

Fall 8-15-2012

# ENG 5010-001: Studies in 20th Century American Literature & Culture: Remediating 9/11

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## Recommended Citation

Ames, Melissa, "ENG 5010-001: Studies in 20th Century American Literature & Culture: Remediating 9/11" (2012). *Fall 2012*. 126.  
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**English 5010 – Studies in 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Literature & Culture**  
**Remediating 9/11: Analyzing Narratives of “Fear” and “Tragedy” Across Genre**  
**Course Policy & Syllabus**

ENG 5010 – Thursdays – 3:30-6:00pm – 3159 Coleman Hall

**Instructor:** Dr. Melissa Ames

**Office:** 3821 Coleman Hall

**Office Hours:** T 10-11am; 12:30-2pm

R 10-11am; 12:30-2pm

Or by Appointment

**Email:** [mames@eiu.edu](mailto:mames@eiu.edu) (please do not use the email provided by WebCT)

**Course Description:** This course studies narratives of the past decade as cultural artifacts directly (or indirectly) influenced by the events surrounding the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks. Students will analyze texts (fiction and non-fiction alike) that attempt to re-present the events of that day, as well as texts that remediate (intentionally or not) those very same events in other narrative spaces. These works from across genres will open up discussion concerning how mediated format affects thematic development. The cultural trends of the past ten years will be studied through the lens of affect theory, with special attention paid to thriving genres (e.g. dystopia). Ultimately, students will interrogate a variety of cultural constructs and narratives in order to determine how various texts may be manufacturing, manipulating, and/or working through post-9/11 concerns.

**Course Objectives:** After the completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Analyze how narratives of tragedy and fear are crafted in a variety formats,
2. Critique how the events of 9/11 are portrayed in literature and popular culture,
3. Note how post-9/11 themes are appropriated by (and for) different groups to further their individual needs,
4. Understand how this content alters throughout time and across media,
5. Analyze how the form a cultural artifact takes on affects its social/political utility,
6. Study cultural trends (i.e. the popularity of various genres) in light of historical events;
7. Situate texts within their historical context and understand how this impacts their production and reception,
8. Integrate diverse studies through an interdisciplinary framework,
9. Contribute to current affect scholarship in the humanities, and
10. Defend these contributions through composition and oral presentation.

**Required Texts and Materials:**

Collins, Susan. *The Hunger Games*. NY: Scholastic, 2010. Print.

DeLillo, Don. *Falling Man*. NY: Scribner, 2007. Print.

Doctorow, Cory. *Little Brother*. NY: Tor Teen, 2010. Print.

Foer, Jonathan Safran. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2005. Print.

Jacobson, Sid, and Ernie Colon. *The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation*. NY: Hill and

Wang, 2006. Print. (PDF available on WebCT).  
McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. NY: Vintage Books, 2007. Print.  
Thomas, Annie, ed. *With Their Eyes: September 11<sup>th</sup>, the View from a High School at Ground Zero* (Play). NY: Harper Tempest, 2002. Print. (Course Pack).  
Whitehead, Colson. *Zone One*. NY: Doubleday, 2011. Print.

and

Additional Literature & Theory Selections in Course Pack (Available at Copy Express)

### **Course Requirements:**

#### **In-Class Work/Participation (300pts):**

As a graduate level course this seminar requires active participation and high-level involvement in the discussion of weekly readings. Students are expected to come to class having completed the assigned reading and to be ready to contribute to an intellectual conversation connecting these to the course theme. In-class work will also consist of collaborative work, peer evaluation/feedback, and written responses to the media critiques presented throughout the term. (Note, due to time restraints, occasionally the latter will be done via WebCT discussion board posts). This portion of the overall grade equals 30% and should not be underestimated. Attendance problems will greatly lower this portion of one's grade.

