

CPLT 110: Introduction to Literary Studies

Fall 2014

Common Sense and Nonsense: Laughter...

Each section of this course provides an intensive introduction to college-level writing. Along with ENG 101 and ENG 181, CPLT 110 fulfills Emory's first-year writing requirement. It also provides an introduction to the study of literature broadly conceived, organized around particular topics and focused on the reading of literary texts, films, popular culture and literary theory.

This section will focus on the topic of play and nonsense. According to Friedrich Nietzsche, our maturity is based on our ability to regain the seriousness of a child at play. We will explore this paradoxical idea in reading a variety of literary works that give seem to favor linguistic and thematic playfulness over rationality. Students will compose essays and digital assignments that engage multiple questions regarding what the Russian absurdist poet Alexander Vvedensky termed the "appearance of nonsense". How might the appearance of nonsense allow a writer to escape political or social consequences for unpopular opinions? How could nonsense be an outlet for the troubles that a person struggles to admit even to his or her own self? Must one overcome the sincere play of childhood to join the purportedly rational order of adulthood? Can linguistic play undermine the strictures of socially constructed identities?

Readings will include Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the absurdist short stories of Nikolai Gogol and Daniil Kharmis, excerpts from the work of James Joyce, and various short philosophical texts concerning the topics of humor and play. Students will also revisit some childhood classics, including popular cartoons and stories, with special attention directed towards the coherent philosophical and ideological stances that often appear within the zaniness of children's entertainment. Finally, students will view a performance of Samuel Beckett's play *Endgame*, a work that provokes reactions against our prevailing assumptions about humor. Must humor be funny? When does play become work? Are laughter and tears really linked to one another, as Samuel Beckett and Nikolai Gogol assert?

Students will explore these related topics as they are presented by such seriously playful writers, all the while developing their skills in close reading of texts and clear writing about them.

Traces, Remnants, and Remains

A paradoxical concept stuck somewhere between continuity and dissolution, the remainder takes many forms: post-apocalyptic landscapes, ruins, haunting memories, and even dead bodies. More than a simply a testament to the passage of time, these sites both pose and represent significant difficulties for a culture that values unity, symmetry, and completeness. In this course we will question the prevailing cultural ideal of order and cohesion by paying close attention to what does not fit—what remains. We will begin by looking at what sorts of things remain, then work backwards to explore the causes and consequences of these strange entities. On the way we will focus on a few aspects of literary theory, the complexities of reading, and, most of all, the process of writing.

Language and its Limits

Each section of this course provides an intensive introduction to college-level writing. Along with ENG 101 and ENG 181, CPLT 110 fulfills Emory's first-year writing requirement. It also provides an introduction to the study of literature broadly conceived, organized around particular topics and focused on the reading of literary texts, films, popular culture and literary theory.

This section will focus on the question of language itself—its importance in human experience and its limits in communicating that experience. How do language and writing influence our lives? Where do the limits of this influence lie, and can they be transgressed? These questions will be addressed over the course of the semester as we explore different uses for language, as well as its occasional uselessness. Beginning with early linguistic theories in the work of pioneering French semiotician Ferdinand de Saussure, this course will address particularly what might be called a subversive history of language in the West, considering avant-garde movements like Surrealism and Situationism, as well as psychoanalysis, in order to better understand how language and discourse can break down under pressure. Ultimately, such an exploration of language will help students to situate themselves within the multiplicity of linguistic theories and practices currently available.

This awareness of theoretical issues concerning a medium we often take for granted will help students read texts more carefully, as well as write papers with greater clarity and insight.

Spring 2015

Media, Communication and the Art of Writing

Our course will begin with classical oratory and end with social media, to show how media plays an essential role in communication across history. We will move into Shakespeare's deft treatment of the perils of miscommunication, to the epistolary novel, to "cyberpunk" speculations to the future of cyberspace, to the Japanese "text novel" composed entirely by cell phone. Underlying all this will be readings in rhetoric and media theory to illustrate the ways we have conceived communication over time. We will intersperse technical writing forms with the expressive tools found in literary arts and cutting-edge forms of social media analysis, in order to provide a well-rounded approach to writing, whatever the genre.

