

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

Spring 2021

2021

Spring 1-15-2021

ENG 3300-600: Seminar in English Studies

Colleen Abel

Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: https://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2021



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Abel, Colleen, "ENG 3300-600: Seminar in English Studies" (2021). *Spring 2021*. 59.
https://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2021/59

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2021 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spring 2021 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

ENG3300: Seminar in English Studies: Speculative Literature

Spring 2021

Online with synchronous chats Wednesdays, 12-12:50

Colleen Abel

crabel@eiu.edu

Virtual office hours (via Microsoft Teams

Office: CH 3811 (remote for Spring 2021)

Mon and Tues. 930-11:00 a.m. and

Thursdays from 5 to 6 p.m.)

Required Texts

Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake*.

Hong, Cathy Park. *Dance Dance Revolution*.

LaValle, Victor and John Joseph Adams, eds. *The People's Future of the United States*.

Whitehead, Colson. *The Underground Railroad*.

Miscellaneous other readings / viewings

Course Description

This seminar emphasizes research and writing skills and their applicability in academic and nonacademic contexts. This semester's topic will be speculative fiction. The *Doomsday Clock*—a symbolic timepiece that indicates how close humanity is to annihilation—is currently at one hundred seconds to midnight, the closest it's been since 1953. No wonder we're obsessed with stories about the future. This class will look at speculative fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and film / tv to investigate some common themes in these narratives, from killer viruses and the walking dead to climate change and nuclear war. What are the contemporary scientific and cultural fears that writers investigate by imagining a future in which today's problems have escalated to cataclysmic proportions? How do gender, ethnicity, and geography shape a writer's concerns about the world to come?

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be able to

- Recognize the main conventions of speculative literature
- Understand the larger context of the texts we read
- Engage with regional, national, and international issues
- Advance your critical reading, thinking, and writing skills in various genres and media within English studies
- Demonstrate research skills in one or more within English studies using scholarly databases and archives
- Analyze scholarly and / or public documents in various media with attention to literary, rhetorical and / or public contexts
- Develop ability to present work

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online through our learning management system, D2L Brightspace, <http://www.eiu.edu/d2l>. I will also be using Microsoft Teams for office hours. You have an account already to Teams: it pops up when you log into your Office 365 account (i.e. when you click “panthermail” on the EIU homepage.) If you need help: [Contact ITS User Services for technical support issues.](#)

Email: support@eiu.edu

Phone: (217) 581-4357

Support Hours: 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday-Friday with your EIU NetID account or password, contact Campus Technology Support at (217) 581-4357 or support@eiu.edu.

Technology Requirements

In order to complete this course, you’ll need internet access (or high speed data) to log on to our D2L course. In order to participate in live sessions or conferences, you’ll need microphone access and / or camera access. To complete written assignments, you will

need some kind of word processing program. You will also have a presentation, for which you can use Powerpoint, Google Slides, or other free programs.

Instructor Response Time

For emails, please allow me up to **24 hours** to respond to your message. For grades, please allow **up to ten days** for me to get back to you for large assignments, though it will likely take less time than this. For discussion board posts, I will grade all posts and responses the week they are completed. Please note that I read and grade all discussion board posts, responses, and exercises, though I may not necessarily respond to each one, as the discussion board is a space that is designed to be student-centered, just as our classroom would be.

Please note that I am unable to meet with students during evenings or weekends except in exceptional circumstances.

Grade Breakdown

Discussion Boards Posts: 200 points

Speculative Fiction: 100 points

Short Assignments (x4): 200 points

Position Papers (x2): 200 points

Context Presentation: 100 points

Final Research Project & Annotated Bibliography: 200 points

D2L will contain more detailed instructions for all assignments. The following are general guidelines.

