**English 242A: Read Prose Fiction**

**Living in an Unjust System**

**Fall 2019**

Instructor: Dr. Paul Morton

Class Place/Time: Sieg 227, MW 1:30-3:20

Office Hours: Padelford A-503, T 1:30-3:30

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**Course Description**

“‘You think you know what is just and what is not. I understand. We all think we know.’ I had no doubt, myself, then, that at each moment each one of us, man, woman, child, perhaps even the poor old horse turning the mill-wheel, knew what was just: all creatures come into the world bringing with them the memory of justice. ‘But we live in a world of laws,’ I said to my poor prisoner, ‘a world of the second-best. There is nothing we can do about that. We are fallen creatures. All we can do is to uphold the laws, all of us, without allowing the memory of justice to fade.’” — J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*

What do you do if you live, work, and breath within a system that you know is unjust? What do you do if you are oppressed by the system? What do you do if you are complicit in it? Do you adapt? Do you fight? Do you support reform? Do you support revolution? How do you even define what is and what is not just?

In this course, we will study seven works of fiction, as well as one work of non-fiction, which struggle with these questions. None offer clear answers.

**Materials**

**REQUIRED:**

All required books are available at University Bookstore located at 4326 University Way NE. Please obtain these specific editions. Do not buy e-books.

Butler, Octavia. *Kindred.* New York: Beacon Press.

Coetzee, J.M. *Waiting for the Barbarians*. New York: Penguin Ink.

Dickens, Charles. *Hard Times*. New York: Penguin Classics.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *The Remains of the Day.* New York: Knopf.

Roth, Philip. *The Plot Against America*. New York: Vintage International.

There is a course pack of three short readings also available at the University Bookstore. It includes Anton Chekhov’s “A Medical Case,” Ursula K. Le Guin’s “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas,” and Oscar Wilde’s “The Case of Warden Michael: Some Cruelties of Prison Life.”

**Calendar**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **WEEK 1** | **IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES** | **HOMEWORK** |
| W 9/25 | Introduction; Course Expectations; Description of Writing Assignments | **Read**: Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”; Chekhov, “A Medical Case”; Wilde, “The Case of Warden Michael” **Write: “**Directed Assignment” |
| F 9/27 | **Directed Assignment Due on Canvas by 12pm** |  |
| **WEEK 2** |  |  |
| M 9/30 | Defining the System | **Read**: Start Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (finish by Wednesday, October 9) |
| W 10/2 | How to Write a Paragraph | **Read**: Continue Reading ROTD **Write:** Draft of Assignment One (On Le Guin, Chekhov, or Wilde) |
| **WEEK 3** |  |  |
| M 10/7 | **First Draft of Assignment One Due**  Peer Review | **Read:** Continue Reading ROTD **Write:** Final Draft of Assignment One |
| W 10/9 | The Historical Novel | **Read:** Dickens, *Hard Times* (Finish by Monday, October 21) |
| F 10/11 | **Final Draft of Assignment One Due on Canvas by 12pm** |  |
| **WEEK 4** |  |  |
| M 10/14 | Narrative Voice; Defining Words | **Write**: Draft of Assignment Two (On *Remains of the Day*) |
| W 10/16 | Writing Exercises; Defining Character | **Read**: Continue Reading *HT* **Write:** Continue Working on Assignment Two |
| **WEEK 5** |  |  |
| M 10/21 | **Draft of Assignment Two Due**  Peer Review;  How Dickens Builds a World | **Read:** Start Reading Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (Finish by November 4) |
| W 10/23 | Dickens’s Diction; Dickens’s Characters | **Write:** Finish Final Draft of Assignment Two; **Read:** Continue WFTB |
| F 10/25 | **Final Draft of Assignment Two Due on Canvas by 12pm** |  |
| **WEEK 6** |  |  |
| M 10/28 | Defining the System of *Hard Times* | **Write**: Draft 1 of Assignment 3 (On *Hard Times*) |
| W 10/30 | Mid-Term | **Read:** Finish WFTB **Write:** Finish First Draft of Assignment 3 |
| **WEEK 7** |  |  |
| M 11/4 | **First Draft of Assignment Three Due**  Peer Review;  Coetzee and Violence | **Write**: Final Draft of Assignment Three **Read:** Start Reading Butler, *Kindred* (Finish by November 18) |
| W 11/6 | Coetzee’s Voice | **Read**: Continue K **Write:** Final Draft of Assignment Three |
| F 11/8 | **Final Draft of Assignment Three Due on Canvas by 12pm** |  |
| **WEEK 8** |  |  |
| M 11/11 | **Election Day-No Class** |  |
| W 11/13 | The Question of Complicity | **Write:** First Draft of Assignment 4 (On WFTB) |
| **WEEK 9** |  |  |
| M 11/18 | **First Draft of Assignment Four Due**  The Uses of Science-Fiction to Understand History; Peer Review | **Read:** Start Roth, *The Plot Against America* Chpts. 1-3  **Write: Final Draft of Assignment 4** |
| W 11/20 | The View of the Oppressed from Butler and Roth | **Read:** Roth, *The Plot Against America,* Chpts. 4-5 |
| F 11/22 | **Final Draft of Assignment 4 Due on Canvas by 12pm** |  |
| **WEEK 10** |  |  |
| M 11/25 | Believing Fiction; Writing Exercises | **Write:** First Draft of Assignment 5 (on K or TPAA) |
| W 11/27 | **No Class** |  |
| **WEEK 11** |  |  |
| M 12/2 | **First Draft of Assignment 5 Due**  Peer Review;  Our Current Moment |  |
| W 12/4 | Wrap-Up |  |
| F 12/6 | **Final Assignment 5 Due on Canvas by 12pm** |  |

