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# ENG 5061A-600: Topics in Literature and Literary Theory

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Welcome to **Harry Potter** and Representation!

Spring 2018

**Harry Potter and Representation** (Online)

English 5061A: Special Topics in Literature and Literary Theory

Instructor: Dr. CC Wharram

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Office Hours: M 1-3, 4:15-5:15; W 1-3



illustration by Anoosha Syed

### Course Overview

This graduate-level course will address some of the most challenging problems that recent debates around the Harry Potter books have raised, especially those connected to representation. The Potter series invites its readers to think of both historical and contemporary social issues. Rowling herself has spurred new debate: how does knowing that Rowling, as she composed the novels, considered Albus Dumbledore gay and Hermione Granger black change our reading of the series? How does reading about such beloved characters (who are in the process of discovering their identities) further help shape readers' understanding of self-representation?

### Getting Started: A Course Overview

Please read carefully through this Course Overview. Here, I will introduce the following:

- 1) purpose and structure of the course
- 2) netiquette
- 3) course policies
- 4) technology requirements and technical skills
- 5) D2L and other technology learner support
- 6) prerequisite knowledge
- 7) information about the instructor
- 8) learning objectives
- 9) assessment (or grading policy)
- 10) instructional materials
- 11) learning activities

### 1. Purpose and Structure of the Course

English 5061: Special Topics in Literature and Literary Theory, "Harry Potter and Representation," will be entirely taught and experienced online over the span of fifteen weeks, January 8 – May 4, 2018.

This class will be appropriate for anyone pursuing masters-level work in literary studies or anyone planning to enrich his or her own teaching of issues of representation and interpretation—in the Harry Potter novels and beyond. In particular, the course will introduce students to:

- 1) historical texts that inform Rowling’s series
- 2) secondary criticism that broadens the scope of the Harry Potter books
- 3) theoretical works that, when applied to the novels, help illuminate ways of reading that are otherwise elusive for students (e.g., Lacanian psychoanalysis), and
- 4) advanced methods for teaching Rowling’s series at the high school level.

English 5061 is organized into modules, or thematically driven topics centered on representation. These cover early stages of character development (birth, self-introduction, childhood), generic conventions (the Bildungsroman and the gothic), dreams and interpretation, biopolitics (external controls over life functions), and the final stages (of life).

While the Potter novels are purportedly written for young audiences (pre-adult), I hope for our class to connect Rowling’s fictional universe with the rich, complex, and surprisingly mature issues in literary and cultural studies that it evokes.

Weeks	Reading Schedule
<b>1 – 2</b> <b>8 Jan.</b> <b>2018</b>	<p><b>Module 1: Early Stages: Birth, Self-introduction, Childhood</b></p> <p>This module will concentrate on reading the opening book of the Harry Potter series, introducing ways to connect these texts to a longer tradition of writing and representation in literature that specifically treats the problem of origins and childhood development.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1: <i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s (Philosopher’s) Stone</i> (1997)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Wordsworth, William. Excerpt from <i>The Prelude</i> (1805 version), Book I, lines 375-430 [The “Skiff-Stealing” Episode]</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Lacan, Jacques. “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function.” <i>Écrits: A Selection</i>, translated by Bruce Fink, Norton, 2002.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Klein, Shawn. “The Mirror of Erised: Why We Should Heed Dumbledore’s Warning.” <i>Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts</i>, edited by David Baggett and Shawn Klein, Open Court, 2004.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Zipes, Jack. “The Phenomenon of Harry Potter, or Why All the Talk?” <i>Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children’s Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter</i>, Routledge, 2000.</p>
<b>3 – 4</b> <b>22 Jan.</b>	<p><b>Module 2: Technology and Desire</b></p> <p>How does technology enhance and inhibit human desire? Do the Potter novels help us understand this question?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2: <i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i> (1998)</p>

Freud, Sigmund. "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, edited by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, Blackwell, 2004, pp. 431-437.

Twenge, Jean M. "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?" *The Atlantic*, Sept. 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/09/has-the-smartphone-destroyed-a-generation/534198/>

Turkle, Sherry. "How Technology Makes You Forget What You Know about Life." Phi Beta Kappa Literary Exercises, Harvard University, 23 May 2017. Keynote Address.

