**ENGL 2329 American Literature: Popular Fiction**

**Fall 2013**

Instructor: Cathy Corder, Ph.D.

Office Hours: MWF, 11am – 1pm, and by appointment

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**Course Information**

Course number: 2329-001 and 002

Room: PKH 103

Meeting times: Section 001: MWF 9 – 9:50am and Section 002: 10 – 10:50am

**Course Description**

The UTA Department of English describes sophomore literature as “an opportunity to help students in all majors become aware that literary studies are relevant to personal, social, and political life,” and a way to “foster enjoyment of literature.” This section of American literature will survey six genres of American popular fiction: the western, detective/mystery, horror, young adult, science fiction, and the graphic novel. We will also examine storytelling through short animations, music videos, and poetry slams.

While many would argue that popular fiction is not “real” literature, these stories have much to tell us about our society, our culture, and our own human nature. We will examine various aspects of narrative (point of view, setting, plot, characterization, and theme) and other literary elements (tone, theme, figurative language, etc.) as we explore these different genres.

**Goals**

* To encourage students to see that literary studies matter and to foster enjoyment of literature, as students engage with ideas and beliefs in ways that extend beyond the English classroom.
* To help students recognize that literature does not occur as isolated literary events, but as a complex dialogue with cultural and historical contexts.
* To develop students’ ability to read critically by studying a variety of literary elements such as form, structure, and style.
* To enable students to demonstrate their understanding of literary texts and their ability to analyze such texts in writing, in online discussions, and through class discussions.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester, students should be able to do the following:

* Demonstrate their knowledge of a variety of literary terms and elements.
* Identify a variety of literary elements within literary texts.
* Explain and analyze how context shapes the composition, reception, and interpretation of texts.
* Demonstrate their ability to discuss literature using textual evidence to support assertions.
* Conduct research using the UTA Library resources.
* Use correct MLA documentations of primary and secondary sources.

**Required Texts**

Novels

*Shane*, Jack Schaefer

*In the Electric Mist with Confederate Dead*, James Lee Burke

*The Shining*, Stephen King

*Player Piano*, Kurt Vonnegut

*Maus*, Art Spiegelman

Short stories – available on Blackboard

Elmore Leonard, “Three-Ten to Yuma”

Edgar Allan Poe, “The Purloined Letter”

Edgar Allan Poe, “The Black Cat”

H. P. Lovecraft, “Dagon”

Ray Bradbury, “A Sound of Thunder”

Comic strips – available on Blackboard

“Krazy Kat”

*Haunt of Horror –* comic book version of H. P. Lovecraft’s short story, “Dagon.”

Movies – available on Blackboard

*Cowboys and Aliens*

*In the Electric Mist*

*Call of Cthulhu*

Television show – available on Blackboard

*Outer Limits*, “Feasibility Study”

**Class Resources**

On the Blackboard site for this class, you will find the course policies and procedures, the class syllabus, as well as assignment prompts, readings, and additional resources for studying literature.

**Grading**

Your final grade is based on 10 short content quizzes, two papers, and a final exam. Here is the breakdown:

Content Quizzes (average of 10) 20%

Paper 1 25%

Paper 2 25%

Paper 3 30%

Assignments

* The content quizzes are short exams, usually multiple choice or fill in the blank, that will give you the opportunity to demonstrate how carefully you have read the assigned texts.
* Paper #1 is a short essay (500-750 words) that asks you to identify important meanings, issues, and themes in one work of popular fiction. This paper is due **Monday,** **September 30.**
* Paper #2 is a longer essay (750-1000 words) that asks you to do a deeper analysis of a literary text, using the tools of literary criticism. This paper is due on **Monday, November 4.**
* Paper #3 is the longest essay (1000-1500 words). I will provide possible topics, but you may also choose one of your own. This paper is due on **Wednesday, December 4.**

These assignments will give you the opportunity to practice skills that you learned in your first-year writing classes: writing good thesis statements, providing relevant textual evidence, constructing useful commentary on the evidence providence, and making clear connections between ideas.

Late Assignments. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date specified. Assignments turned in after the class has begun will receive a 10 percent deduction unless the instructor has agreed to late submission in advance of the due date. For each calendar day following, the work will receive an additional 10 percent deduction. **Work is not accepted after three late days.** If you must be absent, your work is still due on the assigned date.

**Class Policies**

Attendance**.** After accruing six absences, students will be penalized 5 percent off their final grade for each additional absence. I will not supply what you miss by email or phone. Please make an appointment to see me in person to discuss absenteeism and tardiness. Please be in class on time, ready to begin the day's activities.

Classroom Behavior. Class sessions are short and require your full attention. All cell phones, pagers, iPods, MP3 players, laptops, and other electronic devices should be turned off and put away when entering the classroom; all earpieces should be removed. Store newspapers, crosswords, magazines, bulky bags, and other distractions so that you can concentrate on the readings and discussions each day. Bring book(s) and e-reserve readings (heavily annotated and carefully read) to every class. Students are expected to participate respectfully in class, to listen to other class members, and to comment appropriately. I also expect consideration and courtesy from students. Professors are to be addressed appropriately and communicated with professionally.

