



American
Contemporary Literature
ENGL 4387, WOMS 4392 / Spring 2016
The University of Texas at Arlington

Meets MWF, 2-2:50, Preston Hall 103

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Office hours: Carlisle Hall 206, M/F, 3-4:30, and by appointment

Course Description:

To tell a literary history is to impose a narrative on the past. We look back fifty or a hundred years and find coherence in periods that were heterogeneous and rife with contradiction to the people living through them. But without the benefit of hindsight, how do we gain perspective on literature written today? In this class we'll read literary fiction¹, non-fiction, and criticism published since 1987 in an effort to discover whether something other than a shared historical moment unites the varied works of fiction known as "contemporary" or "postmodern." What, if any, thematic concerns, formal traits, or political projects do they share? A central question will be how writers represent gender dynamics and contend with it as a force that not only shapes their prose but also affects their reception. Perched as we are in the present, we have the advantage of investigating public sphere debates, dilemmas, and controversies about literature that are ongoing—and of weighing in on them before they ossify into neat literary histories. The writing you'll do in this class will be directed to a more general, non-academic audience than is usually the case in a college classroom. If other literature classes prepare you to teach, give you a canonical grounding for future study, or train you for academia, this class will equip you to consider questions about contemporary literature that matter outside of the classroom.

¹ "Literary fiction" is the term given to works of so-called "serious" writing (i.e., usually not genres like science fiction, fantasy, romance, Westerns, mystery, comic books, etc., though sometimes literature in those genres makes the "literary" cut) that gets reviewed not only in *Publisher's Weekly* or *Kirkus*, which are geared toward librarians, but in the few remaining national book reviews (in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *LA Times*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Yorker*, etc.) meant to attract the attention of readers themselves.

If this course were a film, it would be rated NC-17 due to profanity, sexual content, and violence. Please come speak to me if this concerns you.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will develop an understanding of and familiarity with seven² major contemporary American writers; they will be able to identify and contrast the writers' styles, concerns, formal innovations, and intellectual preoccupations.
2. Students will become conversant in public sphere debates surrounding contemporary literary fiction; they will become acquainted with major review outlets, periodicals, and magazines in which these debates are carried out.
3. Students will develop their writing skills as they experiment with genre, style, and audience.

Materials:

Claire Messud, *The Woman Upstairs*

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

Junot Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (not available at the bookstore because I added it late)

A MavMail account that you check daily

Assignments:

Reading Quizzes	15%
Virtual Salon	25%
Contributions (6), 20%	
Comments (at least 12), 5%	
Contemplitapedia contributions (6)	10%
Review project	14%
Review poetics analysis, 5%	
Review, 9%	
Think Piece	18%

² Many of you will no doubt notice omissions that seem to you glaring. Here is a (partial) list of contemporary American fiction writers I would have included were there world enough and time: Sherman Alexie, Paul Auster, Russell Banks, Octavia Butler, Michael Chabon, Teju Cole, Michael Cunningham, Edwidge Danticat, Lydia Davis, Don DeLillo, Jennifer Egan, Dave Eggers, Louise Erdrich, Jeffrey Eugenides, Jonathan Safran Foer, Mary Gaitskill, Siri Hustvedt, Denis Johnson, Edward P. Jones, Jhumpa Lahiri, Jonathan Lethem, Peter Mathiessen, Cormac McCarthy, Lorrie Moore, Cynthia Ozick, Richard Powers, Thomas Pynchon, Norman Rush, Karen Russell, George Saunders, Donna Tartt, William Vollman, Colson Whitehead, Joy Williams, Meg Wolitzer, Nell Zink.

