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ENG 2009G-002: Literature and Human Values: Labor, Class, Power

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English 2009: Literature & Human Values - Faith, Survival, Progress

Course Policy & Syllabus

ENG 2009 – TR – 11:00a.m.-12:15pm – 3160 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 (please do not use the email provided by WebCT)

Course Description: This course will study narratives that wrestle with ethical concerns surrounding “progress” (societal achievements, technological advancement, scientific discoveries, etc.). Contemporary debates and specific issues addressed in this course will include: cloning, stem cell research, black market organ transplants, human trafficking, surveillance technology, and capital punishment. Students will analyze various fictional texts (novels, film, and television) that critique these issues. Class discussion will revolve around the following questions: what do we do when human survival and societal progress come at extreme costs, and how might such advancements question our faith in humanity?

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

1. Read fiction and nonfiction, expressing a wide range of cultural perspectives and values, and develop abilities to think critically and write analytically about them.
2. Engage in reading and writing experiences about literature in order to demonstrate an increased understanding of an appreciation for social, cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic ideas and their discovery.
3. Develop research skill, including effective use of source materials and the principles of documentation, and apply that skill to the study of literature and media analysis.
4. Understand the relationship that narratives have to one another (despite differences in media or genre) and to the cultural/social/historical time period in which they are created, produced, and consumed.
5. Analyze thematic variations across media and genre in order to determine the effects of narrative format.
6. Apply research from outside disciplines (e.g. science, law, ethics) to the study of literature, film, television, and other artifacts from popular culture.
7. Work collaboratively in order to explore ideas, formulate arguments, and present findings in a scholarly fashion.

Required Texts:
and
Course Pack (Available at Copy Express)
Materials: Writing instruments, papers, a storage system for returned work and supplementary materials (three-ring binders work well), two-pocket folders for submitted work, USB-compatible device for saving documents (i.e. a jump drive), a college dictionary (print or electronic), access to word processing (typewriter or computer), and other appropriate supplies.

Course Requirements: This course consists of in-class writing activities, discussion of assigned readings, peer review sessions, out-of-class writing assignments of varying lengths, collaborative group work, and possible pop quizzes. Your grade will be based on a point system that factors in all scores you earn on all writing assignments and in-class work/participation. Attendance is mandatory and will be factored into your in-class grade. Active and constructive class participation will make a positive impact on your overall grade. Detailed assignment instructions and scoring rubrics will accompany all major assignments as the course progresses.

In-Class Work/Participation (200pts):

Daily work – includes in-class activities, writing, peer response, informal group work, and oral presentations.

Response Pieces – includes short formal or informal written responses to the required reading, the media critiques, and class discussion/debates.

Participation – includes attendance, participation in class activities, and course preparation. Points may be deducted due to tardiness/early departure, lack of participation, failure to bring texts and other needed materials to class, and/or behavior that distracts from class activities.

Formal Writing Assignments/Assessments/Projects (1000pts):

Response Journal: An ongoing project that documents careful reading and literary analysis, as well as the attentive viewing of in-class films. This collection of essays and notations will assist students in completing other course work. (200pts)

Synthesis Essay: A thematic analysis (mid-term) paper dealing with one select cultural issue/debate as explored through various narratives (print and narrative). (100pts)

Multi-genre Research Project: A final project that allows students to analyze one text (from the second half of the semester) in great depth. This multimodal composition will consist of various writing items, creative pieces, and will demonstrate research skills. (200pts)

Group Research Project/Presentation: A collaborative group project studying a contemporary controversy occurring in the fields of science, law, and/or ethics, which has infiltrated mainstream media and popular culture. This project will require out of class meetings, research compilation, and a formal group presentation. (100pts)

Midterm Exam: An in-class exam including the interpretation and identification of key literary passages & quotes, short response questions concerning the literary works & media narratives, and reflective responses that showcase an understanding of the course focus areas (thematic analysis, genre study, and application of research). (100pts)

Final Exam: An essay exam focusing on the course study of thematic variations due to genre, media, and audience. Students will be expected to discuss the major narratives (print and media) covered during the semester as they relate to the course theme. (100pts)
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Type</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Writing Assignments/Essays</td>
<td>800 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Work/Participation</td>
<td>200 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Points Possible</td>
<td>1000pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Instructor Class Policies:
Submitted Assignments: All documents must be submitted on time and have a professional appearance. Every assignment should be typed on white, 8.5 x 11 paper and formatted according to MLA guidelines and standards when applicable. (If you are unfamiliar with MLA 2009 guidelines please utilize Purdue’s Online Writing Lab at: http://owl.english.purdue.edu). When writing assignments are turned in they will be submitted in a two-pocket folder that holds all pre-writing, outlines, drafts, and peer review comments. For your own protection, keep copies of all completed 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.

In-Class Work: In-class activities must be completed in the class period they are assigned. No make-ups will be given on any of these activities unless arrangements have been made with the instructor in advance.

