2014

124-01 Studies in Fiction: Narrating Double Lives

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Studies in Fiction: Narrating Double Lives  
ENGL 124-01, Fall 2014

Class Time: MWF 8:00-8:50 a.m.  
Class Location: 9 Hailstones Hall
Instructor: Dr. Anna Newnum  
Instructor Office: 243 Hinkle Hall
E-mail: newnuma@xavier.edu  
Department Office: 236 Hinkle Hall
Office Phone: (513)745-3219  
Office Hours: MW: 10-11:30 a.m.
Mailbox: 123 Hinkle Hall  
F: 9-10 a.m., and by appointment

Course Description:
This class will introduce you to the genre of prose narrative in its many forms including short stories, novels, and a graphic novel/memoir. In addition to exploring the styles and formal elements that authors use to tell stories, we will particularly focus on how they approach the theme of double lives and split selves. As we explore this theme, we will discuss literature from a variety of time periods and cultures ranging from the quintessential Victorian representation of a double life in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, the contemporary story of a young, sci-fi-loving Dominican boy from New York. We will explore what leads authors to depict characters with double personalities and hidden lives. In some cases, these characters expose social problems or anxieties. In others, characters with double identities demonstrate the effects of conflicting social and cultural expectations on individuals or help us to glimpse the trauma of political and religious conflicts. Together we will discuss how these stories relate to the competing pressures of your own lives.

*You must purchase the editions listed below.*
- *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde (Broadview 9781551111261)
- *Kindred* by Octavia Butler (Beacon 9780807083697)
- *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* by Marjane Satrapi (Random House 9780375714573)
- *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz (Riverhead Trade 9781594483295)
- *40 Short Stories: A Portable Anthology* (forth edition) edited by Beverly Lawn (Bedford/St. Martin’s 9781457604751)

**CORE Objectives:**
ENGL 124 fulfills the three-hour literature elective requirement for the CORE curriculum but will not count toward the English major or minor. We will focus on the following CORE objectives:
- **Goal 1 (Communication):** Students will organize and express their ideas in writing and orally. They will formulate clear, arguable, and well-supported theses through the use of an effective writing process. They will improve their ability to dialog with peers.
- **Goal 2 (Critical Thinking):** Students will analyze and interpret texts by exploring the structural and narrative elements of fiction. They will also describe the historical, cultural, and social contexts of texts.
- **Goal 4 (Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Approaches):** Students will learn to understand and appreciate the humanities by interpreting literary expression. They will also reflect on literature’s interdisciplinary connections with the arts and sciences.
- **Goal 6 (Global Awareness):** Students will recognize how past experiences and individual differences (such as gender, ethnicity, class, and geography) influence their interpretations of literature. After reading literature from different perspectives, students will describe
contribute insights from diverse and/or underrepresented groups to local, national, and global communities

Course Requirements and Policies:

Participation: Class periods will be primarily discussion-based rather than lecture-based. Consequently, your learning will depend on a positive classroom community. You cannot participate in this community unless you attend class and are prepared to discuss the readings. Your participation grade will be based on both your attendance (you must sign in at the beginning of each class period) and the quality of your comments and in-class work. Good participation includes both making thoughtful comments during discussion and listening respectfully to classmates. To aid your learning, class periods may include quizzes, short writing exercises, and group activities, all of which influence this portion of your grade.

Attendance: Missing more than four class periods, regardless of the reason for your absences, will result in losing one half of a letter grade from your final course grade for each additional class missed. If you are unable to attend class, please notify me in advance of the class period. It is your responsibility to cover the material from the missed session, acquire handouts distributed in class, and acquaint yourself with any announcements made about assignments. While your final course grade will not be directly penalized for four or fewer absences, you will not be able to make up in-class work such as quizzes if you are absent.

Formal Essays: You will complete two formal essay assignments for which you will receive further written instructions. Before handing in your final essays, you will be required to work on drafts and to participate in peer workshop days. Failure to hand in a draft or participate in workshops will result in the loss of one full letter grade on your final essay. Major assignments are due at the beginning of the class period noted on the syllabus. Essays not turned in at the beginning of the class period will be lowered a half letter grade, with added deductions of up to one full grade for each additional day they are late.

