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ENG 3300 001: Seminar in English Studies

Randall Beebe

Eastern Illinois University

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Texts

*Game of Thrones* (HBO, 2011-present)

*A Game of Thrones* (1996), G. Martin [volume 1 of *A Song of Ice and Fire*]

*V for Vendetta*, A. Moore & D. Lloyd (1988-89)

*The Prince*, N. Machiavelli (1532)

Other Readings (via D2L)

Requirements

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 2 / Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Response Papers</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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Course Description

In this seminar, we will look at the phenomenon called *Game of Thrones* through the lens of the literary gothic (a kind of fiction that developed at the end of the 18th century), and we will use this comparison to investigate how narratives structure power and terror.

While we will look at several points of connection between the literary gothic and *Game of Thrones* (such as gender and social politics, family dysfunction, intense subjectivity, and the narrative privileging of complex, tortured relationships), one of our primary points of emphasis will be the problem of moral ambiguity—how do the literary gothic and *Game of Thrones* invite and complicate discussions of good and evil? What are we to make of these fictional worlds where subversion—dark desire, sexual transgression, fantastic deviance—takes center stage?

As designed by the English Department, this required seminar is intended to be a different kind of learning experience for students of all concentrations. Within a seminar format, students will take an active role in leading and participating in class discussion. You will complete a variety of writing projects (of varying lengths and for both popular and academic audiences) and short presentations, and, along the way, develop advanced research skills.
You will also complete and present a research project—the focus, shape and scope of which will be up to you to design. Students will be strongly encouraged to develop projects that complement their concentration in the English major and (where possible) relate to their career goals.

Seminar Format
This course is designed as a seminar, which essentially means seminar participants share the responsibility of presenting material (usually your own writing projects and research) and facilitating class discussion.

It's very likely that this course format will be very new to most of you—but it's designed that way to help you develop further your critical thinking and writing skills and prepare you for the challenges you will face after you leave EIU.

Here are some specific goals for the course:
- to develop advanced research skills (in using a variety of databases, verifying information, learning various research formats);
- to develop skills in deploying that research for use in both academic and popular writing;
- to sharpen critical thinking skills (in reasoning, close reading, data analysis);
- to increase proficiency in writing skills (for different audiences, in different formats);
- to gain more confidence in public speaking (through facilitating discussions, presenting research, collaborative learning).

Assignments
You will receive an assignment sheet for each major assignment. Here’s an overview the main work for the seminar:

- Paper 1 - explore the concept of the "gothic" in GoT and another work.
- Paper 2 - write a summary of your presentation. The presentation you will complete as a group; however, the paper will be your own work.
- Final Project - a multi-staged writing and presentation activity, designed to help you reflect on your training as an English major and prepare for life after EIU.
- First Presentation - working with one or more students, you will develop a 15-minute presentation on 2 episodes from GoT.
- Participation - you need to be actively involved in class discussions for a seminar to work. In short, I take informed participation very seriously in this kind of course.
Attendance Policy
You need to attend every class session. It’s especially important in seminars where so much of what we do is collaborative and discussion-based. I generally allow two absences—no questions asked. On the third absence—and for every absence thereafter—I will deduct 5% from your final grade. Six or more absences equate to an automatic “F” for the course. For any day that you are not in class, it is your responsibility to find out what was covered, new assignments given, changes in the syllabus, or any homework due for the next meeting.

Classroom Etiquette
You’re welcome to bring your notebook computer/tablet to class. However, I ask that you observe common rules of etiquette and decorum when you use it. In brief, you may use it to take notes or complete an in-class writing activity. You may not use it for anything not directly related to class work. Also, please turn off (or mute) cell phones. Out of respect for the class and the integrity of class activities, absolutely no text messaging during class is allowed.

Conferences
The nature of this course will allow for a great deal of in-class conversations about your research and projects. However, it is vital that you work with me closely (and often) on your work. I am in my office many other hours besides the posted office hours and I urge you to get in the habit of talking to outside of class.

Electronic Writing Portfolio
This course is a writing-centered course and, as such, your papers satisfy the requirements for the Electronic Writing Portfolio. If you plan on using work from this course for your EWP, I ask that you complete this before the last two weeks of the semester.

Students with Disabilities
If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.