



Missouri Western State University
 College of Arts and Sciences
 Department of English, Foreign Languages
 and Journalism

ENG 450: Historical Fiction

Thursdays 3:30 - 6:20 pm Murphy 106
 Fall 2009

Instructor: Dr. Donaher

Office: Eder Hall 222 L

Office Hours: TR 2:00-3:00 pm; W 9:00-11:00 am and 3:30-4:30 pm; and by appointment

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Course Philosophy and Objectives

You will examine historical fiction as a product of formulaic convention AND as "works of literature," with all the aesthetic considerations we bring to reading canonically-sanctioned writings. To this end, you will employ a variety of critical approaches, ranging from biographical and historical to feminist and cultural to psychological and archetypal.

Required Materials

Texts:

- Eco, Umberto. *The Name of the Rose*.
- Gregory, Philippa. *The Other Boleyn Girl*.
- Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible*.
- Mitchell, Margaret. *Gone with the Wind* (optional).
- Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.
- Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*.
- *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th ed. MLA, 2003.
- Various online and library texts assigned in class or as a part of your writing and research

Required Printing:

- Access to a printer: ALL class materials will be online, in [WebCT](#). You will not receive hardcopies of class handouts. Please remember to print them ahead of time to use as you do the readings--or at least before you come to class. I have organized the class handouts into units, based on the bold faced headings in the schedule below. Use these headings to find the appropriate folder in WebCT for that unit's materials. Also: to save paper/ink when printing PowerPoints, remember to set the printer to print as "Handouts" (under the drop-down menu under Print What:) and set it to 6 slides per page (under Slides per Page: drop-down menu).
- You can also access this basic syllabus via my [homepage](#) listed above and the [EFLJ Directory](#) page (scroll and click on Donaher).

Other:

- Good humor, exuberance, a "happy to be here" attitude (trust me, it helps... a lot)
- Computer flash drives or CD-RWs

- Photocopies of your work and various sources

Assignments

Weekly Responsibilities and Journal

Your first responsibility is to read somewhat carefully. Each week, you will send me an email with an attachment of a reading journal over each work read. Your journal should reflect on the work in question in terms of its relation to ideas in literary theory, as well as the usual conventions of theme, symbol, setting, cultural perspectives, and/or characters, etc. Think of the journal as a short literary analysis, but informal, perhaps unorganized and rambling, as you gather your sense of how the work functions and how it should be interpreted. I'll expect a one page journal (single-spaced) over each work in question.

Research on Historical Fiction Genre

You will create a working definition of the historical fiction genres and write a 2-page overview of the genre, including background research on the genre's history, highpoints, and literary merits.

Critical Research Project

You will compile a research portfolio and write a professional, conference length (7-8 pages or 3200-3700 word) researched article on one (or more) of the texts used in class. Papers will be formally written and documented, in MLA Style, and be well edited, as befits all academic papers. Final papers will be submitted electronically. You will also learn more about academic conventions and discourse by crafting a proposal (based on your critical article) for possible presentation at the 2010 national Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Conference, held in Saint Louis, March 31-April 3, and write a formal letter of application for funding from the MW Foundation Student Excellence Fund (SEF).

If you are actually interested in presenting at the conference, you will submit your proposal to the appropriate PCA/ACA Area Chair, and we will pursue funding from the SEF, work further on our papers after the course ends, and travel as a group to the conference.

Have Fun
And I mean it.

Grading

The quality of your work, the percentage of the work that you complete, and your effort will determine your final grade.

Your Final Grade Distribution is as follows:

- Reading Journal = 40%
- Critical Research Project = 40%
- Genre Report = 20%

Other Requirements

Student Disability

Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities should contact me **during the first week** so that we can discuss class requirements.

Late Work

All assignments are due on the due date, unless otherwise specified. Learning is a cumulative process and each assignment in this course is designed to build on the last assignment; therefore, late work disrupts this important aspect of the learning process. **Therefore, no daily work will be accepted late. The genre report and the critical research project has a grace period of NO MORE THAN 24 hours from the due date/time for technical difficulties. After 24 hours, it will be discounted 10% for each 24 hour period late, including weekends.** No work will be accepted after the last class day before the final exam.

Computer Usage

You will be called upon to read materials online, use WebCT, and utilize computers in and outside of class time. The critical research paper and draft materials must be word processed in MSWord.

University Academic Honesty Policy and Due Process

Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another's work, falsifying documents or academic records, or any other fraudulent activity. Violations of academic honesty may result in

a failing grade on the assignment, failure in the course, or expulsion from the University. When a student's grade has been affected, violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Provost or designated representative on the Academic Honesty Violation Report forms.

Please see the current Student Handbook for specific activities identified as violations of this policy and the student due process procedure. This handbook is available online at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf>. Academic policies and procedures begin on page 23.

Course Policy on Academic Honesty

. . . it is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation. -- Herman Melville

Plagiarism is literally the stealing of others' words and ideas and using them as your own. Make every effort to give credit where credit is due, and if you are not sure of "how"--ask. You are responsible for proving that all work turned in for grading is your own original work. Work with evidence of plagiarism, intentional or not, will receive a zero and may result in failure of the course. Students who cheat on a quiz or the final exam will receive zero for that activity and it may result in failure of the course. Further, all incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the the Provost as required by the official University policy and may result in additional consequences for the student.

Final Thoughts

Despite Einstein's assurances that even the motions of dust motes have pattern, life to us mere mortals is unpredictable. I recognize that at times your outside life may interfere with your classroom life. It is up to you to set your priorities and to realize that "doing it all" is not always possible or even desirable. If you are feeling overly stressed about all you have to accomplish, you need to come see me.

Course Schedule

Aug 27

Syllabus/Introductions
Genre Assignment: Defining Historical Fiction

Sept 3

Twain, *Connecticut Yankee*

Sept 10

Genre Projects Due (50 points) - Come share your knowledge of the historical fiction with the 334 class. Email the 2-page genre overview to donaher@missouriwestern.edu by NOON on Sept 13 for posting to WebCT for the class to access/download.

Sept 17

Eco, *The Name of the Rose*
In 334: Critical Project Assignment - Finding Research Topics; Doing Library Research (from the comfort of your arm/computer chair); Down and Dirty Research

Sept 24

EVERYONE: Preliminary Topics Due (10 points) - Email Dr. D by class time

Oct 1

Gregory, *The Other Boleyn Girl*
In 334: Crafting Paper Proposals and Funding Letters

Oct 8

EVERYONE: PCAACA Proposal Drafts and SEF Funding Letter Drafts Due (50 points) - Email Dr. D by class time
Miller, *The Crucible*

Oct 15

Conference-Goers: Submission Deadline for SEF Funding Letters - Email and signed hardcopy to Dr. Donaher by 10 am today!

Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (optional)

Oct 22

In 334: Incorporating Research (bring some of your research materials and your paper draft)

Oct 29

Zusak, *The Book Thief*

Nov 5

EVERYONE: Research Portfolio Due (50 points)

In 334: The Joy of Bibliographies (bring your MLA guides)

Nov 12

EVERYONE: Critical Paper Draft Due (25 points): In-class critiquing, bring 2 copies

Nov 19: NWP/NCTE Conference - Work on Final Papers

Nov 26: Thanksgiving

Dec 3

EVERYONE: Final Critical Paper Due (100 points)

Conference-Goers: Submission Deadline for PCAACA Paper Proposal - email the appropriate PCAACA Chair today! Send a separate email copy to Dr. D.

Dec 10

Final Exam Period 2:00-3:50 pm