According to Student Conduct and Discipline, "students are prohibited from engaging in or attempting to engage in conduct, either alone or in concert with others, that is intended to obstruct, disrupt, or interfere with, or that in fact obstructs, disrupts, or interferes with any instructional, educational, research, administrative, or public performance or other activity authorized to be conducted in or on a University facility. Obstruction or disruption includes, but is not limited to, any act that interrupts, modifies, or damages utility service or equipment, communication service or equipment, or computer equipment, software, or networks” (UTA Handbook or Operating Procedures, Ch. 2, Sec. 2-202). Students who do not respect the guidelines listed above or who disrupt other students’ learning may be asked to leave class and/or referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

Academic Integrity. All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

Instructors may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts" (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2)

You can get in trouble for plagiarism by failing to correctly indicate places where you are making use of the work of another. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the conventions of citation by which you indicate which ideas are not your own and how your reader can find those sources. Read your textbook and/or handbook for more information on quoting and citing properly to avoid plagiarism. If you still do not understand, ask your instructor. All students caught plagiarizing or cheating will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

**Student Support Services**

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

Americans with Disabilities Act. The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Electronic Communication Policy**

All students must have access to a computer with internet capabilities. Students should check email daily for course information and updates. I will send group emails through Blackboard. I am happy to communicate with students through email. However, I ask that you be wise in your use of this tool. Make sure you have consulted the syllabus for answers before you send me an email. Remember, I do not monitor my email 24 hours a day. I check it periodically during the school week and occasionally on the weekend.

The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University “MavMail” address as the sole official means of communication with students. MavMail is used to remind students of important deadlines, advertise events and activities, and permit the University to conduct official transactions exclusively by electronic means. For example, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation are now sent to students through the MavMail system. All students are assigned a MavMail account. Students are responsible for checking their MavMail regularly. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/email/>. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active even after they graduate from UT Arlington.

**Student Feedback Survey**

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Conferences and Questions**

I have regularly scheduled office hours each week. These times are reserved for students to drop by or to make an appointment to discuss course assignments, grades, or other class-related concerns. I will be happy to make other appointment times for you if your class schedule conflicts with regular conference times or if I am not available on certain days. If you receive a grade on an assignment or quiz about which you have questions, please wait twenty-four hours before discussing it with me. This gives you time to process the assignment comments and to think about how your course work meets the requirements set forth for each assignment. I do not discuss individual student issues in the classroom before, during or after class.

**Syllabus and Schedule Changes**

I try to make my syllabus as complete as possible; however, during the course of the semester I may be required to alter, add, or abandon certain policies /assignments. Instructors reserve the right to make such changes as they become necessary. I will inform students of any changes through email.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

F 8/23 Introduction, policies and procedures, and class schedule; genres of popular fiction

M 8/26 Literary analysis and close readings

W 8/28 **Western Literature**

F 8/30 Short story: Elmore Leonard, “Three-Ten to Yuma” [BB]

M 9/2 Labor Day holiday

9/4 *Shane*, Chapters 1-3

Quiz #1

9/6 *Shane*, Chapters 4-7

9/9 *Shane*, Chapters 8-11

9/11 *Shane*, Chapters 12-16

Quiz #2

9/13 Movie: *Cowboys and Aliens*

9/16 **Detective/Murder Mystery Literature**

9/18 Short story: Edgar Allan Poe, “The Purloined Letter” [BB]

9/20 *In the Electric Mist with Confederate Dead*, Chapters 1-4

Quiz #3

9/23 *In the Electric Mist with Confederate Dead*, Chapters 5-8

9/25 *In the Electric Mist with Confederate Dead*, Chapters 9-12

9/27 *In the Electric Mist with Confederate Dead*, Chapters 13-16

Quiz #4

9/30 *In the Electric Mist with Confederate Dead*, Chapters 17 – 20, Epilogue

**Due:** Paper #1. Identifying Meanings, Issues, and Themes

10/2 **Horror Literature**

10/4 Short stories: Edgar Allan Poe, “The Black Cat” and H. P. Lovecraft, “Dagon” [BB]

10/7 *The Shining*, Chapters 1-7

10/9 *The Shining*, Chapters 8-13

Quiz #5

10/11 *The Shining*, Chapters 14-18

10/14 *The Shining*, Chapters 19-25

Movie: *Call of Cthulhu*

10/16 *The Shining*, Chapters 26-37

Quiz #6

10/18 *The Shining*, Chapters 38-46

10/23 *The Shining*, Chapters 47-58

10/25 **Science Fiction Literature**

10/28 Short story: Ray Bradbury, “A Sound of Thunder” [BB]

10/30 TV show: *The Outer Limits,* “Feasibility Study”

11/1 *Player Piano*

11/4 *Player Piano*

**Due:** Paper #2

11/6 *Player Piano*

Quiz #7

11/8 *Player Piano*

11/11 *Player Piano*

Quiz #8

11/13 **Graphic Literature**

11/15 Comic strip: “Krazy Kat” [BB]

11/18 Comic book: *Haunt of Horror* [BB]

11/22 *Maus*, pp. 5 – 59

Quiz #9

11/25 *Maus*, pp. 60-105

11/27 Out-of-class work on *Maus*

11/29 Thanksgiving holiday

12/2 *Maus*, pp. 106-59

Quiz #10

12/4 Concluding Thoughts on Popular Fiction

**Due:** Paper #3