

Law through Literature ENG 3401 / D614, Fall 2018

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:00 – 5:15 pm, Midway 307

Professor Rebecca Mazumdar, Ph.D. (rmazumdar@citytech.cuny.edu – allow 24 hours for response)

Office hours: Tuesdays 10:00 am to 12:00 pm; Thursdays 2:45-3:45 pm, and by appointment

Office location: Namm 528 // Mailbox location: Namm 512 // Office phone: 718-260-5118

Prerequisites: Students in this course must have successfully completed English 1121 or a 2000-level English class.

Course description and objectives:

You're probably already familiar with the College's description of this course:

An exploration of concepts of justice, higher law, customary law and written law expressed through works of fiction and non-fiction. The course seeks to enhance the student's sensitivity to issues of ethics, gender bias and class consciousness as they affect the administration of justice. Readings improve communication skills and strengthen legal skills of identifying, articulating and locating problems in the context of underlying legal issues. Written assignments emphasize expository writing skills.

(Learning Outcomes Document)

What this description means for this specific section of 3401 is that you'll read a number of literary texts that explore controversial issues related to law and the legal system. We'll discuss these texts alongside their cultural, social, and political contexts, in order to apply their lessons to your careers as legal professionals.

I expect you to participate in class to show that you understand the assigned readings and can analyze them on multiple levels. We will use the elements of fiction (plot, setting, point of view, characterization, theme, and style) to analyze assigned readings. We'll also discuss various genres and engage in comparative analysis. You'll be expected to use these skills in formal writing assignments and exams. Please refer to the Learning Outcomes handout for a full explanation of these goals, since they are key to our class and to each of our assignments.

You will do a lot of work in this class. College classes expect two hours of homework for every hour of class time; since we're in class 2.5 hours a week, that means an average of five hours of homework each week. Factor this commitment into your schedule now.

Required course materials (books have been ordered through the City Tech bookstore; you must use these editions, even if you purchase or borrow them somewhere else):

- Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*. 978-0385490818. \$8.58.
- E. L. Doctorow, *The Book of Daniel*. 978-0812978179. \$13.24.
- Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*. 978-0142437339. \$9.01.
- *Alibi* podcast. Eight episodes, available free at <http://alibi.org.za/wordpress/>
- A writer's manual, like Rules of Thumb or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- A reliable computer, with internet (email) access and a printer. Save electronic files of all your work.
- A folder or notebook devoted to this class.
- Supplemental materials on our Open Lab site.

*If you choose to use an eReader, that's fine. However, please know that you cannot use any electronic devices, at all, on any exam in this class. This means that you will need to prepare for these exams, which include open-book sections, accordingly.

Required assignments:

***Project 1 (Oppression Journal): 15%

***Project 2 (Podcast "Transcript"): 20%

***Research Project (Oral presentation and written report published on Open Lab): 15%

***Midterm exam: 10%

***Final exam: 15%

Participation: 10%

Unannounced reading quizzes: 15% (quizzes cannot be made up; lowest quiz grade will be dropped)

*****Passing this class is contingent upon successfully completing all assignments and passing the final exam.**

Students with disabilities: If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please see me as soon as possible so I can accommodate you. If you think you may have a disability that requires accommodation, see the Student Support Services Program in Room A237, or call them at 718-260-5143.

Class policies:

Regular attendance: This course is designed as a seminar-type class, which means that active participation is necessary if you and your peers are to succeed in this class. I expect you to come to class prepared (which means you've read the assigned readings and you've completed any homework assignments). I also expect you to come to class on time and stay for the duration of our meeting. I take attendance at the start of class; if you're not in your seat when I take attendance, you will be marked absent. If you arrive after attendance is taken, you'll be marked late. If you do miss a class, please know that you are responsible for the information we covered while you were gone. If your religion is not directly recognized by the school calendar, and you anticipate missing classes for religious reasons, please see me as soon as possible. Absences will be excused only in the case of unavoidable, unforeseeable emergencies affecting you or an immediate family member; documentation is required. If you stop attending class and do not return, without officially withdrawing, you will receive a WU grade.