Class Attendance: Because this course is discussion heavy and emphasizes writing as process and as collaborative activity, attendance is essential. During the projects, your classmates will rely on your feedback. Class exercises, peer responses, and group work cannot be made up and their lack of completion will negatively affect your in-class work/participation grade. Therefore, absences negatively affect your grade. 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. If it is an excused absence, attending a pre-approved workshop or lecture appropriate to the course description, you can make up the time but not the work missed. Perfect attendance merits the addition of 25 extra-credit points to the in-class work/participation category.

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, and 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 and your absence is undocumented 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 represented as one’s own - has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty up to an including 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.
Tentative Course Schedule  
English 2009: Literature & Human Values – Faith, Survival, Progress

I. Exploring the Consequences of Technological Progress

Week 1  
T 8/21 – Course Overview & Introduction  
Assigned Reading: Begin Feed (Parts I & II)

R 8/23 – Critiques of the “Digital” Generation  
Prepared Reading: Dumbest Generation (excerpt in course pack); “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” (course pack); continue Feed (Part III)

Week 2  
T 8/28 – Social Networking & Consumerist Culture – Discussion of Feed  
Prepared Reading: Complete Feed (Part IV)

R 8/30 – “Intelligent” Technology – A.I. Artificial Intelligence  
Prepared Reading: Begin Reading “Super Toys” (course pack)

Week 3  
T 9/4 – How “Smart” Do We Want our Technology? – A.I. Artificial Intelligence  
Prepared Reading: Continue “Super Toys” (course pack)

R 9/6 – Understanding the Consequences of Advanced Technology – Discussion of “Super Toys”  
Prepared Reading: Finish “Super Toys” (course pack)

Week 4  
T 9/11 – Technology, Friend or Foe? – Discussion of Short Stories  

R 9/13 – The Rule of Machines – I, Robot  
Prepared Reading: Begin Uglies (Part I)

Week 5  
T 9/18 – The Cost of Human Reliance on Technology – I, Robot  
Prepared Reading: Continue Uglies (Part II)

R 9/20 – Fictional Portrayals of Real Societal Problems – Discussion of Uglies  
Prepared Reading: Finish Uglies (Part III)

Week 6  
T 9/25 – The Effect of Technology on the Environment and Human Body  
Prepared Reading: Begin Brave New World (chs 1-6)

R 9/27 – Analyzing Narratives About Technological Progress – Peer Editing  
Prepared Reading: Continue Brave New World (chs 7-12)
Week 7
T 10/2 – How Dystopian Texts Critique Current Concerns & Predict Future Problems – BNW Discussion
Prepared Reading: Finish Brave New World (chs 13-18)
Assignment Due: Analysis Essay

R 10/4 – Reflecting on Narratives of Technological Progress
Midterm Exam

II. Critiquing the Changing Justice System

Week 8
T 10/9 – Technology & Notions of Truth – Discussion of Short Story
Prepared Reading: “Minority Report” (course pack)

R 10/11 – Trusting the Justice System – Minority Report
Prepared Reading: Begin Little Brother (chs 1-7)

Week 9
10/16 – Finding Flaws in the Laws – Minority Report
Prepared Reading: Continue Little Brother (chs 8-15)

10/18 – Living in a Surveillance Culture – Discussion of Little Brother
Prepared Reading: Finish Little Brother (chs 16-21 & epilogue & afterword)

Week 10
10/23 – The Ethics of the Patriot Act & The Survival of “Freedom”
Prepared Reading: Begin Never Let Me Go (Part I)

10/25 – Contemporary Debates about the Death Penalty – The Life of David Gayle
Prepared Reading: Continue Never Let Me Go (begin Part II)

III. Ethical Debates Within Science & Medicine

Week 11
10/30 – The Controversy Surrounding Assisted Suicide – The Life of David Gayle
Prepared Reading: Continue Never Let Me Go (finish Part II)

11/1 – Public Debates about the Morality of Cloning & Stem Cell Research – NLMG Discussion
Prepared Reading: Finish Never Let Me Go (Part III)

Week 12
11/6 – Science & Humanity – The Island
Prepared Reading: Begin The Handmaid’s Tale (Parts I-III)

11/8 – Release Day for Multi-Genre Project Conferences – No Class
Prepared Reading: Continue The Handmaid’s Tale (Parts IV-VI)
Week 13
11/13 – Religion & Science – The Island
Prepared Reading: Continue The Handmaid’s Tale (Parts VII-IX)
Assignment Due: Completed Response Journal

11/15 – Workshop Day on Multi-Genre Project – No Class
Prepared Reading: Continue The Handmaid’s Tale (X-XII)

T 11/20 – No Class – Thanksgiving Break

R 11/22 – No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Week 14
T 11/27 – The Truth About Human Sex Trafficking – Discussion of The Handmaid’s Tale
Prepared Reading: Finish The Handmaid’s Tale (XIII-XV & Historical Notes)
Assignment Due: Multi-Genre Research Project


Week 15
T 12/4 – Economics & Ethics – Repo Man

R 12/6 – Closure Activities / Evaluations

Final Exam Week / End of the Semester

(Note: This Schedule is Subject to Change at the Instructor’s Discretion &
Reading Selections are Abbreviated by Title)