

Perspectives in Literature / D945, Summer 2016

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8:30 to 11:00 AM, Namm 521

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

Office hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 11:00-12:00, 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 1101.

Course description and objectives:

As you can see from the College's description of this course, Perspectives in Literature is "A study of human values in the literature of Western Culture. Readings are organized around the great themes of literature and life, family life, man, woman, and nature of evil, the individual and society, skepticism and faith." This semester, we'll explore these themes as they appear in various genres of American and British literature. We will encounter controversial social issues and questions that hounded authors for centuries; through novels, short stories, poetry, a play, and a graphic novel, we'll examine how people have answered (or not) some of literature's most persistent questions about science, power, art, love, war, peace, and existence.

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 Outcomes Assessment 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; factor this commitment into your schedule now.

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

- Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles*. 978-1451678192. \$7.99.
- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*. 978-0486475820. \$6.95.
- Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*. 978-0618706419. \$14.95. (Please buy the book, not just the short story)
- 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 (Literature and technology): 15%

***Project 2 (Cultural role of storytelling): 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.

Other requirements of the course:

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 within the first two minutes 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. Distracted and distracting behavior, which includes using cell phones or music devices, will reduce your participation grade, since it demonstrates that you are not, in fact, actually present and engaged *mentally* in our classroom. You are allowed 2 absences from this class without penalty. The third absence may result in a WU grade. 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.

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. 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.

Other important policies:

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. 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: No.

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>Due Today</i>	<i>Classroom Activities</i> (including Student Presentations [SP])
1	6/2	Syllabus, Bradbury's "Rocket Summer"		Introduction, Elements of Fiction activity
2	6/7	Charters, "Elements of Fiction" (Handout); Bradbury (" Ylla ," "The Summer Night," " The Earth Men ," "The Taxpayer," " The Third Expedition ")	Open Lab membership, introduction email to Prof. Devers, research project selection	Practice quiz; project 1 assigned and discussed today. SP: The Space Race, Cold War Politics
3	6/8	Bradbury (" And the Moon be Still as Bright ," "The Settlers," "The Green Morning," "The Locusts," "Night Meeting," "The Shore," "Interim," "The Musicians," " Way in the Middle of the Air ,"), Edgar Allan Poe, " The Fall of the House of Usher " (on Open Lab)	Summary paragraph for Project 1	Plagiarism quiz. SP: The Atomic bomb, Atomic Test Blasts in the U.S., Genocide of Native Americans
4	6/9	Bradbury ("The Naming of Names," " Usher II ," "The Old Ones," "The Martian," "The Luggage Store," "The Off Season," "The Watchers," "The Silent Towns," " The Long Years ," " There Will Come Soft Rains ," "The Million Year Picnic"); Mary Shelley, Letters I-IV	Outline of Project 1	Quotation workshop. SP: Cold War Culture
5	6/14	Shelley, Chapters 1-8	Completed draft of Project 1	Peer review. SP: The Faustus Story, The Prometheus Story, Alchemy
6	6/15	Shelley, Chapters 9-20	Final submission of Project 1	SP: Early Modern Medicine, Grave Robbing, The History of Electricity
7	6/16			Midterm Exam; Second half of class TBD
8	6/21	Shelley, Chapters 21-24		Project 2 assigned and discussed today; SP: Phrenology, Maritime Culture, Discovery of the North Pole
9	6/22	O'Brien (" The Things They Carried ," "Love," "Spin," " On the Rainy River ," "Enemies," "Friends," " How to Tell a True War Story ")		SP: The Cloning Controversy, The Vietnam War
10	6/23	O'Brien ("The Dentist," " Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong ," Stockings," "Church," " The Man I Killed ," "Ambush," "Style," " Speaking of Courage ")	Summary paragraph for Project 2	SP: The Draft, Anti-Vietnam War Demonstrations, PTSD
11	6/28	O'Brien ("Notes," " In the Field ," " Good Form ," "Field Trip," "The Ghost Soldiers," "Night Life," " The Lives of the Dead ")	Outline of Project 2	SP: Metafiction
12	6/29	Gibbons and Moore, Chapters 1-5 (including material between the chapters)	Completed draft of Project 2	Peer review. SP: The Golden Age of Comics, The Silver Age of Comics
13	6/30	Gibbons and Moore, Chapters 6-10	Final submission of Project 2	SP: Rorschach Tests, Richard Nixon's Presidency
14	7/5	Gibbons and Moore, Chapters 11-12		SP: Films Based on Comic Books
15	7/6			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.**

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: Devers.
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.

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.

Emailing your professor

By 6/7, 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 Devers" 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.

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. 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.

**You must visit me during office hours, or make an appointment, to select a presentation topic (and, therefore, to select your presentation date). Presentations will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Date of presentation	Topic	Due date for research paper	Author
8. 6/14	The Faustus Story	6/14	Mellisa
9. 6/14	The Prometheus Story	6/14	
10. 6/14	Alchemy	6/14	Leslie and Fathima
11. 6/15	Early Modern Medicine	6/15	
12. 6/15	Grave Robbing	6/15	Donovon
13. 6/15	The History of Electricity	6/15	Shane
14. 6/21	Phrenology	6/21	Daniel
15. 6/21	Maritime Culture	6/21	Rodrick
16. 6/21	Discovery of the North Pole	6/21	Alyssa
17. 6/22	Cloning (supportive)	6/22	Ivana
18. 6/22	Cloning (opposed)	6/22	Christian
19. 6/22	The Vietnam War	6/22	Brian
20. 6/22	The Vietnam War	6/22	Pietro
21. 6/23	The Draft	6/23	Rebecca
22. 6/23	Anti-Vietnam War Demonstrations	6/23	
23. 6/23	PTSD	6/23	Hasan and Jason
24. 6/28	Metafiction	6/28	Deisy
25. 6/29	The Golden Age of Comics	6/29	Kayla
26. 6/29	The Silver Age of Comics	6/29	Steven
27. 6/30	Rorschach Tests	6/30	Ashley
28. 6/30	Richard Nixon's Presidency	6/30	Hope
29. 7/5	Films Based on Comics	7/5	

Assessment:**Report**

- 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 text: ____/20
- Effectively summarizes the written report: ____/20
- Length (five minutes): ____/10
- Shows signs of rehearsal, practice (is polished and confident): ____/10