Writing Help: I enjoy working with students one on one and encourage you to visit me during my office hours or make an appointment to discuss your papers before they are due. I also encourage you to use the writing center (Conaton Learning Commons 400), which is a resource for students of all ability levels at any stage in the writing process. For more information, call 513-745-2875, or visit www.xavier.edu/writing_center.

Response Papers: These short (two-page) responses will allow you to regularly express your ideas about and reactions to the texts we read and will help prepare you to write your formal essays. The class periods for which you will write responses are staggered so that not all students will write responses for the same day. You will be assigned a group number, and response dates for each group appear on the course schedule. Because I want to read your responses before our class discussion, you must post them on canvas no later than 8:00p.m. the night before our class discussion. While I expect you to contribute to class discussion every day, when you have a response due, I will be certain to call on you since you will have specific ideas and questions ready to share with the class. Late responses will receive the same deductions as late essays.

Presentations: With a small group, you will create a presentation to help your classmates understand the cultural and historical contexts of one short story as well as provide questions for
class discussion. Each group presentation will be approximately 20 minutes. Late work will not be accepted for presentations.

**Exams:** The mid-term and final exams will consist of short answer and essay questions. We will discuss the format of the exams later in the semester and will spend time reviewing for them in class. The final exam for this class is scheduled from **8:00-9:50 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 17th.** It must be taken during the scheduled exam period, so do not plan to leave early for break.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism, which is the use of someone else's words or ideas as your own, is a serious academic offense and is not tolerated at Xavier. Any assignments containing plagiarism will receive an F or a 0, and egregious cases of plagiarism may result in a failing final grade for the course. As a preventive measure, all of your written work will be checked using TurnItIn.com. To avoid any misunderstandings, we will discuss appropriate citation in class.

**Contacting Me:** I am happy to respond to questions via e-mail, and I try to do so whenever possible within 24 hours. Before you contact me, however, please make sure the information you are seeking cannot be easily obtained from the syllabus or one of your classmates. If you have concerns about any aspect of this course, your first step should be to contact me. If you have questions about a grade, first be sure that you have read all of my comments on your assignment and then make an appointment to see me in person.

**Grading:**

**Final grades are determined using this formula:**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participation—20%</th>
<th>Essay #1—15%</th>
<th>Essay #2—15%</th>
<th>Response Papers—15%</th>
<th>Mid-Term Exam—10%</th>
<th>Final Exam—15%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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- A work demonstrates deep critical thinking and sophisticated language use. A student who receives an A in this course has consistently completed superior work and incorporated lessons learned from previous assignments to improve upon future ones.
- Earning a B will reflect an above-average commitment to coursework. This means producing polished, thought-provoking, and inventive writings, as well as showing a genuine interest in the subject matter and a consistent willingness to ask and answer difficult questions. B work still meets the standards of A work but may not have the same level of excellence or consistency.
- C is an average grade in college. It indicates satisfactory college-level work.
- **D or below** means that you have not shown an effort towards improvement, have failed to meet the course requirements by completing college-level work, or have hurt your grade through consistently late work, absences, or plagiarism.

**Grading Scale**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A = 93-100%</td>
<td>B = 83-86.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A- = 90-92.9%</td>
<td>B- = 80-82.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ = 87-89.9%</td>
<td>C+ = 77-79.9%</td>
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Schedule of Readings:
*The course schedule may evolve to meet the needs of students in the course.