#### **Required Assignments/Essays (700pts):**

Explication – Students will complete a short explication of an assigned article (or set of readings) grounded in affect theory. This explication will be distributed and presented to the class on the appropriate class period. (100pts)

Annotated Bibliography – In pairs, students will compose an annotated bibliography that houses abstracts of crucial literary criticism/readings that their assigned text received. Students will then distribute these annotated bibliographies to the class and provide a brief presentation discussing the critical reception this author received for this specific work and other relevant ones. (100pts)

Midterm Essay – Students will compose an 8-12 page essay analyzing one text/author that we have studied throughout the first seven weeks of class. Applying the affect theory studied in the course to this text/author and utilizing it to formulate an argument and further discussion on the course theme will be a requirement. (200pts)

Seminar Paper – This final project allows students an opportunity to direct the course content to their particular interests and apply the sort of analysis we have been conducting to a new text. This 15-20 page essay will showcase the student's mastery of the subject matter and ability to conduct an in-depth study of a cultural artifact through an affect lens. At the completion of this project, the student's research will be presented to the class in a symposium forum. This project accounts for one third of the student's course grade and it should be regarded as very serious scholarly endeavor – one that will require much time, effort, and research. Preparation for this assignment will require an approved proposal and a student conference. (300pts)

**Course Grade:** Your grade in this course will be calculated using a straight point system and standard grading scale. Your final grade will be determined by the following breakdown and grading scale:

Required Assignments/Essays:	700pts
<u>In-Class Work/Participation:</u>	<u>300pts</u>
Total Points Possible:	1000pts

A	100% - 90%	D	69% - 60%
B	89% - 80%	F	59% - 0%
C	79% - 70%		

**Instructor Class Policies:**

Submitted Assignments: All documents should be submitted on time and must have a professional appearance. Every assignment should be typed on white, 8.5 x 11 paper and formatted according to MLA 2009 guidelines and standards. You must staple the pages together if an assignment is more than one page long. For your own protection, keep copies of all completed and returned work.

Assignment Due Dates: **LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AND WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF ZERO (0).** Assignments, including drafts, are due at the beginning of class. E-mail attachments will not be accepted as substitutes for hard copies of your work. Computer and printer problems are not an excuse for turning in late work, so draft and print well in advance.

Class Attendance: Because this course emphasizes discussion, attendance is essential. During the various presentations, your classmates will rely on your feedback. Class discussion, peer interaction, and the in-class media analysis cannot be made up and their lack of completion will negatively affect your in-class work/participation grade. After two absences, an additional absence will also result in a penalty of one full letter grade subtracted from your final course grade. A student who accrues more than three absences will not be eligible to pass the course. For an absence to be excused it must be considered a legitimate and verifiable emergency and documentation must be provided. Legitimate and verifiable emergencies include those instances for which you can provide documentation for why you had to miss class. Acceptable documents include accident reports, doctors' notes, hospital forms, and employer notices. Although these documents will be accepted, any pattern of documented absences will be questioned and addressed.

Proper Documentation of Emergency: Assignments may only be turned in late if the student provides documentation of an emergency that prevented him/her from attending class. Proper documentation must be an original document (no photocopies), containing the student's name, cover the date(s) in question, and be signed by a professional (i.e. doctor). An email is not proper documentation.

*Presentations:* Please be present when you are scheduled to give a presentation. **If you miss class on the day of a scheduled presentation you will receive a zero and will not be able to make up the presentation.**

*Plagiarism:* In accordance with English Department and University policies, “Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – ‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of such as one’s original work’ (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*) – has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty up to and including an immediate assignment of the grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.” The best argument against plagiarism is that you cheat yourself out of the education you are here to obtain when you copy someone else’s work. If you believe that a specific instance in your writing might constitute plagiarism, please consult me prior to turning in the final draft.

*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.

## English 5010 Course Schedule

### **R 8/23 – Week 1: Reading 9/11 as a Generation’s “Catastrophic” Time Marker (“Where were you when the world stopped turning on that September day?”)**

In-Class Reading/Post-Class Reading: Williams, “Structures of Feeling” (in-class excerpt for course pack); Anderson, “Introduction,” “Cultural Roots” (course pack); & Appaduri, “Here and Now,” “Disjuncture and Difference” (course pack)

### **R 8/30 – Week 2: The Psychological Roots of Affect Theory (A Historical Look at the Study of Emotion)**

Prepared Reading: DeLillo, *Falling Man*; James, “Habit,” “Stream of Consciousness,” “Emotion” (course pack); James, “What is an Emotion (1884)” (online: <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/James/emotion.htm>); & Flatley, “Glossary” (course pack).

