**DS 3321-002 Disabilities in Literature**

**Fall 2015**

Instructor: Cathy Corder, Ph.D.

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9am – 10:50am, Wednesdays 11am – 12noon, and by appointment

Office: Carlisle Hall 523

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**Course Information**

Course number: DS 3321-002

Room: UH 25

Meeting times: MWF 2 – 2:50pm

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This section of Topics in Disability Studies is cross-listed as ENGL 2303, a course intended to be “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.” Therefore, the purpose of our class is twofold: first, the course will introduce students to the process of close, thoughtful, and critical reading of a variety of literary genres: fiction, memoir, drama, poetry, and graphic novel. This process involves identifying the components of literary analysis—setting (time and place), characterization, plot structure, style, and theme—and interpreting the ways in which an author may use those components.

The second goal of this class is to explore how contemporary texts represent disability (physical, mental, social, and cultural). We will use our knowledge of literary elements to consider the ways in which literature may demean and undermine people with disabilities by the use of stereotypes or may reduce disability to mere metaphor. We will look at characters with different disabilities to determine if they are portrayed as victim or as superhero or as a true-to-life person. Further, we will see how authors with disabilities give voice to their own experiences. We will also investigate the implications of these literary representations in terms of what we as individuals and as a society consider “normal” and how we recognize what it is to be fully human.

**Course Goals**

1. Students will be able to explain the ways in which writers and readers have depicted and/or responded to disability in both fiction and nonfiction.
2. Students will be able to use concepts of literary analysis (characterization, style, theme, plot development) to enhance discussions about the treatment of disability in narrative, poetry, drama, autobiography, and graphic literature.
3. Students will be able to create well-supported arguments about the literature of disability using both primary and secondary sources.

**Required Texts**

*What’s Eating Gilbert Grape?* by Peter Hedges

*The Ship Who Sang* by Anne McCaffrey

*Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Depression* by William Styron

*Autobiography of a Face* by Lucy Grealy

*Epileptics* by David B

Short stories and critical essays will be available on Blackboard.

**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. 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.

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

* **Discussion boards (8 @ 50 points each):** These are opportunities for you to respond to a reading or a class discussion and to comment on other student’s posts. Expect a DB assignment every other week, for a total of eight discussions.
* **Critical analysis (2 @ 100 points each):** You will write two short (3-4 pages) papers that analyze the treatment of a disability in a short story, play, movie, or tv show that we have not examined in class.
* **Midterm exam (200):** This will be a take-home, open-book essay exam.
* **Research project (300):** This will be your final assignment for the class and comprises both a research paper and a presentation.

**Grading**

Your final grade for this course will consist of the following:

Discussion boards (50 points each) 400 points

Critical analysis (100 points each) 200

Midterm exam 200 points

Presentation 300 points

**Total 1100 points**

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

A 990 - 1100 points

B 880 – 989 points

C 770 – 889 points

D 660 – 769 points

F 659 and below

**CLASS POLICIES**

**Attendance.** At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students’ academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance.

As the instructor of this section, I will take attendance, but I will not factor any unexcused absences into your final grade. However, be sure to pay attention to my policy on late assignments, which follows.

**Excused absences** include official university activities (such as athletics), military service, religious holidays, and/or the death of a close family member. You must inform me in writing at least one week in advance of an excused absence (except for a death, of course), and I will work with you to reschedule or make up missed work.

**Unexcused absences** may be the result of any number of situations: bad traffic, previous class running late or in a building far away, you really need to study for that calculus test this afternoon, you really need to catch up on sleep this morning, you’re just not feeling well.

**PLEASE** do not email me to say that you won’t be in class for WHATEVER unexcused reason. Do not email me and ask if you missed anything in class that day. Do not email me and ask how you can make up the work you missed. **I will not supply what you miss by email or phone. It is your responsibility to get together with a peer to get this material or make an appointment to see me in person.**

**Late Assignments.** I will notprovide make-up opportunities for in-class writing, group work, or midterm exams. I do not accept signature assignment essays that are more than three days late. If you must be absent, your work is still due on the assigned date.

**Classroom Behavior.** Class sessions are short and require your full attention. Please be judicious and courteous in your use of any electronic devices. Store materials from other classes, reading not related to this class, bulky bags, and other distractions so that you can concentrate on the ENGL 1302 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.

**Cell phone policy:** If I have to ask you more than twice to put away your cell phone, I will deduct 10 points from your final grade for every following request.

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.*

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. 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.

