Spring 1-15-2014

ENG 1002G-036: Composition and Literature

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English 1002: Composition and Literature

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Office Hours: M 1-3, W 1-2, F 1-2  
and by appointment.

Required Texts:  
- *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi  

Additional Requirements:  
- Attendance to Macbeth, $5, Feb. 26-March 2  
- Three-ring binder for your readings and essay drafts.  
- Printing readings found on D2L.

Course Description:

"Nothing is easier than to denounce the evildoer; nothing is more difficult than to understand him." Fyodor Dostoevsky’s quote presents a challenge to understand those whom society deems as evil, a challenge I would like to extend to this 1002 class. What exactly defines evil? Does evil exist? What myths govern our concepts of evil, and through opposition, of good? By investigating the construction of evil, we will analyze a diversity texts, both historical and contemporary, visual and literary, to determine evil’s construction in literature, politics, media, and ultimately our lives. From Plato’s philosophical writings to Springsteen’s lyrics, from Milton’s epic poem *Paradise Lost* to the graphic novel *Persepolis*, this course’s reading lists explores multiple genres and therefore multiple ways to address one’s audience. The objective of 1002 is to build on skills acquired in 1001, yet this 1002 course expands the range of texts (from print sources to more multimedia ones), emphasizes how to write about literature, and teaches a variety of transferable research methods. For example, what are the types of sources available to a writer; how does one use them within an essay; and how can historical research be included in a literature essay? In this course, we will gain comfort with the concept of inquiry as a process for learning and acquire transferable writing and research skills for your future college careers. First and foremost, this course is a research-oriented writing-centered course, and the theme simply serves as a unifying frame for our inquiry, research, and writing.

The course is divided into three segments: "Evil Acknowledged: Defining and (De)constructing Good and Evil," "Evil Eradicated: Attempts to Remove Evil through Public Policy, Group Action, and Polemical Rhetoric," and "Evil Advertised: Pop Cultural Representations of Evil." In the first segment, we will analyze definitions of both good and evil (seeing as how evil functions and exists within a comparative, relational realm). We will read a variety of philosophers, psychologists, and religious leaders and apply their definitions—analyzing the fallibility, assumptions, and binary oppositions intrinsic within their definitions—to poems, songs, and fiction selections. Once we delve into the complexity of defining evil, we will then investigate how political leaders have used (and are using) definitions and charges of evil to enact public policy. For example, what presuppositions created the Salem Witch Trials? How
does Al-Qaeda justify action through the conviction of evil’s presence? After investigating political applications of evil, we will then analyze pop culture’s representation of good and evil through movies, television shows, and contemporary readings and songs. For example, how do reality shows fabricate the villain and the victim? Why is such a dichotomy compelling to watch? What myths of good and evil are intrinsic to horror or superhero movies? In sum, we will analyze evil through a variety of communities and examine how these different groups present, create, and support a single concept.

**Course Objectives:**

1. To enhance critical thinking and writing skills by learning to effectively construct arguments through writing, reading, and research.
2. To identify choices writers make and the effects of those choices on the reader.
3. To develop research skills such as using correct MLA citations, supporting positions with evidence, and drawing conclusions from multiple sources.
4. To show a mastery of standard usage of grammar and spelling.
5. To build a writing community by responding constructively to peers’ work.
6. To establish that writing, reading, and critical thinking are interdependent activities that are developed and enhanced through focused practice.

**Course Requirements:**

**Attendance:** To help build a writers’ community, the course depends upon everyone's participation and attendance. Missing four courses will lower your final grade by five points. Each absence thereafter will continue to lower your grade by five more points. To allow adequate time for class discussion and in-class writing, arrive on time. Being late twice (or leaving early twice) will be considered an absence. This attendance policy applies to all students regardless of whether one is missing class due to a school-sanctioned event, university athletics, or illness. Also be advised that I do not accept work late, which also includes occasions when you are absent. Finally, if you arrive without the day’s reading in paper format, you will be counted as absent.