Midterm	9%
Final	9%

Explanation and Provisos:

- You can't make up reading quizzes, but quizzes you miss because of an excused absence are excused. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.
- The Virtual Salon is an online discussion forum you'll access on Blackboard. You will post a contribution of 300-600 words once every two weeks (due dates depend on your group assignment; see Appendix A and the course schedule). The contribution, which is due by midnight (**no late work accepted**), should be a thoughtful, carefully written contribution to our discussion about the day's reading. Your audience is me and your classmates, so you can be somewhat informal, but everyone will be reading what you write, and you'll be graded on each contribution (rubric on Blackboard), so do take time with this assignment. The only requirement for these contributions, other than length and topicality, is that you follow the "they say, I say" model of public sphere writing. That is to say, in each post, you must respond in some way to something that was said in class, in our reading, or in the Virtual Salon. Use that utterance as your departure point for your contribution. Think of the Virtual Salon as a place to continue class conversation or take it a new direction, raising questions or issues that we didn't have time to cover in class, or bringing a passage we didn't get to discuss to everyone's attention. I ask that you read everyone's contributions every week. You are required to post at least two comments for each Salon (12 in all). Your grade on the comments is credit/no credit, but still, make them substantive.
- As we move through the course we'll build a class wiki, the Contemplitapedia. The purpose of this collaborative assignment is to assemble factual information about the world of contemporary literature, putting it all in one place for your reference. There is no length requirement for the entries; I simply want you to gather information about people, periodicals, books, movements, films, terms, trends—really, anything that comes up in our reading and discussion. Be sure to credit your sources here (e.g., writing, "as I learned on Wikipedia"). Put the information in your own words, and don't feel compelled to be exhaustive; your aim is to identify and locate what you're defining in a way that matters to our course (which is subject to your judgment, obviously). I've started a few categories, but we can build more. You're required to post 6 times during the semester, on particular dates (see the syllabus). These should be short and straightforward; don't devote tons of time to this assignment. Entries are due by midnight on the due date; **no late work accepted**.
- The review and think piece assignments will give you a chance to experiment with public sphere genres we'll be reading a lot of this semester. The prompts are on Blackboard. The review project involves group work and a peer review; you'll get the opportunity to revise your think piece. The prompts will be Blackboard. At the end of the semester, I'll put together *The 4387 Review*, a collection of your writing from the course. I'll include one piece of writing by everyone; you get to choose whether it's your review or your think piece.
- A substantial portion of both exams will be identification/close readings. These questions ask you to name the work and author of a particular passage and offer a close reading of the passage that underscores its significance to the work as a whole. The best way to

prepare for the exams is to keep up with the readings, mark passages that we discuss, pay attention to the differences in the authors' styles, and take good notes during class. The exams do not require that you memorize passages, but rather that you learn to recognize the authors' distinctive traits. The final will not be cumulative.

- Make-up exams may be given at my discretion, but only under the most unusual circumstances. I require documentation to offer a make-up exam.
- Keep all your graded assignments until final grades have been submitted for the semester.

Grading Scale:

I grade holistically, which means that there are not specific point values assigned to different elements in your writing. The grades I assign indicate how well you meet the expectations of an assignment, which are explained on the prompts.

90-100=A, for work that exceeds expectations.

80-89= B, for work that meets expectations well.

70-79=C, for work that meets the expectations of an assignment competently.

60-69=D, for work that fails to meet the minimum requirements of an assignment.

59 and below=F, for work that is either incomplete or has flouted the requirements.

Participation and Discussion:

I encourage you to participate actively in class because the study of literature can't happen in a vacuum. While I will lecture on occasion, for the most part this class is discussion-based, which means that we all play a significant role in its success. It is incumbent upon each of us to come to class with something to say about the text under discussion: an observation, a question, an opinion. Because I expect each of you to come to class ready to contribute, you should not only *complete* the required reading or assignment, but *think about it*. Daily quizzes will help you keep up with the reading; your lowest quiz grade will be dropped to allow for an absence.

The reading in this course is intense, usually 50-60 pages of primary text per class meeting, often with criticism assigned on the same day. I recommend doing the reading over a two-day period so that you're reading only 25-30 pages a day, which will take about an hour or two, depending on your pace (spend any less time than that and you're probably going too fast). It's a lot. But much of the reading is very accessible, so I don't think I'm asking too much of you. Because we're reading such big chunks for each meeting, our conversations about the texts will not be exhaustive. I invite you to use our Virtual Salon (about which more below) to continue or redirect the class conversation.