Texts may include works by: Aristotle, Marcus Tullius Cicero, Giordano Bruno, Michel de Montaigne, William Shakespeare, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Sojourner Truth, Jorge Luis Borges, Paul de Man, Marshall McLuhan, William Gibson, Kanye West, Satoshi Takatsu and Anita Sarkeesian

Fall 2015

Inheriting Tongues: Linguistic Fluidity in Caribbean Literature

What does it mean to inherit a mother tongue, and what happens to that tongue when a new language is imposed by a colonial power? This course will involve a writing-intensive approach to various Caribbean texts which discuss the ways in which linguistic changes affect identity. We will investigate why language is sometimes associated with parental inheritance, considering how approaches to parental models of language shift within a Caribbean context. Texts will include a variety of literary works and essays from major Caribbean authors such as Jamaica Kincaid, Patrick Chamoiseau, Frantz Fanon, and Derek Walcott.

Students will engage in multimodal forms of writing, including brief response papers, collaborative assignments, digital media texts, along with peer reviewing and revising assignments. By engaging in such various forms of analysis and writing, students will enhance their literacy in digital, literary, and academic fields, allowing them to construct their own identities as writers in college and beyond.

Promises: The Temporality of Language

“All promise outruns the performance.” — R.W. Emerson

In *How to Do Things With Words*, J.L. Austin famously dislocated what he deemed to be the traditional understanding of language. According to Austin, language should not be considered only according to the truth or falseness of its references (of what it states), but also as something eminently performative, that is to say, as doing in saying, or as set of speech acts. As it happens, promising has been one of the speech acts that has received more attention, not only by Austin and his disciples, but also, and specially, by Austin’s detractors. Upon closer inspection, it seems that the reason for this is that the figure of the promise invites us to interrogate the conditions—like the existence of accepted conventional procedures or the intention to actually conduct oneself according to what is being uttered—over which the effectivity (or felicity) of speech acts is built.

Taking J.L. Austin’s work as our point of departure, we will draw on a variety of texts belonging to different traditions, epochs, and geographies in order to interrogate the speech act of promising. In order to do so, we will move through different philosophical traditions to finally arrive at some literary texts that will invite us to address this figure from different angles. Issues concerning the status of language, time, and subjectivity will be critical for our inquiry. Some of the authors we will read include, but are not limited to, J.L. Austin, Thomas Hobbes, Giorgio Agamben, Hannah Arendt, Friedrich Nietzsche, Roberto Bolaño, and Jorge Luis Borges.

Since this course fulfills the first year writing requirement, students will engage actively and creatively in writing. Through a series of different writing assignments, such as response papers, drafting, editing, and a final interpretative document, students will learn, not only how to compose and revise their work, but also how to engage with and use various kinds of sources in the practice of writing.

Representations of “the Animal” in Modern Media and Literature

In 1789, British philosopher Jeremy Bentham wrote: “The question is not, ‘Can they reason?’ nor, ‘Can they talk?’ but, ‘Can they suffer?’” This question, which challenged the social and legal norms of the eighteenth century that denied sentience to non-human animals, has influenced disciplines across the social sciences and humanities to focus on what has become known as, “the question of the animal.” Bentham’s question has sparked centuries of debate about the sentience of non-human animals and our relationship to them. Contemporary debates focus on question such as, do non-human animals have consciousness? Language? Can they communicate? Are they aware of their own death? By tracing questions such these through a wide range of texts by writers such as Ruth Harrison, Peter Singer, Carl J. Adams, Vicki Hearne, Lewis Carroll, Franza Kafka, J. M. Coetzee, Gilles Deleuze, and Jacques Derrida, students will learn how to read, write, and think critically and creatively about how the figure of “the animal” is represented in Western literature, film, and popular forms of new media.