WEEK 1:
M 8/25: Introductions.
W 8/27: “The Things They Carried” (402-419); in class, close reading tools.
F 8/29: “Young Goodman Brown” (1-13); in class, setting; **Group #1 Response.**

WEEK 2:
M 9/1: LABOR DAY
W 9/3: “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (294-308); in class, plot; **Group #2 Response.**
F 9/5: “The Story of an Hour” (66-68), “Hills Like White Elephants” (228-232); in class, point of view; **Group #3 Response.**

WEEK 3:
M 9/8: *Metamorphosis* (126-147); in class, character; **Group #4 Response.**
W 9/10: *Metamorphosis* (147-168); **Group #5 Response.**
F 9/12: *Picture of Dorian Gray* (43-83), “Preface” (41-42), “Appendix A” (253-254); **Group #1 Response.**

WEEK 4:
M 9/15: *Picture of Dorian Gray* (84-128), “Appendix D” (260-261), “Appendix G” (269-270); **Group #2 Response.**
W 9/17: *Picture of Dorian Gray* (129-160), “Appendix F” (266-267); **Group #3 Response.**
F 9/19: *Picture of Dorian Gray* (161-204); **Group #4 Response.**

WEEK 5:
M 9/22: *Picture of Dorian Gray* (205-251), “Appendix H” (271-277); **Group #5 Response.**
W 9/24: No reading; in class, the legacy of *Picture of Dorian Gray.*
F 9/26: *Kindred* (9-51).

WEEK 6:
W 10/1: **Essay #1 Draft due**; in class, paper workshop.

WEEK 7:
M 10/6: *Kindred* (151-188).
W 10/8: **Essay #1 due**; in class, review for the mid-term exam.
F 10/10: FALL BREAK

WEEK 8:
M 10/13: *Kindred* (189-139).
W 10/15: *Kindred* (140-164).
F 10/17: **Mid-term exam.**
WEEK 9:
W 10/22: *Persepolis* (10-32), “Iran Timeline” (on canvas); **Group #3 Response**.
F 10/24: *Persepolis* (33-61), “From an Interview with Marjane Satrapi” (on canvas); **Group #4 Response**.
W 10/27: *Persepolis* (62-93), “‘Persepolis’ and the Middle East Today” (on canvas), “Invoking the Arab Spring, Iran rewrites its own history” (on canvas); **Group #5 Response**.
WEEK 10:
M 10/27: *Persepolis* (62-93), “Persepolis’ and the Middle East Today” (on canvas), “Invoking the Arab Spring, Iran rewrites its own history” (on canvas); **Group #5 Response**.
W 10/29: *Persepolis* (94-125), “Iran’s Students Chafe” (on canvas), “International Sports: A Quiet Revolution in Iran” (on canvas); **Group #1 Response**.
F 10/31: *Persepolis* (126-153), “How a 5-Year-Old Foreign Film Sparked a Free-Speech Fight in Tunisia” and “Broadcast of an Animated Film Roils Tunisia Before Elections” (on canvas); **Group #2 Response**.
WEEK 11:
M 11/3: *Oscar Wao* (1-50).
W 11/5: *Oscar Wao* (51-118); **Group #5 Response**.
F 11/7: *Oscar Wao* (119-165); **Group #4 Response**.
WEEK 12:
M 11/10: *Oscar Wao* (167-201); **Group #3 Response**.
W 11/12: *Oscar Wao* (205-261); **Group #2 Response**.
F 11/14: Group Presentation Meeting.
WEEK 13:
M 11/17: *Oscar Wao* (263-307); **Group #1 Response**.
W 11/19: *Oscar Wao* (311-335).
F 11/21: **Essay #2 Draft due**; in class, paper workshop.
WEEK 14:
M 11/24: “Two Kinds” (446-456); **Presentation 1**.
W 11/26: THANKSGIVING
F 11/28: THANKSGIVING
WEEK 15:
M 12/1: “Woman Hollering Creek” (457-467); **Presentation 2**.
W 12/3: **Essay #2 due**; “Interpreter of Maladies” (484-503); **Presentation 3**.
F 12/5: “Birdsong” (514-527); **Presentation 4**.
WEEK 16:
M 12/8: “The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven” (478-483); **Presentation 5**.
W 12/10: “Brownies” (online); **Presentation 6**.
F 12/12: In class, final exam review and student evaluations.
**Final Exam:** 8:00-9:50 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 17th