In a change of policy for me, this semester you will not receive a grade for participation, but I will certainly take class contributions into account for students whose final average is borderline. Spending time on a device during class or falling asleep in class may count as an absence (I will let you know if your comportment in class falls into the "present but absent" category).

Attendance and Tardiness:

At the University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the professor for this course, have established an attendance policy, explained below.

Regular class attendance is expected, and any absence is strongly discouraged. I record two kinds of absences: excused and unexcused. Quizzes you miss for excused absences are excused as well.

I excuse absences under the following circumstances:

1. Military duty (documentation required)
2. Official university business (e.g., participation in a sporting event; documentation required)
3. Illness, *at my discretion* (doctor's note required). Please note that I will not excuse your absence for a regularly scheduled doctor's appointment. There is a limit of 4 absences due to illness. Should your health interfere markedly with your performance in the course, come talk to me.
4. Religious holidays (let me know ahead of time)

In some circumstances, I may excuse other kinds of absences, *with documentation*.

Every time you record an unexcused absence, you will receive a zero on the reading quiz for that day. **If you record seven unexcused absences you will automatically fail the course.**

Punctuality is essential. Coming to class late disrupts the rhythm of the class, and it is disrespectful to me and to your classmates. By missing the first few minutes of class, you miss important announcements. Arriving after class has begun will have an adverse effect on your participation grade, and egregious (15 minutes +) lateness (or leaving early) will be counted as an absence.

Submission Requirements and Late Work:

You will turn in all of your formal assignments on Blackboard (elearn.uta.edu). It is your responsibility to make sure that your submission goes through, which means going back after you have uploaded your assignment to double check that it is there. Computer problems are not a valid excuse for late or missing work. If you are having trouble uploading an assignment from your home computer, go to the library and upload it from there. Plan ahead.

I do accept late work on the essay assignments (the review and the think piece), with the following two conditions: 1) late work will lose a letter grade (10 points) for each calendar day (*not* class day) it is late, and 2) I will no longer accept a paper when it is 6 days late. No late work is accepted on the Virtual Salon contributions or the Comtemplitapedia, nor can you make up missed reading quizzes.

Extensions are negotiable. If you anticipate needing more time for an assignment, you must get in touch with me at least two days before the assignment is due. Together we will arrive at a later due date. I will hold you to that new due date and deduct points if you miss it. Do not e-mail me

the day before something is due to ask for an extension; I will refuse. Plan ahead. I reserve the right to refuse extensions.

Unless we have made a special arrangement, do not send me essays by e-mail. I will not accept them. It's fine, however, if you e-mail me an assignment as a backup.

Academic Integrity:

All UTA students are expected to adhere to the University's Honor Code, which reads as follows:

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.

The University's policy is that faculty members 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.

My policy is to hold students to the highest standards of academic honesty, and I have zero tolerance for violations of academic integrity. Plagiarism of any kind will result in strict penalties, including the possibility of failing the course. You will be turning in all of your assignments via SafeAssign, a program available via Blackboard that checks your work against work on the web and a database of student work, thereby flagging potential instances of plagiarism.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is presenting another person's ideas or words as one's own. Plagiarism occurs when a writer quotes, paraphrases, or summarizes another person's work without crediting his/her sources. Plagiarism occurs whether the text quoted is a book, article, website, Wikipedia, a reader's guide like Cliffs Notes or Sparks Notes, another student's paper, or any other source. Submitting a paper you got credit for in another class, also known as "self-plagiarism," is also a violation of academic integrity and will result in the same penalty. *An entire essay is considered fraudulent even if only a single sentence is plagiarized.* Also, please note that plagiarism has nothing to do with intent. If you do not properly credit your sources, you have plagiarized, whether or not you meant to.

How can I avoid plagiarism?