Since this course fulfills the first-year writing requirement, students will engage in a series of different writing assignments and workshops, such as bi-weekly response papers, in-class group work and

presentations, and choice of either a short book or film review for a final paper. Each writing assignment is designed to help students better understand that writing is a process which involves editing and revising. Through the designated writing assignments, we will explore “the animal” as one of the most trivialized, and yet also one of the most powerful and troubling figures at the heart of human identity in Western culture. Along with performance in the writing exercises, final grades will also be determined by participation in class discussion.

Spring 2016

Fall 2016

English 181: Writing about Literature

Fall 2014

Memory and African American Literature

Content: This course will focus on the significance of memory as expressed in 20th Century African American literature. Because African American literature often utilizes the reoccurring theme of reflection as an avenue into the dynamics of oppression, in its various forms, and the desire to eliminate that oppression, within multiple forms of liberation, this course will highlight 20th Century texts which utilize memory to excavate a tortured past in order to obtain a bearable future for its protagonists. Our readings will provide plentiful opportunities to analyze and articulate expressions of the construction of self in narrative as constituted by the ever occurring mental imagery of Black lived experiences. We will also analyze the ways in which authors use their characters’ memories as a rhetorical gesture intended to provoke readers to investigate the influence of their own memories upon their futures and personal philosophies. As students engage the course’s texts, through writing assignments and class participation, they will learn to demonstrate both effective, persuasive writing and critical readings of texts. In writing, students must demonstrate competency in argumentation, and demonstrate writing that is strengthened by the use of multiple textual illustrations.

Contemporary British Literature, Culture, and Film

Content: Late twentieth and early twenty-first century Britain is a fascinating place (not to say it wasn't fascinating at earlier times too!). The end of World War II and the collapse of the British Empire brought many seismic cultural changes to the island nation. These changes feature large in contemporary debates in Great Britain about society, culture, politics, arts, healthcare, education, religion... you name it! In this English 181 course, you will be writing about contemporary British literature and film while drawing on secondary sources to help inform the texts you generate.

As you work on your own writing about contemporary Britain, we will discuss such issues as imperialism, multiculturalism, war, identity, immigration, racism, and neocolonialism. You will be doing a variety of both out-of-class and in-class assignments that will enable you to practice writing in several academic genres, including traditional research papers, creative compositions, and others. By looking at the film

and literature of Britain today, you will be able to shape your own understanding of writing and editing processes.

Stranger Danger in Poetry, Fiction, and Film

Content: In this course, we will focus our reading, discussions, and compositions on texts that use strangeness as artistic and rhetorical strategies. How do writers use the unfamiliar (monsters, aliens, robots, fantasy lands, and such) to examine ethical, philosophical and social problems with which we are familiar? Why would a writer choose to make strange something that is commonplace or well-known? As we consider these and other questions, we will view films and read poems, short stories, and novels across several genres, especially science fiction and fantasy (readings will include *The Hunger Games*, *Ender's Game*, excerpts from *Alice in Wonderland*, and others). Your compositions will derive from these readings and themes.

This course is designed to develop your composition skills by writing about literature. We'll practice writing techniques typically associated with literature, including close reading, analysis, and evaluation, as well as developing research skills. You'll learn strategies for incorporating other authors' words and ideas into your own writing and making arguments about and in response to literature and other texts. Additionally, you will learn use digital media as a way engaging with and responding to literary texts. This class participates in the Domain of One's Own initiative. You will create media projects and publish them to your own personal web domain using readily available, easy-to-use tools. No prior technical knowledge or media-making experience is required.