Teare, Elizabeth. "Harry Potter and the Technology of Magic." *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*, edited by Lana Whited, U of Missouri P, 2002.

5 – 6  
5 Feb.

**Module 3: Generic Conventions, Part One: Bildungsroman**

Arguably the most famous contemporary example of the Bildungsroman, or novel of education, the Harry Potter series traces the growth of the protagonist from infancy through adulthood. We will investigate the vital role of crises—both external and psychological—in the extraordinary "apprenticeship" of the ordinary individual.

3: *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999)

Goethe, Wilhelm. "The Sorcerer's Apprentice." 1797

*Fantasia*. Disney, 1940. ["The Sorcerer's Apprentice" segment]

Belcher, Catherine. "Harry on the Border between Two Worlds: Reading Harry en Espanol in a Mexican American Border Community." *Teaching Harry Potter: The Power of Imagination in Multicultural Classrooms*, edited by Catherine Belcher and Becky Stephenson, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

7 – 8  
19 Feb.

**Module 4: Generic Conventions, Part Two: Gothic**

This module concentrates on the Gothic, including the reading of the "original" Gothic novel, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). As an historical genre, the Gothic—like the Harry Potter series—romanticizes by "longing" specifically after the medieval period, at once idealizing and foregrounding the "horror" of the Middle Ages.

4: *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000)

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. "Alastor or The Spirit of Solitude." 1815. *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, edited by Thomas Hutchinson, Oxford UP, 1914.

Carey, Brycchan. "Hermione and the House-Elves: The Literary and Historical Contexts of J. K. Rowling's Antislavery Campaign." *Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays*, edited by Giselle Liza Anatol, Praeger, 2003, pp. 103-115.

	<p>Walpole, Horace. <i>The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story</i>, edited by W.S. Lewis, Oxford UP, 1998.</p> <p>Gruss, Susanne. "The Diffusion of Gothic Conventions in Harry Potter and <i>The Order of the Phoenix</i>." <i>Heroism in the Harry Potter Series</i>, edited by Katrin Berndt and Lena Steveker, Ashgate, 2011.</p>
<p>9 – 10 5 March (Spring Break: 12 March)</p>	<p><b>Module 5: Dreams, Directions, Interpretations</b></p> <p>5: <i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i> (2003)</p> <p>Freud, Sigmund. Selection from <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i> (1900)</p> <p>Freud, Sigmund. Selection from "The Uncanny." <i>Imago</i>, Bd. V., 1919. Reprinted in <i>Sammlung</i>, Fünfte Folge, translated by Alix Strachey.</p>
<p>11 – 13 26 March</p>	<p><b>Module 6: Late-Stage Potter, Part One: Biopolitics</b></p> <p>This module addresses the inescapable importance of biopolitics throughout the Harry Potter series.</p> <p>6: <i>Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince</i> (2005) 7: <i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows</i> (2007)</p> <p>Weber, Samuel. "Bare Life and Life in General." <i>Grey Room</i> 46 (Winter 2012): 7-24.</p> <p>Ostry, Elaine. "Accepting Mudbloods: The Ambivalent Social Vision of J. K. Rowling's Fairy Tales." <i>Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays</i>, edited by Giselle Liza Anatol, Praeger, 2003, pp. 89-101.</p>
<p>14 – 15 16 April</p>	<p><b>Module 7: Late-Stage Potter, Part Two: <i>The Cursed Child</i></b></p> <p>8: <i>Harry Potter and the Cursed Child</i> (2016)</p>

## 2. Netiquette

Please see [EIU's Online Learning Netiquette Guide](https://www.eiu.edu/coisolutions/ss_netiquette.php)

([https://www.eiu.edu/coisolutions/ss\\_netiquette.php](https://www.eiu.edu/coisolutions/ss_netiquette.php)): In an online course, most communication is done through written messages either in private posts or public discussions. It is important that students in online courses be especially sensitive to how messages and sentiment are communicated and received. Be respectful, clear, and descriptive in your online post assignments.