Responsible scholarship: I expect you to complete all assignments on time, and to do so honestly. We will discuss academic integrity and plagiarism early in the semester. Know now, however, that I will not tolerate any academic dishonesty in my course. The school's statement on academic integrity is in the box below; ***in this class, an act of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero (0) on the affected assignment and a report filed with the school's Academic Integrity Officer.*** A second act of academic dishonesty in this class will result in additional sanctions. If you have any questions about plagiarism and how to avoid it, please ask me.

New York City College of Technology Policy on Academic Integrity

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

Another aspect of responsible scholarship is doing your best to meet course requirements. If you find you are having trouble keeping up with your assignments, please see me during office hours. Requests for extensions will only be considered if they are received at least 24 hours before the original due date. Formal papers are due in hard copy (stapled) at the start of class on the days indicated on the course calendar, and must adhere to MLA guidelines. Late papers will not be accepted.

Writing: This course is designated as writing intensive. That designation means a few things for us. Of course, it means that we'll have several formal and informal writing assignments, which will ask for at least 15 pages of writing from you over the duration of the semester. But this writing serves important purposes. It's not just an opportunity for you to convince me that you've "done the reading"; more importantly, these assignments are your opportunities to wrestle with – and hopefully develop a more confident understanding of – the complex themes raised in those readings. We will use writing to help us learn about our literary texts, even as we use literature to teach us about our own writing. You must submit two successful, complete papers and a completed research project in order to pass this class. Larger formal assignments will be scaffolded, which means that you'll work on them incrementally, turning in outlines, drafts, or other early-stage procedural drafts before submitting the final draft. These drafts are just as important as the final submission, and therefore are required parts of the writing projects.

Letters of recommendation: In the future, a potential employer or school may ask you for a letter of recommendation from a professor. If you wish to ask me for a letter of recommendation, please be prepared. I'll need the name and address to which the letter should be sent, as well as a deadline. Regardless of which professors you ask for such letters, you should be prepared to provide this information when you request the letter. I'll also ask you to visit me during office hours (or make an appointment) so I can write a letter specific to your strengths and goals. Please notify me at least a month before the letter is due; it should go without saying that I write letters only on behalf of students who passed my class in good standing.

Extra credit: You are only eligible for one extra credit opportunity. Extra credit opportunities must be accessible to the entire class and therefore cannot be offered on an individual basis. Option 1: A comment on a classmate's research paper (on Open Lab) in which you use the IQIAA method to demonstrate the relationship between a presentation and the assigned reading will be eligible for up to 10 points in participation. Option 2: A hand-written diagram of the excerpted passage on a quiz will be eligible for up to full credit on that quiz. Diagrams must follow all rules for sentence diagramming and include every word of the quoted passage. Occasionally, classroom activities will carry the possibility of extra credit as well.

Paper grades: Your papers will be evaluated according to the following rubric. Please read it carefully and let me know if you have any questions.

- A, A- Papers earning an A or an A- are excellent examples of critical literacy in action. They carefully and intelligently respond to the ideas in the readings and are easy and enjoyable to read. Organization is smooth and the argument is well-polished and convincing. These papers demonstrate the student's mastery of the goals for the course as outlined by CUNY. A paper would earn an A- rather than an A if it met these standards but fell short in an area of sentence-level revision (e.g., minor typographical errors, occasional editing missteps).
- B+, B, B- Papers earning grades in the B range (B+, B, or B-) are good; they set themselves apart by being thoughtful and interesting, though they may still have some rough spots. Overall, the paper succeeds, even if some kinks still need to be ironed out. These papers are more successful than papers earning grades in the C range, because these papers take risks with original analyses or interesting responses to the readings. These papers are less successful than papers earning grades in the A range, because they still need attention to significant paragraph- or sentence-level issues like organization, appropriate use of evidence, appropriate levels of analysis, frequent editing and proofreading missteps, or unclear phrasing. Within this range, papers earn a B+ when these paragraph and sentence level issues occur infrequently but still impede the writer's attempts to communicate; papers earn a B- when the issues occur more frequently, substantially impeding communication.
- C+, C Papers earn a C+ or a C when they meet the requirements of the assignment, but they do so unspectacularly. Such papers are considered average. These papers often have one or more weaknesses on the global level that substantially affect(s) the paper's readability. If your thesis is unclear, if your argument vacillates, if you summarize more than you analyze... these issues often negatively affect the success of a paper. These papers are more successful than papers earning a D because they do, in fact, meet all the requirements of the assignment; these papers are less successful than papers earning grades in the B range because they don't take risks with original analyses or interesting responses to readings and because they present substantial global weaknesses that impede the writer's ability to communicate his or her ideas.
- D If a paper earns a D in this class, it is because it clearly failed to meet the requirements of the assignment. It may have dramatically fallen short of the page requirement or have lacked a thesis statement or argument entirely. Papers earning grades in the D range demonstrate an honest attempt to address the assignment, though they need substantial global and paragraph level revisions in order to meet CUNY's requirements for this course. Papers earning a D are less successful than papers earning a C because they don't meet the requirements of the assignment or the course; they are, however, more successful than papers earning an F because they demonstrate a good faith attempt to complete the assignment.
- F Papers earning an F clearly fall short of meeting the requirements of the assignment. They have no focus and demonstrate no engagement with the assigned readings at all. These papers are less successful than papers earning a D, because they fail to demonstrate any attempt to meet the standards of the course or the requirements of the assignment.