Music, Media, and Literature

Content: Music operates as a powerful genre of inspiration and expression for musicians, visual artists and writers alike. Poets select words that evoke a certain tone whereas many artists view music as the driving force that invigorates their visual imaginations. As an art form that pervades and shapes a host of different media outlets, music helps to deliver the emotional impact of a movie, television program, or video game. This course, therefore, will examine the concept of music as it relates to the following four genres: video games, superhero movies, Japanese anime, and literature. As the class explores each genre in sequence, we will return to the fundamental issue of how music adds to and defines the imaginative world it depicts. To answer this question, the course will explore a wide variety of source material including *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Dragon Ball Z*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Amazing Spider-Man*. As a writing-intensive course students will be required to produce weekly blackboard posts, weekly critical reaction papers, two soundtrack reviews and a capstone music-scoring project. Video gamers, anime enthusiasts, musicians and movie fans are welcome!

Spring 2015

Origins in African-American and Native American Literature

Content: In this course, we will explore stories of origin in the Americas, looking primarily at literature and art produced by Native Americans and peoples of African descent. These stories in many ways respond to the displacement experienced post European colonization and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. We will examine and discuss stories that appear in a variety of art forms, their potential origins, and the ways in which they connect to the social conditions of specific times and spaces. Selected texts include Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, Maryse Conde's *Windward Heights*, excerpts from Pauline

Melville's *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, and Carlos Museum exhibitions including *Grandfather Sun*, *Grandmother Moon: Wixárika Arts of Modern West Mexico*, *Creating Matter: The Prints of Mildred Thompson*, and *African Cosmos: Stellar Arts*. We will also engage composer Christopher Theofanidis' *Creation Oratoria* as performed by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

English 181 is designed to help students develop as reflective, critical, effective, and creative readers and writers. Therefore, while the course theme asks students to examine the authoring of creation stories throughout the Americas, the primary focus of the course will be on the craft of critical reading and effective written expression.

This course is supported in part by a grant from the Mellon-funded Creation Stories project.

Disability and Monstrosity in Gothic Fictions

Content: "It's really a lack of imagination that makes children check under the bed.

Like the monsters couldn't be floating invisibly just above you?"—Welcome to Nightvale.

From Frankenstein's creature to George Romero's zombies, disabled bodies have long played significant roles in gothic narratives. This course will investigate that phenomenon to consider how distinctive bodies both operate as narrative devices loaded with symbolic meaning and speak to the real material conditions of the text's readership. Students will engage these debates and related discussions through a series of individual and collaborative writing assignments designed to develop both writing skills and critical reading strategies. This class participates in the Domain of One's Own initiative. You will create media projects and publish them to your own personal web domain using readily available, easy-to-use tools. No prior technical knowledge or media-making experience is required.

Women Writing Extraordinary Ecologies

Content: This semester, we will dive into literature and art created by women that responds inventively to the irresistible allure of the idea of "nature," such as the writing of Mary Shelley, Emily Dickinson, Margaret Atwood, Octavia Butler, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Ursula K. LeGuin, and the visual art of Louise Bourgeois, Allison Hunter, Ana Mendieta, and Jee Young Lee. Our secondary readings include a variety of analyses of and observations about nature, as well as television shows, films, and other media. The works we'll concentrate on all have one thing in common: they reject, upend, and combust views about human-nature relationships and human social dynamics that rely on hierarchies like Aristotle's Great Chain of Being, in which kings sit at the top of a ladder of organisms. In contrast, the pieces we'll explore and inhabit contain weird, wild, and extraordinary worlds.

The most important text in this class will be your own writing. This course is a section of Writing About Literature, which means that it is a writing-intensive course and its primary focus is training you in a variety of academic writing styles as well as literary analysis. You will write both formally and informally; your major assignments will involve three main genres (the personal essay, the close reading essay, and the research paper) and one collaborative project.