1. Develop your own opinions and ideas whenever you write papers or exams. Resist the temptation to look to online reading guides, analyses, or summaries for inspiration; it's way too easy for the language you read and ideas you're exposed to to seep into your own writing.
2. As you work on your research paper, take good notes, being sure to keep your ideas about the primary text and the ideas of your interlocutors (i.e., your sources) separate.
3. Whenever you refer to another person's ideas or words, use proper citation to give them credit. This can mean either paraphrasing an author's ideas and indicating that you are doing so in your prose (e.g., writing, "As Brook Thomas has argued," and following that opener with a statement of his argument in your own words) or citing a source directly via quotation (e.g., "As Brook Thomas writes, 'xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx'"). Because most English classes will require you to use MLA citation guidelines, the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* is a recommended text for this course.
4. Do not turn in work for this class that you have submitted, or will submit, in another class.

What are the consequences of plagiarism?

If I suspect you of plagiarism, I will contact you so that we can discuss my concerns. You will then have the opportunity to either accept or deny responsibility for plagiarism. If you deny responsibility, your case will be handled by the Office of Student Conduct, and you will receive an Incomplete in our course until the investigation is complete. Students who commit plagiarism will most likely receive a reduced grade, possibly a zero, for the fraudulent assignment. (I assess the academic penalty on a case-by-case basis.) Without exception, I will report the incident to the Office of Student Conduct, whether or not the student accepts responsibility for the alleged plagiarism. Disciplinary probation for a year is a common penalty for plagiarism issued by the Office of Student Conduct.

If you have any questions about these policies or about what constitutes plagiarism and/or collusion, ask me. Be sure to visit the website for the Office of Student Conduct for clarification on any of the above:

<http://www.uta.edu/studentaffairs/conduct/academicintegrity.html>

Etiquette:

The way you comport yourself during the semester has a substantial effect on your ethos, or credibility. Please take the following etiquette guidelines into account:

1. Laptops, tablets, and e-readers are permitted in class only if you are using them to access the day's reading. On other days, put them away. Put your phones away every day. The latest research indicates that despite our belief that we are good at multitasking, learning suffers significantly when it is interrupted by digital media. Check out these two articles if you're interested in the research:
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/04/140424102837.htm>

<http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom>

2. Visit me during office hours, make an appointment outside of office hours, or e-mail me for questions and help. I check my e-mail several times a day, but I cease to do so at night and do so considerably less frequently over the weekend. Please seek help ahead of time.
3. Please be sure your e-mails have both a salutation and a closing.

Writing Center:

If you're serious about your writing, you should take advantage of the Writing Center, located in Room 411 of the Central Library. The Writing Center offers guidance to UT-Arlington students on writing assignments. Students must register with the Writing Center before making appointments and should bring a printed copy of their assignment sheet, any instructor or peer comments, and their draft to the appointment. Hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mondays-Thursdays, 9 am to 3 pm Fridays, and 12 to 5 pm Saturdays and Sundays. Walk-in "Quick Hits" sessions are available during all open hours Mon-Thurs. Register and make appointments online at <http://uta.mywconline.com>.

Writing Center consultants assist students with writing development, from understanding an assignment and brainstorming ideas or revising an early draft to polishing a final document. However, the Writing Center is not a document editing service; consultants will neither identify every error nor rewrite student assignments. They focus on improving writing skills and helping students become better editors of their own writing, which includes learning to identify and correct their own grammar, punctuation, and editing errors.

Syllabus and Schedule Changes:

I've tried to make this document as complete as possible; however, during the course of the semester I may be required to alter, add, or abandon certain policies and/or assignments. I reserve the right to make such changes as they become necessary. You will be informed of any changes in writing.

The Syllabus as a Contract:

You may have noticed that much of what's written above begins with the pronoun "you." I have made very clear what is expected of each of you in the course. This syllabus is more than a list of what *you* need to do, though; it's also a contract, a list of obligations and responsibilities that each of us takes on at the beginning of the semester. By reading this syllabus and deciding to stick with the course, you are consenting to the policies outlined above and promising to uphold your end of the bargain. I am promising a few things, too. As your instructor, I will:

1. Always start class on time, as I know your time is valuable.
2. Always end class on time, as I know you have places to be.
3. Grade your work within a week of it being turned in.
4. Hold office hours every week and advise you well ahead of time of any changes to them.
5. Be respectful of your opinions and open to your questions.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Drop Policy:

Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Electronic Communication:

UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

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, or view the information at www.uta.edu/resources.