### **R 9/6 – Week 3: The “Facts” and “Feelings” of 9/11 (A Look at the National Rhetoric Surrounding the Attack)**

Prepared Reading: Jacobson & Colon, *The 9/11 Report* (pdf on WebCT); Tomkins, “Intro,” “What are Affects,” “Distress-Anguish,” “Shame-Humiliation and Contempt-Disgust,” “Anger,” “Fear-Terror” (course pack); Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” “The Bleed” (course pack);

In-Class Film Viewing: *The World Trade Center* (2006)

### **R 9/13 – Week 4: Literature & Trauma Theory (Feeling the Page)**

Prepared Reading: Foer, *Extremely Loud*; Fish, “Affective Stylistics” (course pack); & Saal, “Regarding the Pain” (course pack)

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Marjorie Worthington

### **R 9/20 – Week 5: The State of Affect in Postmodernism (Scholarly Stances on the “Survival” of Emotion)**

Prepared Reading: Benjamin, “Motifs in Baudelaire,” “The Work of Art” (course pack); Shaviro, “Life, after Death, of Postmodern Emotions” (course pack) & Grossberg, “Postmodernity and Affect” (course pack)

In-Class Film Viewing: *United 93* (2006)

### **R 9/27 – Week 6: Controversy, Censorship, Catharsis: Responding to 9/11 (Speaking out From the Stage – A Look at Performance/Music Trends)**

Prepared Reading: Thoms, *With their Eyes* (course pack); & Grossberg, “Another Boring Day,” “I’d Rather Feel Bad” (course pack)

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Robert Martinez

### **R 10/4 – Week 7: The Aftermath of 9/11 as Seen on the Small Screen (From the News to Infotainment & Primetime Drama to Reality Television)**

Prepared Reading: 9/11 Poetry (excerpts in course pack); Doane, “Information, Crisis, Catastrophe” (course pack); Mellencamp, “TV Time” (course pack); Grusin, “Introduction,” “Remediating 9/11,” “Premediation,” “Conclusion” (course pack); Ames, “Where Have All The Good Men Gone” (course pack); & Mousoutzanis “Temporality and Trauma” (course pack)

**R 10/11 – Week 8: Obsessions with Death ??? & Unlikely Heroes???**  
**(The Returning Trends of Vampire & Zombie Narratives)**

Prepared Reading: Whitehead, *Zone One*; & Grossberg “The Indifference of TV”  
(course pack)

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Donna Binns

**Midterm Paper Due**

**R 10/18 – Week 9: Surveillance Culture**

**(The Effects of the Patriot Act as Theorized by Scholars and Authors)**

Prepared Reading: Doctorow, *Little Brother*; Massumi, “Fear, the Spectrum Said,”  
(course pack) & Faludi, “Terror Dream,” & “We’re at War” (course pack)

**R 10/25 – Week 10: The Legacy of 9/11 in Youth Culture**

**(The Revived Popularity of Young Adult Dystopia)**

Prepared Reading: Collins, *Hunger Games*; & Douglas, “The Turn Within” (course  
pack)

**Proposal Due for Seminar paper**

**R 11/1 – Week 11: The “Therapeutic” Effects of Mainstream Dystopian Literature**  
**(Or, What Does it Say When Oprah goes Apocalyptic?)**

Prepared Reading: McCarthy, *The Road*; & Aubry, “Introduction – Reading as Therapy”  
(course pack)

**R 11/8 – Week 12: Hollywood’s Dystopian Tendencies Post-9/11**

**(Where Affect Theory and Film Studies Meet)**

Prepared Reading: Grodal, “Introduction: Evolution, Biology, Culture, & Film” (course  
pack)

**Mini-Film Presentations & Roundtable Discussion**

**R 11/15 – Week 13: Contemporary Affect Theory & Its Future**

Prepared Reading: Gregg & Seigworth, “An Inventory of Shimmers,” “Affect’s Future”  
(course pack)

No Class – Individual Conferences for Symposium Preparation

**R 11/22 – Thanksgiving Break**

No Class – University Vacation

**R 11/29 – Week 14: Applying Affect Theory to 9/11 Texts Across Genre & Media**

Student Presentations

**Seminar Paper Due**

**R 12/6 – Week 15: Bringing Closure to the Study of 9/11 Trends & Consequences**

Student Presentations

**Final Exam Week – End of Semester**

(Note: This Schedule is Subject to Change at the Instructor’s Discretion)