**Participation:** The time we spend together is our opportunity to exchange ideas, and multiple opinions create dynamic conversations and constructive workshops. In *Mystery and Manners*, writer Flannery O’Connor reflects on the value of writers interacting with one another: "Unless the novelist has gone utterly out of his mind, his aim is still communication, and communication suggests talking inside a community." While we will be writing nonfiction, this sense of community is equally important. At the end of the semester when I reflect on your participation, I will consider not only how often you contributed to class discussions, but the quality of those comments. I will also consider your seriousness with in-class writing assignments in the participation grade as well. Also, text messaging in class and other distractions such as checking email in class will result in a failing participation grade. I will provide you with one verbal or written reminder, but after that, the 50 or less participation grade is fixed. Simply put, I want your full attention for the two and half hours that we spend together a week. Since understanding the writing process as a group endeavor is important, participation counts as 10% of your grade.
**Quizzes:** To ensure active reading and encourage our class to “enter the parlor” regarding academic discourse, we will have daily quizzes over our reading. These will count as 20% of your final grade.

**Readings:** Assigned essays should be read by the date on the syllabus and will serve two purposes. The readings will serve as the preliminary research to our three essays and should be viewed as jumping-off points for inquiry and further research. The other purpose is to challenge and expand our viewpoints, asking us to examine and articulate what we believe and why. Also, many of our readings will be found on either E-reserve or D2L; I recommend the purchase of a three-ring binder to organize and save the articles. As I mentioned in the attendance policy, be sure to bring the readings in paper format or you will be counted as absent.

**Essays:** Throughout the semester, we will be refining our ideas into three main essays. The first essay will instill a sense of being present in your research by focusing on field research methods. You will conduct interviews to augment and explore your personal definition of evil, which you will determine at the end of the first sequence. Appropriate individuals to interview will include professional clergy from a variety of faiths, sociologists, psychiatrists, etc. In this essay, we will learn effective interview techniques and ways to synthesize multiple sources in an effort to support one’s personal belief system.

With the second essay, the historical inquiry, you will choose a speech set forth by a politician or group leader where connotations or suggestions of evil served as part of the governing decision. This essay will explore ways historical research can be conducted such as by examining artifacts, visiting museums, or interviewing historical societies. Drawing upon the first essay, the historical essay will critique the historical event in relation to your personal definition of evil.

For the third essay, the main research project, we will analyze how pop-culture responds and reinforces particular concepts of evil. To begin this essay’s research, you will first observe a pop-cultural text. Then, you will decide what is the dominant representation of evil or “badness” and how that text communicates and produces such concepts. To help ensure steady progress with your research, everyone will provide a multi-media presentation based on his/her initial findings. This essay will require multiple methods and methodologies, including both visual and/or aural support.

For every essay, you will present to me and/or the class an early draft. While the draft won’t be complete, it will be far enough along for us to see its strengths and weaknesses. Since we devote class time and my time to improving the essays, I expect the final draft to be of high quality and free of errors. Any final draft that has more than five mechanical errors on one page or lacks a works-cited page will receive a "NC."

**All work not written in class must be:**
1) Typed in 12-point fonts
2) Double-spaced
3) Numbered
4) Stapled
5) Also, title essays and use standard one-inch margins.
**Final Exam:** The main research project is due on our last day of class.

**Conferences:** One conference with me regarding your writing is required. We cancel two class dates so as to ensure everyone has time to meet. During our meetings, we will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your essay and your writing as a whole. The conference is mandatory and will be considered an absence if you miss.

**Grading:**

Essay #1/Hands-on Inquiry 15%
Essay #2/Historical Inquiry 20%
Essay #3/Final Research Project 25%
Quizzes 20%
Informal Writing and Presentation 10%
(These writing assignments are noted on the syllabus with their point values.)
Class Participation 10%

Grading scale is as follows:
A = 90-100  B = 80-89  C = 70-79  D = 60-69  F = 0-59
*If you earn a final grade lower than a “C,” you will not receive credit for this course.

**University Policies:**

**Plagiarism** is a serious offense and will be dealt with according to university policy, which can be found on the Office of Judicial Affairs pages. First offense will be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs and will result in a grade of F for this class. I think we all know what plagiarism is by now: the willful “appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work” (from *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*). In sum, do your job, which means do your own work.

If you have a **documented disability** and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (217-581-6583) as soon as possible. The Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS) is “committed to facilitating the provision of equal access and opportunity to all campus programs and services for students with disabilities” (from EIU’s web site).

