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Fall 2021

2021

Fall 8-15-2021

ENG 3903B-600: Women Literature Language Post-1800

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Abel, Colleen, "ENG 3903B-600: Women Literature Language Post-1800" (2021). *Fall 2021*. 77.
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ENG3903B: Women, Literature, and Language, Post-1800: Women in Dystopia

Fall 2021, Online

Colleen Abel

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Virtual office hours [via Microsoft Teams](#)

Office: CH 3811 (remote for Fall 2021)

Monday 11:00-noon

Tuesday 9 to 10 a.m.

Thursday 5 to 6 p.m.

Required Texts

Atwood, Margaret. *The Year of the Flood*.

Piercy, Marge. *Woman on the Edge of Time*.

Butler, Octavia. *Parable of the Sower*.

Miscellaneous other readings / viewings

Course Description

A dystopia is a nightmare society, one characterized by injustice, suffering, and imbalance of power. Writers who envision dystopias are holding up mirrors to their own society, and these dystopias express their fears and concerns for the future. This class will examine dystopian literature through the lens of gender. What does it mean to be a woman in a nightmare world? What rights, power, and expression have been taken away? Throughout this course, we will read and watch texts by women and through discussion, presentation, written analyses, and creative projects, we will examine the worlds created by this literature and what they can tell us about our own.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Recognize the main conventions of dystopian 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
- Demonstrate research skills
- 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.

Grade Breakdown

Discussion Boards Posts & Responses: 200 points

Dystopian Fiction: 100 points

Article Summaries (x2): 200 points

Position Papers (x2): 200 points

Context Presentation: 100 points

Final Exam: 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 revolve around **an article, from the present or the past, 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 doomsday preppers. The Piercy text might encourage you to research psychiatric facilities in the 1970s. The idea is to give us context for the reading: what real-world issues is the author transforming? So you'll spend some time discussing the article, and spend some time making connections to the text. You will upload your presentation, 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.

Article Summaries: Twice over the course of the term, I will ask you to find a scholarly article on the text we're focusing on, and you will produce a summary of it. These should be about 500 words.

Dystopian Fiction: This will be a chance for you to be creative and imagine your own dystopian 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 Exam: You will have a final exam in this course! We'll thoroughly discuss how to prepare for it shortly into our course.

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 Wednesday and the responses by Friday.**

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. Clear incidents of hate speech will be reported to the University as a [bias incident](#).

Please also note that the art we encounter this semester will be **dark**; this is dystopian literature after all. You should consider, especially, that given that these works will be depicting the experience of women / femmes / trans / gender nonconforming people, we are going to encounter themes such as violence (including sexual violence), abuse, mental illness and other types of trauma. I will try my best to alert you if there is something especially sensitive in the reading or viewing, and you should always feel that you can discuss the work with me if you need to process it with someone else. I would not teach these works if I didn't believe wholly in their power and beauty.

EIU Policies

- Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in [EIU's Code of Conduct](#) . 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](#) 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 McAfee 1301.
- 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 McAfee 1210, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Course Schedule

Week One: August 23, Monday

Introduction to the class

Beauty and Ugliness: Twilight Zone, “Eye of the Beholder”

Discussion Board Posts and Responses

Week Two: August 30, Monday

A World Beyond Gender: Introduction to *Woman on the Edge of Time*

Discussion Board Posts and Responses

Week Three: September 7, Tuesday

Woman on the Edge of Time

Discussion Board Posts

Dystopian Fiction due, Friday, 11:59 p.m.

Week Four: September 13, Monday

Woman on the Edge of Time

Discussion Board Posts and Responses

Week Five: September 20, Monday

Woman on the Edge of Time

Discussion Board
Article Summary 1 due, Friday 11:59 p.m.

Week Six: September 27, Monday

Viewing: "San Junipero," *Black Mirror*
 Discussion Board Post and Responses

Week Seven: October 4, Monday

Rethinking America: Introduction to The Parable of the Sower
 Discussion Board Posts
Position Paper 1 due

Week Eight: October 11, Monday

The Parable of the Sower
 Discussion Board Posts and Responses
 **No class, Friday, October 15 (FALL BREAK)

Week Nine: October 18, Monday

The Parable of the Sower
 Discussion Board Posts and Responses

Week Ten: October 25, Monday

The Parable of the Sower
 Discussion Board Posts and Responses

Week Eleven: November 1, Monday

Short Stories: "Our Aim is Not to Die" (D2L)
 "The Synapse Will Free Us From Ourselves" (D2L)
 Discussion Board Posts and Responses

Week Twelve: November 8, Monday

Stewards of the Future: An Introduction to Year of the Flood
 Discussion Board Posts and Responses

Week Thirteen, November 15, Monday

Year of the Flood
 Discussion Board Posts
Article Summary 2 due, Friday, November 19 11:59 p.m.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Fourteen, November 29, Monday

Year of the Flood

Discussion Board Posts and Responses

Week Fifteen, December 6, Monday

Year of the Flood

Discussion Board Posts

Position Paper 2 due, Friday, December 10 11:59 p.m.

Week of December 13: Final Exams