Literatures of the African Diaspora

Content: This course will take up a diverse set of works from across this African diaspora. Broadly defined, the African Diaspora refers to the scattering of African peoples as a result of the Atlantic slave trade. With an attentiveness to both shared origins and unique experiences, we will be looking at texts by Caribbean, African American, and Black British authors. The works in this course will challenge you to

make connections and distinctions regarding themes, formal devices, and political outlooks of the different authors and regions. We will engage questions related to cultural dominance, the representation of “the other,” and the enduring legacy of colonization. Because the issue of representation is central to the course, we will be looking at a variety of genres such as poetry, short story, novel, film/ documentary, academic essay, etc. to explore the difference genre makes in representation.

Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child: Representations of Kinship in African American Literature and Culture

Content: The title of this course draws from the Negro spiritual of the same name to explore representations of family within African American literature and culture. What constitutes family? What makes another person kin? What does family do? In this course, we will explore many features of kinship—including familial roles, affective attachment, generational inheritance, and the familial structure of community—primarily within 19th and 20th century African American women’s writings, song, film and criticism. We will consider gender, emotions and the confluence of past and future within works such as the myth “All God’s Chillun Had Wings,” Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes were Watching God*, Bessie Griffin’s rendition of “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child,” Paule Marshall’s *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*, Ava DuVerney’s *Middle of Nowhere* and Erykah Badu’s “My People.” We will also briefly discuss projects such as *Finding Your Roots*, sponsored by Henry Louis Gates and Ancestry.com, as well as the Human Genome Project.

Train Songs and Train Dreams: The Railroad in American Literature

Content: In this course we will explore the role of the train in literature, music, and film of the United States, from antebellum period to contemporary moment. Students will engage with literary texts -- poems, novels, short stories -- as well as pop-culture forms like blues music. Our goals will be (1) to investigate how reading, listening, and watching carefully can contribute to a fuller sense of the past and present of the nation; and (2) to take on analytical writing and research assignments in order to produce scholarly work that offers insight into that national past and present. A final assignment will require students to create multimedia projects that incorporate their own field recordings of train activity on campus and beyond.

Writing in Tight Spaces

Content: Writing sometimes leaves us feeling trapped or claustrophobic: there’s never enough time to say what we mean, and the rules seem arbitrary and cruel. In this first-year writing class, we will learn to use the inherent limitations of written forms to our advantage, and we will ask why literary genres can be tools for surviving real confinement and oppression—be it a prison cell, a detention hall, or a family home turned sinister. We will build outwards from the “nuts and bolts” of rhetorical grammar to the fundamentals of web design and digital storytelling, all with the aim of doing more (revealing, advocating, proving) with less (time, space, gimmicks). Authors may include Herman Melville, Harriet Jacobs, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Kurt Vonnegut, and Natasha Trethewey. We will also examine and create 140-character tweets, 60-second documentaries, and low-budget films.

The Composition of Place

Content: This intensive writing course aims to develop techniques of writing and analysis through writing about literature. We will practice techniques most commonly used in the study of literature – close reading and rhetorical analysis – as well as develop research skills and learn how to incorporate other people’s ideas into our own writing. Our discussions and writing exercises will focus primarily on literature and film, but close reading and rhetorical analysis skills will have value beyond the course.

Our discussions, analysis and writing will converge around the theme of place, real and imagined, and the ways it is characterized, evoked, pictured, and deployed in written, visual and cinematic texts. How does the meaning of a place emerge? Who creates it? We will explore how writers communicate the meaning of place(s) in texts and images and use this exploration as a framework for understanding the way we can, similarly, create meaning by engaging a text through literary analysis.

Fall 2015

Humbug! Hoaxes in Literature and Culture

Content: Every day, we are asked to differentiate truth from lies: on the news, in conversation with friends, and on the cover of tabloids. In this class, we’ll read literary hoaxes, and look at how “real-life” hoaxes blur the line between literature and everyday life. This course is designed to develop your writing skills by having you write about literary texts, which for the purposes of this class will include not only fiction and poetry, but also film, television, and a variety of cultural artifacts. Our own writing will be one of our major course texts. Using close reading, research, and analysis, we will compose our own essays and creative projects examining truth, lies, and the immense grey area in between. We might ask, what are the motives behind and uses of hoaxes and lies? who gets to determine the truth? how do we decide when to be skeptical, and when to be trusting? what makes something true, anyways? We will think deeply about these and similar questions while becoming stronger writers through intensive practice.