<i>Mtg #</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Reading</i> (Check Open Lab before each class for announcements and reports from your peers.)	<i>Assignments Due Today</i>	<i>Classroom Activities</i>	<i>Student Presentations at the Start of Class Today</i>
1	8/28	Syllabus		Course introduction	
2	8/30	Charters, "The Elements of Fiction" (handout)	Introduction email to Prof. Mazumdar, with research project selection	Elements of Fiction activity	
3	9/4	Atwood, chapters 1-2	Open Lab membership	Discuss Atwood; Project 1 assigned and discussed today	
4	9/6	"Margaret Atwood on What <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> Means in the Age of Trump," handout	Response paper due as a post on Open Lab by 11:59 pm tonight	No class meeting today; please refer to assignment instructions, p. 16	
5	9/13	Atwood, chapter 3	Comment on classmate's response (on Open Lab) due by 11:59 pm tonight	Practice quiz	
6	9/20	Atwood, chapters 4-5	Idea page for Project 1	Understanding the jeremiad genre	(1) The Stonewall Riots
7	9/25	Atwood, chapters 6-7		Plagiarism quiz	(2) The History of Birth Control in the US; (3) Rape culture
8	9/27		Draft of Oppression Journal	Peer Review	
9	10/2	Atwood, chapters 8 through Historical Notes		Continue discussing Atwood	(4) Suffrage; (5) Feminism in America
10	10/4	Alibi, Episodes 1-2. [Consider reading ahead: start 5 pp/day of Doctorow now.]	Publish Oppression Journal to Open Lab by midnight tonight.	Translating elements of fiction to a nonfiction broadcast	(6) The Innocence Project; (7) Apartheid
11	10/9	Alibi, Episode 3-4	Annotation; submit Part I peer review handout today.	Discuss the Devries case	(8) Legal Procedure (TBD)
12	10/11	Alibi, Episode 5-6		Debate	(9) Reportage
13	10/16	Alibi, Episodes 7-8	Explication rough draft.	Peer Review	(10) True-crime movies
14	10/18		Post Explication to Open Lab by midnight tonight.	Conclude discussion of Alibi; exam preparations	(11) Polygraph tests
15	10/23	Midterm Exam	Midterm Exam. Submit Part II peer review handout today.	Midterm Exam	Midterm Exam