*Please note the following syllabus is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.*

**Syllabus**

**WEEK ONE**
Monday 1/13: Introduction to Class
PART I: Evil Acknowledged: Defining and (De)constructing Good and Evil

Wednesday 1/15:  Reading due: Lyrics to “Devil Went Down to Georgia” and “Devils and Dust” found on D2L.

WEEK TWO
Monday 1/20:  NO CLASS: MLK HOLIDAY


WEEK THREE
Monday 1/27:  Reading due: Milton, first half of Book 9 (around line 612) from Paradise Lost found on D2L.

Wednesday 1/29:  Reading due: Last half of Book 9 from Paradise Lost found on D2L.

WEEK FOUR
Monday 2/3:  WRITING DUE: Interview, worth 20 points
Reading due: From Baumeister, Evil, Inside Human Violence and Cruelty: preface, chapter one, and chapter two (up to page 59) found on D2L.


WEEK FIVE
Monday 2/10:  WRITING DUE: One page of essay #1. Worth 10 points Please see assignment on D2L.
Reading due: Sample student essay on D2L.
Workshop


WEEK SIX
Monday 2/17:  Reading due: Excerpt from The Art of Happiness, pp. 34-41 (D2L) and “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor (D2L).

Wednesday 2/19:  ESSAY #1 DUE
Guest speaker on Macbeth
PART II: Evil Eradicated: Attempts to Remove Evil through Public Policy, Group Action, and Polemical Rhetoric

WEEK SEVEN
Monday 2/24: Reading due: *Macbeth*, Acts 1 and II (D2L has a link but any copy you can find is acceptable.)

Wednesday 2/26: Reading due: *Macbeth*, Acts III until the end (D2L)
Reminder: Go see *Macbeth* at Doudna Fine Arts Center! (The play runs from February 26th-March 2nd.)

Thursday 2/27: See the play. I’ll be attending this night, so feel free to come with me or on your own.

WEEK EIGHT
Monday 3/3: Viewing due: Performance of *Macbeth* at EIU (The play runs from February 26th-March 2nd.)

Wednesday 3/5: WRITING DUE: One page analysis of three sentences from your chosen speech. For more information on what is required, visit D2L for the complete assignment. Worth 10 points.

SPRING BREAK MARCH 10-14 SPRING BREAK

WEEK NINE
Monday 3/17: Reading due: *Persepolis*, pp. 1-32

Wednesday 3/19: Reading due: *Persepolis*, pp. 33-86

WEEK TEN
Monday 3/24: Reading due: *Persepolis*, pp. 87-153 (end)

Wednesday 3/26: WRITING DUE: Paragraph on historical artifact, historical archive, or on-site visit to a museum that relates to your speech. For more information on what is required, visit D2L for the complete assignment. Worth 10 points.

WEEK ELEVEN
Monday 3/31: No class: Individual Conferences

PART III: Evil Advertised: Pop Cultural Representations of Evil

Wednesday 4/2: ESSAY #2 DUE
Reading due: Joyce Carol Oates, “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” found on D2L.
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<tr>
<th>WEEK TWELVE</th>
<th>Viewing due: <em>The Running Man</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 4/7:</td>
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<td>Wednesday 4/9:</td>
<td>**Reading due: **Selection on heroes by Joseph Campbell (D2L) Continued discussion on <em>The Running Man</em> and set-up for <em>The Hunger Games</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>WEEK THIRTEEN</th>
<th>Viewing due: <em>The Hunger Games</em></th>
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<td>Monday 4/14:</td>
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<td>Wednesday 4/16:</td>
<td>**WRITING DUE: **Practice summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting from the two movies. For the complete assignment, visit D2L. Worth 10 points.</td>
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<th>WEEK FOURTEEN</th>
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<td>Monday 4/21:</td>
<td>**No class: **Individual Conferences</td>
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<td>Wednesday 4/23:</td>
<td><strong>PowerPoint Presentations (Worth 40 points.)</strong></td>
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<th>WEEK FIFTEEN</th>
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<td>Monday 4/28:</td>
<td><strong>PowerPoint Presentations</strong></td>
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<td>Wednesday 4/30:</td>
<td><strong>PowerPoint Presentations</strong></td>
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**FINAL EXAM:**
Thursday, May 8th at 12:30 in our regular classroom. Essay #3 is due at this time.