Haunted Ireland

Content: Ireland is a haunted country. From its mythological foundations in a mysterious Otherworld to the abandoned suburban homes that litter today’s post-recession landscape, Ireland has always had a close relationship with the supernatural. In this class, we’ll look at Irish faeries, vampires, mermaids, zombies, and ghosts. We will ask what these representations of the supernatural mean in the Irish context. What can they tell us about fear, memory, and difference in Ireland? We will examine short stories, poems, plays, films, novels, websites, and digital art projects. Students will be exposed to a wide range of literary texts and become comfortable reading and writing about different genres. This is a writing intensive course; students will be asked to write brief blog posts about the readings for each class. In addition, students will build a portfolio with short assignments about the literature we’ve studied. For the final project, students write an academic research paper on a country and supernatural creature of their choosing.

Animals and Their Representations

Content: "This course will take a closer look at how animals have been portrayed in literature across time. We will start with English author Anna Sewall's 1877 novel *Black Beauty*, and then read Kenneth

Grahame's 1908 classic *The Wind in the Willows*, George Orwell's renowned 1945 novel *Animal Farm*, and the American avant garde feminist writer Carol Emshwiller's *Carmen Dog* (1988). By studying how animal characters are constructed and represented in novels, we will try to understand not only what it means to be human but also how it is reflected in the novelistic genre.

This course is designed to help first-year students develop writing skills that will allow them to deal confidently with writing projects undertaken at and beyond Emory. Moreover, by looking at the various representations of animals that are so familiar or unfamiliar to them, students will have an opportunity to challenge their established conceptions not only of animals, but also of the relationship between humans and animals and even of relationships between humans. As they explore lines of inquiry related to the course theme, students will be expected to compose four major projects: a personal essay, an analytical essay, an annotated bibliography, and a multimodal project."

Writing about Science Fiction Literature and Film

Content: In our modern industrialized society, science fiction allows us to reflect on our present by imagining our future. In this composition course, we'll explore elements of writing through the lens of speculative fiction, considering the position of humans in relation to the environment, technology, time and space, and each other. We'll look at how increased globalization and rapid technological changes have altered human relations and power dynamics, and we'll evaluate arguments about whether we should welcome or resist these changes. Readings and screenings include classic examples of the genre (*Frankenstein* and the film version of *Fahrenheit 451*) and more recent representations of the not-so-distant future (*Super Sad True Love Story*, *The Fly*, and *Her*, among others). We'll consider how each of these works of art takes a position about current cultural and technological trends, and in order to develop our own arguments about the role of science fiction, we'll develop a portfolio with a variety of artifacts: weekly blog posts, a visual presentation, a literary response letter, and a researched analysis.

Heroes and Monsters

Content: In this course, students will develop critical reading, analytical writing, and rhetorical presentation skills while exploring the way that exemplarity (meaning, worthy of imitation) and monstrosity are constructed in medieval literature and art. Reading assignments include *Beowulf*, *The Voyage of St Brendan*, *The Hammer of Witches*, medieval saints' lives, romances, sermons, chronicles, and visual narratives of monsters and heroes in manuscripts, stained glass, and wall paintings. All texts in the course engage with the question of exemplarity broadly, including the rhetorical strategies authors use to construct heroes and the ideological motivations for labeling certain figures as monstrous. Reading and writing assignments will engage with the visual as a form of "text" or argument, and students will compose in multiple modes, including traditional written essays, oral presentations, and a final multimodal research project.