Mtg #	Date	Reading (Check Open Lab before each class for announcements and reports from your peers.)	Assignments Due Today	Classroom Activities	Student Presentations at the Start of Class Today
16	10/25	Miller, Act 1		Introduction to Miller	(12) Theocracy
17	10/30	Miller, Act 2		Project 2 assigned and discussed in class	(13+14) The Salem witch trials
18	11/1	Miller, Act 3	Idea page for Project 2	Continue discussing Miller and Cold War politics	
19	11/6	Miller, Act 4	Discussion questions	Finish discussing Miller	(15) Witch trials in European history
20	11/8		Annotated Outline for Project 2	Transition to Doctorow, with introduction to Cold War culture	(16) Joseph McCarthy
21	11/13	Doctorow, pp 1-30		Introduction to <i>Book of Daniel</i> (Prezi: Making Sense)	(17) HUAC
22	11/15	Doctorow, pp 31-60	Draft of Podcast due at the start of class	Peer Review	(18) Treason in the USA
23	11/20	Doctorow, pp 61-80; <i>Howl</i> by Allen Ginsberg (Open Lab)		Thematic analysis: The Individual in Society (Prezi)	(19) The cold war; (20) The Rosenberg trial
24	11/27	Doctorow pp 81-100	Podcast due at the start of class	Focus on characterization in Doctorow	(21) The censorship trial of "Howl"
25	11/29	Doctorow, pp 100-121		Focus on POV in Doctorow	(22) Fat Man and Little Boy
26	12/4	Doctorow, pp 121-140		Focus on plot in Doctorow	(23) J. Robert Oppenheimer
27	12/6	Doctorow, pp 141-160		Focus on style in Doctorow	(24) 1967 March on the Pentagon; (25) The Berlin Wall
28	12/11	Doctorow, 160-180	Last day to submit any extra credit assignments	Focus on setting (domesticity) in Doctorow (Prezi)	
29	12/18	Doctorow, finish		Reviewing for the final exam	
30	12/20	Final Exam	Final Exam	Final Exam	Final Exam

Open Lab Instructions

This semester, we'll use City Tech's Open Lab to continue our classroom discussions and as a resource hub for course materials. ***One of your required assignments this semester is participation in the class blog on Open Lab, so it is essential that you activate your membership and check the page regularly.*** First, you'll need to sign up for Open Lab and request membership to our class. Here's how you can do that.

1. You must activate your City Tech email account. You must be able to log into your account and read emails. I cannot help you with this. If you have problems with your account, visit the Welcome Center on the first floor of the Atrium building.
2. Sign up for Open Lab at <http://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/register/>
3. After you sign up, you'll need to log on to your City Tech email account and click on the registration link you receive from Open Lab.
4. Log on to Open Lab at <http://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/>
5. In the search box at the top right of the page, search for your professor's last name: Mazumdar.
6. In your professor's list of courses, choose yours.
7. Select "Request Membership" to gain access to your class. After I've added you to the class, you'll have access to the course material.
8. When viewing our course on Open Lab, make sure you click "Class Site" to see the full site.

Emailing your professor

By August 30, please send me one paragraph to introduce yourself to me. Use this opportunity to practice appropriate email etiquette:

- Use your official school email address (or an address that uses your name or a professional title; avoid using personal accounts with screen names that might be considered offensive or that contain a long series of numbers).
- In the subject line, indicate which class and section you're in, and the general topic of your message.
- Use an appropriate greeting, and address your audience respectfully. In this case, "Dear Professor Mazumdar" would be appropriate.
- The content of your message should be clearly organized, free of grammatical and typographical mistakes, and direct.
- Sign your name to your email. You should always do this, but it is especially important if your name is not in your email address.

These guidelines should be used any time you email any of your professors. Failure to follow these guidelines could mean a delay in getting a response. If I can't identify you in your email, I may not respond at all.

Information about the Research Project

15% of your semester grade will come from your work on this research project. The project has two parts: an oral presentation in class, using visual aids (Power Point, Prezi, or handouts), and a blog post published on our Open Lab site, available to the entire class as reference. You should also post your visual aids with your blog post, so we'll have access to them.

The Blog Post: Around 1000 words; 70 points

At least two days before your scheduled presentation, you should post your research report as a blog post on our Open Lab page. (You should also post your visual aids for the presentation, but these can be added later, as a comment on your post.) Consider this a formal research paper: this means that you must correctly quote, cite, and provide bibliographic information for all of your sources. Failure to do so will constitute academic misconduct, and will result in a zero for the entire research project as well as a complaint filed with the school's academic integrity officer. Your post should be composed thoughtfully in a Word document before being pasted into the Open Lab platform: this means that you'll be evaluated on your organization and clear presentation of information.

Please remember: we all know how to Google something. Your report should not simply repeat the information from Wikipedia; instead, buttress the statistical or factual information with your interpretation of the event or issue. What were the primary concerns? Who were the key players? How did your event/person/issue change the lives of people who experienced it, or people who lived afterwards? Which legal issues are connected to your topic? You will be evaluated on your ability to balance the factual, encyclopedic repetition of facts with your own subjective interpretation and analysis of those facts. You must use at least one source found through the library's databases.