Presentation: Over the course of the term, each of you will do a five-minute presentation. You'll sign up for your slot during the first week of the class. This presentation will involve finding two sources from print or digital media that deals in some way with one specific issue raised in the text we're reading at the time of your presentation. For example, the Atwood novel may prompt you to do some research into

biogenetics. The Hong text might encourage you to research foreign workers in the tourism industry. The idea is to give us context for the reading: what real-world issues is the author transforming? You will deliver the presentation during our weekly session, and upload it, along with your article to a dedicated discussion forum.

Position Papers: For this paper, you will be responding to a specific prompt that I will give you about a course text. You will need to make an argument with a thesis, using the text as evidence. Should be three pages minimum.

Speculative Fiction: This will be a chance for you to be creative and imagine your own speculative scenario. You can write any kind of short story—and feel free to turn it into a graphic short story if you’ve got drawing or design chops! Should be two pages minimum.

Final Research Paper: A 6-8 page paper that considers one (possibly two) of the texts we’ve read through the lens of scholarly / archival research.

Late work

Assignments will be docked two points for every day they are late. Final papers will not be accepted. If you need an extension, please let me know as far in advance as you’re able.

Learner Participation Guidelines

This class is synchronous, which means “happening at the same time.” We will meet for a little less than an hour once a week, and the rest of our class will take place on our discussion boards. This means that the discussion board is functioning as our classroom. You’re probably used to the post-and-response format. For the most part, we’ll be doing that, as well, **with the post due by the end of the day Tuesday and the responses by Thursday.**

For posts, I'll be looking for about 200-250 words; the more specific, the better. The second part of the discussion board will be responses to two of your classmates. These responses should be at least 75 words, and should be more than simply saying "Good point!" or "I agree!" If you respond to their discussion question, you should be adding to what they say, not merely echoing what they say.

Specific instructions will be given each week for the discussion board expectations for the week to come, but the above guidelines should give you a general sense of what to expect.

Classroom (N)etiquette

Perhaps the most important classroom policy of all concerns our learning environment. A successful learning community is one in which we can learn from people whose perspectives we might not necessarily share and I ask everyone to be constructive and mindful. Speaking our minds is a fantastic privilege of this environment, but doing so in an aggressive or hostile way helps no one. However, if there is hostile language directed at any group because of their minority status (such as sexual orientation, religion, race, etc.), I will need to report this to university as a [bias incident](#).

EIU Policies

- Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.
- Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, 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.

- 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). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Course Schedule

Week One: January 11

Read “Introduction” to People’s Future of the United States (*PFUS*)

Discussion Board Posts & Responses

Week Two: January 18 (No class Monday, 1/18)

Read “The Bookstore at the End of America” and “Read After Burning” (*PFUS*)

Discussion Board Posts & Responses

Week Three: January 25

Oryx and Crake

Discussion Board Posts & Responses

Assignment 1 due

Week Four: February 1 (No class Tuesday, 2/2)

Oryx and Crake

Discussion Board Posts & Responses

Week Five: February 8 (No class Friday, 2/12)

Oryx and Crake

Position Paper 1 due

Week Six: February 15

Short readings

Discussion Board Posts & Responses

Week Seven: February 22 (No class Wednesday, 2/24)

Dance Dance Revolution

Discussion Board Posts & Responses

Speculative Fiction due

Week Eight: March 1

Dance Dance Revolution

Discussion Board Posts & Responses

Assignment 2 due

Week Nine: March 8

Short readings

Discussion Board Posts & Responses

Week 10: March 15 (No class Thursday, 3/18)

Underground Railroad

Discussion Board Posts & Responses

Assignment 3 due

Week 11: March 22

Underground Railroad

Discussion Board Posts & Responses

Week 12: March 29

Underground Railroad

Position Paper 2 due

Week 13: April 5 (No class Wednesday, 4/7)

Short readings

Discussion Board Posts & Responses

Week 14: April 12

Children of Men (film)

Discussion Board Posts & Responses

Assignment 4 due

Week 15: April 19

Short readings

Discussion Board Posts & Response

Annotated Bibliography due

Week 16: April 26

No new readings: Final Project Work

Discussion Board Posts & Response

Final Project due Wednesday May 5, 11:59 p.m.