly polished and perfectly argued, *should be as perfect as you can make it in the time you have.* A large portion of your participation grade is devoted to your drafting and workshopping efforts. Because you are in college now, I am willing to give you all the benefit of the doubt; however, from time to time I will use excerpts from your drafts to highlight specific areas for improvement or imitation. If I find your drafts and workshop efforts to be consistently under par, I will mark your participation grade accordingly. Similarly, if any member of your workshop group comes to me with legitimate complaints (i.e., your comments exhibit the critical acumen of a six-year-old, your drafts are not posted in a timely fashion, or your reviews are not returned with enough allowance for revision), I will mark your participation grade accordingly.

Writings—Improvement: Benefit received is proportionate to effort invested. This means I also grade according to your improvement over the course of the term. If I take the time—expend the effort—to point out something you tend to do poorly or incorrectly, then you should take the time to learn how to correct it. If I see the same mistakes over and over again, *after* I have commented on them, then I will assume that you have not read my comments and/or have no interest in maturing as a writer and a thinker.

Writings—Experiment: From experimentation springs new ideas. I value experimentation. If you experiment with new voices, new argumentative strategies, new modes of expression, and so on, I will most likely reward you. Yet, I have also been around the block. I know all the tricks students—especially smart, canny students—can have up their sleeves: don't try to fool me. If I think you're trying to pass off a last-minute draft as a well-planned experiment in logic and voice, then I will 1.) not give you a grade; 2.) call you into my office; and 3.) ask you to defend your work. Then, I will either reread and grade the assignment, ask you to redo it, or fail the submission.

Schedule

** *subject to change*

W	1/4	Introductions; Course Overview Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Syllabus/Honor/Plagiarism Assignment (look up W&L's standard honor code, read the plagiarism handout, read the syllabus in its entirety, and post <i>a complete and representative</i> honor statement reflecting the completion of this assignment to the discussion board on our blackboard site)• Begin reading Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"
F	1/6	Voice; Discuss Kafka Assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finish reading Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"• Time-stretch activity
M	1/9	Sample Workshop; Meeting in Computer Lab TBA Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Kusz, "Ring Leader"• Read handouts on using Microsoft Word to revise• Read handout on commenting
W	1/11	Discuss Kusz; How to Review Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finish the first draft of your personal narrative (essay 1)
TH	1/12	Essay 1 Draft Due to Discussion Board for Peer Review by 5:00pm Download Peers' Drafts, Comment, and Upload by 9:00pm Download Your Draft, Merge Peers' Comments, and Revise Print 3 Copies for Workshopping
F	1/13	Workshopping Essay 1 Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise your first draft according to peer comments and in-class workshop

- SUN 1/15 Essay 1 Draft 2 Due to Discussion Board for Peer Review by 5:00
Download Peers' Drafts, Comment, and Upload
Download Your Draft, Merge Peers' Comments, and Revise
Print 3 Copies for Workshopping**
- M 1/16 Workshopping Essay 1
Assignments:
- Revise your first draft according to peer comments and in-class workshop
- T 1/17 Essay 1 Draft 3 Due to Discussion Board for Peer Review by 5:00
Download Peers' Drafts, Comment, and Upload
Download Your Draft, Merge Peers' Comments, and Revise
Print 3 Copies for Workshopping**
- W 1/18 Workshopping Essay 1
- TH 1/19 Turn in Essay 1 to Blackboard→Assignments→Essay 1 by 8:00pm**
- F 1/20 Telling Tales
Assignments:
- Read O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"
 - Compose a one-page response to one of the topics I distribute in class
- M 1/23 Discuss O'Connor; the *How* of It All
Assignments:
- Read Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily"
 - Timeline Exercise (compose a chronology of story events—as opposed to plot events—in "A Rose for Emily")
- W 1/25 Discuss Faulkner
Assignments:
- Read Beckett, "The End"
 - Compose a one-page essay *in Beckett's style* on a topic I distribute in class
- F 1/27 Discuss Beckett
Assignments:
- Read assigned chapters in *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing*
 - Correct sentences I provide using what you've learned in *NBCW*
 - Bring in any and all grammar questions!
- M 1/30 Speaking of Style: Grammar Day!
Assignments:
- Finish draft of Essay 2
- T 1/31 Draft Essay 2 Due to Discussion Board for Peer Exchange (as above)**

- W 2/1 Workshopping Essay 2
- F 2/3 Workshopping Essay 2
- M 2/6 Workshopping Essay 2
Assignments:
- Finish Essay 2
 - Begin reading Le Fanu, “Carmilla”
- T 2/7 Essay 2 Due to Blackboard → Assignments → Essay 2 by 8:00pm**
- W 2/8 Discuss Le Fanu
Assignments:
- Finish reading Le Fanu, “Carmilla”
 - Evidentiary list assignment (make a list of at least 10 significant moments in “Carmilla” that you think significantly bear on one of the topics I distribute in class)
- F 2/10 Discuss Le Fanu; Groupwork (thesis construction, using text as evidence)
Assignments:
- Read Cather, “Paul’s Case”
 - Revise groupwork paragraph on your own; turn in to Blackboard → Assignments → Close Reading Paragraph
- M 2/13 Washington Break: No Classes
Assignment over Break:
- **Screen *Laura* (1944), dir. by Otto Preminger; take notes on viewing questions**
- W 2/15 Washington Break: No Classes
- F 2/17 Washington Break: No Classes
- M 2/20 Discuss *Laura*, “Paul’s Case”
Assignments:
- Finish Draft of Essay 3
- T 2/21 Essay 3 Draft Due to Discussion Board for Peer Exchange (as above)**
- W 2/22 Workshopping Essay 3
- F 2/25 Workshopping Essay 3
Assignments:
- Finish Essay 3
 - Read *Othello*, Act I

SAT 2/26 Essay 3 Due to Blackboard→Assignments→Essay 3 by 8:00pm

M 2/28 Read *Othello*, Act II

W 3/2 Read *Othello*, Act III

F 3/4 Read *Othello*, Act IV

M 3/7 Read *Othello*, Act V

T 3/8 Essay 4 Draft Due to Discussion Board for Peer Exchange

W 3/9 Workshopping Essay 4

F 3/11 Workshopping Essay 4

M 3/14 Workshopping Essay 4

Assignments:

- Finish Essay 4
- Begin reading McCarthy, *Child of God*

T 3/15 Essay 4 Due to Blackboard→Assignments→Essay 4 by 8:00pm

W 3/16 Read *Child of God*

F 3/18 Read *Child of God*

M 3/21 Read *Child of God*

W 3/23 Finish Reading *Child of God*

12/3 Essay 5 Draft Due to Discussion Board for Peer Review (as above)

F 3/25 Workshopping Essay 4

M 3/28 Workshopping Essay 4

W 3/30 Workshopping Essay 4; Conclusions

TBA Essay 5 Due to My Mailbox by 8:00pm