**Writing Center**

Location: Room 411 of the Central Library

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8:15 p.m. Mon-Th, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fri, and 12n to 5:15 p.m. Sat and Sun

Students must register and can make appointments online at [http://uta.mywconline.com](http://uta.mywconline.com/). Face-to-Face and online appointments for undergraduate students are scheduled for 40 minutes. Writing Center consultants assist with any aspect of academic writing, from understanding an assignment, brainstorming, revising an early draft, to polishing a final draft. However, the Writing Center is not an editing service; consultants will not correct grammar or rewrite assignments during our long sessions. Please see [www.uta.edu/owl](http://www.uta.edu/owl) for more information about services and guidelines.

**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY**

You must have access to a computer with internet capabilities. You 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 and professional 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 several times during the day, but not after 10pm or before 7am, and only occasionally on weekends. I will always try to respond to your email within 24 hours.

**EMAIL POLICY**

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 three 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.

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**CLASS SCHEDULE**

Fri 8/28 Course introduction, syllabus, policies

What is disability?

Mon 8/31 How do we define/identify disability?

Wed 9/2 Disability in traditional literature

**Read:** Grimm’s fairy tale

Fri 9/4 Disability in fairy tales

**Read:** Grimm’s fairy tales

**Due:** Discussion Board #1

Mon 9/7 Labor Day holiday

Wed 9/9 Introduction to literary analysis

Fri 9/11 The practice of literary analysis / disability and technology

**Read:** “Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut

Mon 9/14 Literary analysis / disability and gender

**Read:** “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Wed 9/16 Literary analysis / disability and style

**Read:** “Cathedral” by Raymond Carver

Fri 9/18 Literary analysis / disability and freaks

**Read:** “Pam Calls Her Mother on Five-Cent Sundays” by Noria Jablonski

**Due:** Discussion Board #2

Mon 9/21 **Read:** *What’s Eating Gilbert Grape?* by Peter Hedges*,* Chaps 1-12, pp. 3-63

Wed 9/23 **Read:** *What’s Eating Gilbert Grape?* Chaps 13-21, pp. 63-113

Fri 9/25 **Read:** *What’s Eating Gilbert Grape?* Chaps 22-32, pp. 117-177

Mon 9/28 **Read:** *What’s Eating Gilbert Grape?* Chaps 33-42, pp. 177-229

**Due:** Critical Analysis #1

Wed 9/30 **Read:** *What’s Eating Gilbert Grape?* Chaps 43-60, pp. 233-319

Fri 10/2 **Read:** “The Ship Who Sang” by Anne McCaffrey

**Due:** Discussion Board #3

Mon 10/5 **Read:** “The Ship Who Mourned” by Anne McCaffrey

Wed 10/7 **Read:** “The Ship Who Killed” by Anne McCaffrey

Fri 10/9 Depictions of mental illness in literature

Mon 10/12 **Read:** *Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness* by William Styron, Chaps 1-4, pp. 3-50

Wed 10/14 **Read:** *Darkness Visible*, Chaps 5-10, pp. 51-84

Fri 10/16 Midterm exam – take home, open book, due Mon 10/19

Mon 10/19 **Read:** *Autobiography of a Face* by Lucy Grealy, Chaps 1-4, pp. 1-87

Wed 10/21 **Read:** *Autobiography of a Face* by Lucy Grealy, Chaps 5-8, pp. 88-159

Fri 10/23 **Read:** *Autobiography of a Face* by Lucy Grealy, Chaps 9-12, pp. 160-223

**Due:** Discussion Board #4

Mon 10/26 Physical disability: “Freaks”

Wed 10/28 **Read:** *The Elephant Man* by Bernard Pomerance

Fri 10/30 **Read:** *The Elephant Man* by Bernard Pomerance

Mon 11/2 **Read:** *The Elephant Man* by Bernard Pomerance

**Due:** Critical Analysis #2

Wed 11/4 **Read:** *The Elephant Man* by Bernard Pomerance

Fri 11/6 Disability in poetry – reading assignment to come

**Due:** Discussion Board #5

Mon 11/9 Disability in poetry – reading assignment to come

Wed 11/11 Disability in poetry – reading assignment to come

Fri 11/13 Graphic disability

**Read:** John Callahan and others

Mon 11/16 **Read:** *Epileptic* by David B

Wed 11/18 **Read:** *Epileptic*

Fri 11/20 **Read:** *Epileptic*

**Due:** Discussion Board #6

Mon 11/23 **Read:** *Epileptic*

Wed 11/25 Out-of-class work

**Due:** Discussion Board #7

Fri 11/27 Thanksgiving holiday

Mon 11/30 Presentations

Wed 12/2 Presentations

Fri 12/4 Presentations

**Due:** Discussion Board #8

Mon 12/7 Presentations

Wed 12/9 Presentations / Last day of class