The Oral Presentation: Five minutes, visuals; 80 points

The presentation should be prepared (e.g., not improvised) and practiced. It should take 5 minutes (not 3, not 8; practice your presentation so you'll know it's exactly 5 minutes long), and should provide the important highlights of your topic. If you use any video or audio clips, the time they take will not count toward your five minutes. I've selected topics that will provide important context for our assigned readings, so your presentation should (a.) assume that the class has read your blog post, and (b.) focus on the connection between your topic and our reading for the day. This means that you should not simply read your blog post; you should instead explain how your blog post helps us to make sense of a particular part of the assigned text. You must include the following:

- Brief summary of the online report
- Quotation from the assigned reading for the day of your presentation, with explication
- A proposed essay question for the midterm or final exam, based on your research and the assigned text.

** To select a presentation topic (and, therefore, to select your presentation date), you must include your top three preferences for a research topic in your introductory email to me. Presentations will be assigned on a first-emailed, first-served basis. Emails sent during our class time will be read last.

Presentation date / relevant author		Topic	Due date of Open Lab post	
1.	9/20 (Atwood)	The Stonewall Riots	9/20	Paris
2.	9/25 (Atwood)	The history of birth control in the USA	9/23	Selena & Jennifer (separate presentations)
3.	9/25 (Atwood)	Rape culture in the USA	9/23	Antoinette
4.	10/2 (Atwood)	Suffrage in the USA	9/30	Janelle and Dao (separate presentations)
5.	10/2 (Atwood)	Feminist movement in the USA	9/30	Tiffany
6.	10/4 (Alibi)	The Innocence Project	10/2	Sharon and Dominique(2 presentations)
7.	10/4 (Alibi)	Apartheid	10/2	Nowshen
8.	10/9 (Alibi)	Procedure (TBD)	10/7	
9.	10/11 (Alibi)	Reportage/New Journalism style	10/9	Almagul
10.	10/16 (Alibi)	True crime movies	10/14	Nicole & Ayarilis (separate presentations)
11.	10/18 (Alibi)	Polygraph tests	10/16	Javonni
12.	10/25 (Miller)	Theocracy	10/25	Lesly
13.	10/30 (Miller)	Salem witch trials	10/28	Amanda
14.	10/30 (Miller)	Salem witch trials	10/28	Mahendra
15.	11/6 (Miller)	Witch trials in European history	11/4	Nina and Jessica (separate presentations)
16.	11/8 (Doctorow)	Joseph McCarthy	11/6	Angelina
17.	11/13 (Doctorow)	HUAC	11/11	Emmett
18.	11/15 (Doctorow)	Treason in the USA	11/13	Shan
19.	11/20 (Doctorow)	The cold war	11/18	Eilene
20.	11/20 (Doctorow)	The Rosenberg trial	11/18	Eliana & Carmelle (2 presentations)
21.	11/27 (Doctorow)	The censorship trial of "Howl"	11/25	Natasha
22.	11/29 (Doctorow)	Fat Man and Little Boy	11/27	Mitchell
23.	12/4 (Doctorow)	J. Robert Oppenheimer	12/2	Genesis
24.	12/6 (Doctorow)	1967 March on the Pentagon	12/4	Jacqueline
25.	12/6 (Doctorow)	The Berlin Wall	12/4	Alisha

Assessment:

Report on Open Lab

- Comprehensive treatment of topic: ____/20
- Appropriate academic research methods (reliable sources, proper acknowledgement and citation style): ____/20
- Length (1000 words): ____/10
- Clearly organized: ____/10
- Shows signs of revision, editing, and proofreading (is polished and free of errors): ____/10

Oral presentation

- Effective visual aids: ____/20
- Makes clear connection to the assigned reading for the day: ____/20
- Effectively summarizes the written report on Open Lab: ____/20
- Length (five minutes): ____/10
- Shows signs of rehearsal, practice (is polished and confident): ____/10

Additional info: When posting your report to Open Lab, please use Tags (on the right) to help us organize our blog. Tag your report with any of the available tags you think are relevant, or make your own.