Spring 2016

Time Travel

Content: "Time" is one of the most important concepts we use to organize our understanding of the world. Heraclitus famously observed that no one steps into the same river twice, and we typically think of our lives as journeys through time. Almost every story we tell, whether of growth or decay, success or failure, involves some orientation within time. Although we generally think of time as flowing in one direction, we are also fascinated by the idea of time travel, of returning to the past or visiting the future.

In this course, we will analyze works which explore the nature of time as inspiration for writing our own pieces dealing with temporality. We will explore short stories, poetry, novels, drama, and film as we consider various questions related to time: What is the relationship between memory and identity? How do literary texts portray the past and imagine the future? How do disruptions in narrative time, such as flashbacks, affect our experience of a given text? This is a writing and thinking intensive course: we will practice (re)writing a number of genres for different audiences and revising our work throughout the semester.

Indigenous Adolescence

Content: In this writing course students will explore representations of adolescence in Indigenous literature. We will read a range of contemporary young adult fiction by American Indian and Canadian Aboriginal writers including Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene), Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel (Mohegan), Eric Gansworth (Tuscarora), and Drew Hayden Taylor (Anishinaabe). While we will primarily focus on fiction, we will also engage short pieces of non-fiction, poetry, hip-hop, and visual art by Indigenous composers. Students will compose in a variety of genres themselves as well including fictional dialogues, book covers, artist statements, and mutli-media essays. This being a Domain of One's Own course, students will post some of their course work to a personal website that they create and manage. No previous web design, creative writing, or visual art experience is necessary for success in the course.

Read|Write|Play

Content: As products of a complicated network of social, economic, and technological forces, videogames are dense objects, deeply layered with multiple meanings and hidden histories that reveal much about our cultural values, hopes and anxieties, and assumptions about the world. In this class we will study the cultural and narrative significance of videogames (and some other types of games) to understand both their narrative and formal aspects, while at the same time mapping connections between videogames and their broader social contexts—how games are designed and manufactured, who plays them and where, and in what ways videogames can be more than entertainment. We'll play through some fairly recent "art" or "indie" games like *Gone Home*, *The Beginner's Guide*, and *The Stanley Parable*. You'll also choose a number of other games that you'd like to explore and analyze. We will read John Darnielle's novel *Wolf in White Van*, which is "about alienation and despair and the search for meaning, which [the protagonist] finds in a postapocalyptic role-playing game he invents, turns into a business and administers in analog fashion, by exchanging letters with its players."

The course website is still under construction, but you can learn a lot more about the class here: <http://bit.ly/readwriteplay>

Fall 2016

Writing about Children in Literature

Content: Whether in Nabokov's *Lolita*, Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, or Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, for a group whose members are almost never published writers, children nevertheless "appear" in literature with remarkable frequency and political charge. By reading, analyzing, and responding to literature about children in global and U.S. contexts, students will develop their own ideas about what it means to write well, in addition to their composition skills. In this writing-intensive course, students will learn

key rhetorical terms that they will use to strengthen their writing and critical reading. Course participants will read and write across a wide range of audiences, genres, and occasions, including but not limited to: short stories, poetry, plays, children's books, and novel excerpts.

Indigenous Adolescence

Content: In this writing course students will explore representations of adolescence in Indigenous literature. We will read a range of texts by American Indian and Canadian Aboriginal authors with a particular focus on works by Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene). While we will primarily focus on fiction, we will also engage short pieces from other genres such as poetry, non-fiction, music, and visual art. Students will compose in a variety of genres themselves as well including blog posts, fictional narratives, artist statements, thesis-driven papers, and multimedia presentations. This is a Domain of One's Own course. Students will post some of their course work to a personal website (viewable by the general public) that they create and manage. No previous web design, creative writing, or visual art experience is necessary for success in the course.