## 3. Course Policies

### Academic Integrity

Plagiarism—either intentionally or unintentionally passing off someone else's work as your own—will not be tolerated, and will result in a zero grade for the assignment and/or the course.

I will also file a Notification of Academic Misconduct Form with the Office of Student Standards, which will become part of your file at Eastern. Please see [EIU's Code of Conduct \(http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php\)](http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php) for more information on plagiarism and other kinds of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for adhering to this code.

#### **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the [Office of Student Disability Services \(OSDS\) \(http://www.eiu.edu/disability/\)](http://www.eiu.edu/disability/). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2022, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

#### **Student Success Center**

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the [Student Success Center \(http://www.eiu.edu/success/\)](http://www.eiu.edu/success/) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

#### **Email Policy**

I will try to respond to all emails to [ccwharram@eiu.edu](mailto:ccwharram@eiu.edu) within 24 hours of receipt (except Thursday). Please use a descriptive subject line ("question about primary sources," etc.), a proper salutation ("Dear Dr. Wharram"), and a proper closing ("Best, Frankie Avalon," "Thank You, Marilyn Manson"). Email professionalism is very important.

#### **4. Technology Requirements and Technical Skills**

Students must have access to the Internet using a laptop or desktop computer. Students are responsible for having a backup plan if the primary computer crashes and/or Internet service fails. Mobile devices can be used but are not recommended for timed online exams or quizzes, and certainly not recommended for writing assignments.

Peripheral devices that may be of use include a headset with a built-in microphone (iPhone earbuds with microphone will also work) and a webcam.

All course content and class activities will be in D2L (<http://www.eiu.edu/d2l>), or on the course blog (<https://eiu5061harrypotter.wordpress.com/>). Self-help tutorials for D2L are available in the D2L Student Orientation course (login required).

Students must know how to download files and have the ability to install software. Students must have Adobe Acrobat Reader (free download) installed on the computer. Microsoft Word is also required and is available free through Office 365 via EIU Panthermail. Tutorials for using Word and other software programs are available at <http://www.eiu.edu/lynda> (login required).

Students must be able to

- download, edit, and save Word documents and PDF files
- email using attachments
- navigate D2L

We may use Blackboard Collaborate to conduct online discussions. You can also find several resources and instructions for using D2L and Blackboard Collaborate at [EIU's Center for Online Learning \(http://www.eiu.edu/col/student\\_resources.php\)](http://www.eiu.edu/col/student_resources.php).

### 5. D2L and Other Technology Learner Support at EIU

If you need assistance with D2L, call **D2L Support toll free at 1-877-325-7778**. Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Email and Chat options are also available on the "My Home" page after logging in to D2L. Other D2L resources including a D2L Orientation course for students are available "My Home Page. If you are experiencing less than optimal D2L Brightspace performance, review the [D2L Brightspace Performance Checklist](#) to assess the issue.

For technical questions regarding other software, hardware, network issues, EIU NetID/password, or Panthermail, contact the **ITS Helpdesk at 217-581-4357** during regular business hours or submit a help ticket at <https://techsupport.eiu.edu/>. If you have a question regarding course content, please contact your instructor.

### 6. Prerequisite Knowledge

This course is designed for graduate students and advanced undergraduates who are eager to learn about literary theory and literary history, all through the frame of the Harry Potter novel series. While no previous knowledge of the Harry Potter novels is required, it will be advantageous for students to have already read these novels—mostly because of the time constraint. No previous knowledge of literary theory is required to take this course, but a willingness to learn new and difficult material is recommended!

### 7. Information about the Instructor

Here is some formal information about [me](#) on EIU's website. More to come...

### 8. Learning Objectives

The broadest learning objectives of this course include introducing and helping you to understand:

- 1) historical texts that inform Rowling's series
- 2) secondary criticism that broadens the scope of the Harry Potter books
- 3) theoretical works that, when applied to the novels, help illuminate ways of reading that are otherwise elusive for graduate students (e.g., Lacanian psychoanalysis), and
- 4) advanced methods for teaching Rowling's series at the high school level.