**Assessment**

Forty percent of your grade will rely on your writing. Ten percent of your grade will rely on an in-class mid-term. Twenty-five percent of your grade will rely on in-class participation. Twenty percent of your grade will rely on your participation in peer reviews. Five percent will depend on a directed assignment.

***Written Work***

You will write five short essays on the assigned material we will be discussing in class. Each of these essays is worth 10 points.

At the end of the quarter, I will drop the lowest grade you received on these five assignments.

There will also be one in-class mid-term made up solely of essays. This mid-term is also worth 10 points.

***Participation***

Your participation grade is contingent on your active and informed participation in class discussion. You will be reading 150-200 pages each week.

***Peer Review***

There will be five in-class peer-review sessions, held every other Monday starting on October 7. For each of these sessions, you will need to bring in three printed-out copies of the first draft of your assignment.

You only need to participate in four of these five sessions. Each session is worth five points, all or nothing. You will **not** receive extra credit for participating in more than four sessions.

***Directed Assignment***

You will write one short directed assignment, due the first week of class on Friday, September 27. It is worth five points, all or nothing.

***Final Grade***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assignment | Percentage of Grade |
| Paper 1 | 10 points |
| Paper 2 | 10 points |
| Paper 3 | 10 points |
| Paper 4 | 10 points |
| Participation | 25 points |
| Mid-Term | 10 points |
| Four Peer Reviews | 20 points |
| Directed Assignment | 5 points |
| Total | 100 points |

**The 4.0 scale conversion chart is at the end of this syllabus.**

**Policies**

**Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. As a matter of policy, any student found to have plagiarized any piece of writing in this class is liable to be reported to the College of Arts and Sciences for review.

**Late Work**

All assignments—the directed assignment as well as the five one-paragraph papers—are due on a biweekly basis each Friday starting on week 1. You will need to upload your work to Canvas in a *.doc* or .*docx* file. **Work sent to my email will not be accepted. Late work will receive zero credit. No excuses.**

**Contact**

My email is [paulwilliammorton@gmail.com](mailto:paulwilliammorton@gmail.com). I answer all email within 24 hours of the school day. I do not answer emails sent after 5pm on Friday until the following Monday. If you cannot make my office hours, please email me to set up an appointment. I will need at least two days’ notice.

**Technology**

**All screens – laptops, cell phones, smartphones, and tablets – are prohibited during class sessions. Use of screens will severely affect your participation grade.**

**Religious Accommodations**

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW’s policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy (https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/)](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form (https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/)](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/).

**Grading Scale**

96-100             4.0

94-95               3.9

92-93               3.8

90-91               3.7

88-89               3.6

86-87               3.5

84-85               3.4

82-83               3.3

80-81               3.2

79                    3.1

78                    3.0

77                    2.9

76                    2.8

75                    2.7

74                    2.6

73                    2.5

72                    2.4

71                    2.3

70                    2.2

69                    2.1

68                    2.0

67                    1.9

66                    1.8

65                    1.7

64                    1.6

63                    1.5

62                    1.4

61                    1.3

60                    1.2

59                    1.1

58                    1.0

57…                 0.7