Writing Like a Witch

Content: Expectro patronum, malefica! In this class, we will explore what it means to be, and to write like, a witch. (No broomstick or knowledge of Latin required.) We will encounter a variety of witches in a variety of contexts, engaging texts from the 15th century *Malleus Maleficarum* to contemporary poetry to Harry Potter, and will ask what these representations say about historic conceptions of magic, of women, and of writing. This course is designed to develop your writing and critical thinking skills through the exploration of literary texts and cultural artifacts. This is a writing-intensive course, and you will produce texts in a variety of genres from film reviews to magazine profiles to research-based analyses of texts. The writing that you produce will be an important course text, and our academic coven will workshop and reflect upon the texts we create. You may even meet your own familiar spirit, and learn a spell or two.

Pathology in Print

Content: Pathology, or the study of disease, is not limited to the scientific classroom. Literary texts are saturated with discussions and descriptions of various states and forms of disease. Turning to literature for narratives of disease provides us with important insight into the human condition such as the meaning of health and healing, death and mortality, disabled and non-disabled bodies. In this writing course we will use literature and the theme of pathology in print to guide us as we learn about writing, create our own theory of writing, and compose our own texts. Throughout the semester you will develop writing skills that you can apply across disciplines in college and beyond. The texts you will use as you develop as writers include short stories by Flannery O'Connor and Ernest Hemingway, excerpts from novels like *A Confederacy of Dunces* and *As I Lay Dying*, and, most importantly, texts you and your peers compose. In order to grow as writers you will be writing something during each class period and as part of a weekly blog post. Other assignments include a literary analysis, multimodal article, and a literary journal.

Barbed Wires, Drawn Lines: Literature from the Borders

Content: How many times have you mused about the idea of borders? What do the lines that divide us mean, and how are we to make sense of them? Literature has always been a place where questions like

these have been thought aloud. Whether the borders are geographical or metaphorical, whether they keep people out or fence people in, borders are liminal spaces that raise questions about politics, oppression, belongingness, identity, among others, and that makes them an important subject for our interrogation.

This writing intensive class will thus explore two types of borders. One that course texts evoke helping you critically engage with the theme. The other kind exists between various genres you will encounter in the course like short stories, novels, literary theory, official reports and movies. The latter, coupled with your writing assignments over the semester—personal narrative, online article, movie reviews, multimodal project and others—will facilitate an analysis of the composition process and aid in the formulation of your own theory of writing.

Lewis, Tolkien and Rowling

Content: In order to develop critical reading and writing skills, we shall read a variety of the works of C. S. Lewis, known as a fine stylist, a distinguished scholar of medieval literature, and an acute critic of religion in modern times. Readings are drawn from all three of the fields in which Lewis wrote: Christian apologetics, scholarly writing, and fiction. We shall also read selections from the work of Lewis's friend, J. R. R. Tolkien, and one novel by J. K. Rowling.

Texts: Selected fairy tales and ballads; *The Great Divorce*; *The Pilgrim's Regress*; *The Abolition of Man*; *Out of the Silent Planet*; *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Hobbit*, *The Sorcerer's Stone*.

Read | Write | Play

Content: In this class we will study the cultural and narrative significance of games, especially videogames, to understand both their narrative and formal aspects. Games are products of a complicated network of social, economic, and technological forces and as such they are dense objects, deeply layered with multiple meanings and hidden histories that reveal much about our cultural values, hopes and anxieties, and assumptions about the world. We will consider questions such as how games are designed and manufactured, who plays them and where, and in what ways videogames can be more than entertainment.

As a class, we'll play through some fairly recent "art" or "indie" games like *Gone Home*, *The Beginner's Guide*, and *The Stanley Parable*. We'll also play some classic games from the early days of videogaming like *Zork* or the original *Zelda*, Atari classics like *Pac-Man* or *Asteroids*, and some tabletop games. You'll also choose a number of other games that you'd like to explore and analyze on your own or in small groups. We will read John Darnielle's novel *Wolf in White Van*, which is "about alienation and despair and the search for meaning, which [the protagonist] finds in a postapocalyptic role-playing game he invents, turns into a business and administers in analog fashion, by exchanging letters with its players."