### 9. Assessment

Grade Value	Assessed Work
<b>Your course grade will be calculated out of a total of 1000 points. Each percentage point for the class is equal to 10 points.</b>	You may find your grades and instructor's feedback on D2L for all assignments, except for Participation in Seminar Discussion, which is ongoing.
100 points or 10% of total course grade	<b>"Word" Essay</b>
100 points or 10%	<b>"Name" Essay</b>
100 points or 10%	<b>Critical Summary Essay</b>

200 points or 20%	<b>Regular Participation in Seminar Discussion,</b> including:
	A holistic score for a <i>minimum of nine Responses to Discussion Posts</i> (3 Responses in each essay category, 100 points or 10%)
	--and--
	A holistic score for further Discussion Posts about and Responses to the instructors' course materials and Responses to students' Proposal Abstracts (100 points or 10%)
100 points or 10%	<b>Proposal Abstract for Final Essay</b>
400 points or 40%	<b>Final Essay</b>

The grading scale is as follows:

- 90-100% = A
- 80-89.9% = B
- 70-79.9% = C
- 60-69.9% = D
- 0-59.9% = F

### Grading Time Frame

I will try my very best to respond to and grade your three shorter writing assignments and proposal abstract within the following time frame: 3 days (ideally) to 5 days.

### 10. Instructional Materials

The materials we will use in this course are all available as pdfs on D2L. This includes all seven Harry Potter novels, critical articles, theoretical texts, assignment sheets, and handouts. All eight Potter films are available on D2L for your viewing pleasure. I will note—even though it should go without saying—that watching one of the films is no substitute for reading the novel. You are not required to watch the films for this class, though references to the films, especially in ways that are problematic for *reading* the novels, are encouraged. We will often broach the topic of “the tyranny of film” in this course.

### 11. Learner Activities

This is a graduate-level seminar for which **class discussion will be vital** to developing a greater understanding of the primary texts, the theoretical texts, and the possibilities for teaching the *Harry Potter* fiction within sophisticated and rigorous contexts. To make discussion possible in an online setting, you will write three formal essays and then convert each of these essays into less formal versions (Discussion Posts) for sharing with our class on this website. You will not only create three Discussion Posts on our blog site, but also write several Responses to Discussion Posts on a regular basis. Everyone will write at least nine Responses (three Responses to others' Discussion Posts under each of

the essay categories: “word,” “name,” and critical summary; and further Discussion Posts about and Responses to the instructors’ course materials and Responses to students’ Abstract Proposals).

**Sign-up sheet for assignments posted online:**

You will be required to sign up for a “word” essay, a “name” essay, and a critical summary on the following google doc.

You must sign up for one of each of these assignments over three different weeks. Choose wisely and keep track of your chosen weeks. **Be careful not to erase or overwrite another student’s name on the sign-up sheet.** See the accompanying instructions (including due dates and format requirements) for each type of online assignment.

**For blog assignments:**

You will be invited via email (and required) to join our class’s blog site:

<https://eiu5061harrypotter.wordpress.com>. This is so that you may complete your Discussion Posts and respond to others’ Discussion Posts. Our WordPress site also keeps a running record of our class’s contributions as they unfold. WordPress privacy policy: <https://wordpress.org/about/privacy/>

Here is the link for making a new Discussion Post on our site:

<https://wordpress.com/post/eiu5061harrypotter.wordpress.com>

(Note: You need to first be invited to and then logged in to the WordPress site in order to post anything.)

Here are instructions for “Word” Discussion Posts and “Name” Discussion Posts.

**For class discussions and conferences:**

You will learn how to use Blackboard Collaborate, a program integrated into the class’s D2L interface. We may use Blackboard Collaborate to conduct online discussions. You can find several resources and instructions for using D2L and Blackboard Collaborate at EIU’s Center for Online Learning.

**For lectures related to course materials:**

Using D2L or our WordPress site, you may access lectures via presentation software or learning modules that contain recorded lectures using multimedia software. You will also access through D2L assigned readings, links to multimedia, discussion threads, other written assignments, rubrics, and an electronic drop box.