Disability Accommodations:

UT 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)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. 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 disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: the Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD), www.uta.edu/disability, or calling

817-272-3364. They may also contact Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS), www.uta.edu/caps/, or call 817-272-3671.

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 or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at 817-272-3364.

Title IX:

The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos. For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX.

Student Feedback Surveys:

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online 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>.

Final Review Week:

A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures:

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which are the stairwells at both ends of the hall outside our door. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist

students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

Emergency Phone Numbers:

In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911. The non-emergency number is 817-272-3381.

Working Course Schedule, subject to change

Please complete the reading for the class meeting next to which it's listed. Apart from the five required books, all the reading is available on Blackboard. I prefer that you bring hard copies of the Blackboard reading to class, printing the selections out and keeping them in a three-ring binder, but if you wish you may read from your laptop or iPad (not your phone). If our reading schedule shifts, as it almost inevitably will, your Virtual Salon and Contemplitapedia due dates will remain firm.

Wed., Jan. 20:	Introduction to the course policies
Fri., Jan. 22:	Introduction to each other, to the course, to the assignments
Mon., Jan. 25:	<i>New York Times</i> "best fiction of last 25 years" list; John Updike, "Wife-Wooing" (Bb) First Salon, Group A; Contemplitapedia, Group D (by midnight on Bb)
Wed., Jan. 27:	Elaine Blair, "Great American Losers"; Gary Shteyngart, "Lenny Hearts Eunice" (Bb) First Salon, Group B; Contemplitapedia, Group E (by midnight on Bb)
Fri., Jan. 29:	Jonathan Franzen, from <i>The Corrections</i> (3-32); <i>Time</i> cover story on Franzen, "Jonathan Franzen: Great American Novelist" (Bb) First Salon, Group C; Contemplitapedia, Group F (by midnight on Bb)
Mon., Feb. 1:	Jonathan Franzen, from <i>The Corrections</i> (32-87); Review of <i>The Corrections</i> in <i>The Guardian</i> (Bb) First Salon, Group D; Contemplitapedia, Group A (by midnight on Bb)
Wed., Feb. 3:	David Foster Wallace, "Shipping Out: On the (Nearly Lethal) Comforts of a Luxury Cruise" (Bb) First Salon, Group E; Contemplitapedia, Group B (by midnight on Bb)
Fri., Feb. 5:	Review of <i>Infinite Jest</i> in the <i>New York Times</i> ; Dave Eggers, Foreword to <i>Infinite Jest</i> and David Foster Wallace, from <i>Infinite Jest</i> (xi-17); Molly Fischer, "Why Literary Chauvinists Love David Foster Wallace" (Bb) First Salon, Group F; Contemplitapedia, Group C (by midnight on Bb)
Mon., Feb. 8:	David Foster Wallace, 2005 Kenyon commencement address: read and listen to the speech and watch the abbreviated YouTube version, "This Is Water," if you wish (Bb) Second Salon, Group A; Contemplitapedia, Group D (by midnight on Bb)
Wed., Feb. 10:	Extra DFW day to use as needed Second Salon, Group B; Contemplitapedia, Group E (by midnight on Bb)
Fri., Feb. 12:	Jonathan Franzen, "Farther Away" (Bb) Second Salon, Group C; Contemplitapedia, Group F (by midnight on Bb)
Mon., Feb. 15:	Jonathan Franzen, "Farther Away" (Bb) Second Salon, Group D; Contemplitapedia, Group A (by midnight on Bb)

- Wed., Feb. 17: Rebecca Mead, "Written Off: Jennifer Weiner's Quest for Literary Respect" (Bb); optional, selection from *Good in Bed* (Bb)
Second Salon, Group E; Contemplitapedia, Group B (by midnight on Bb)
- Fri., Feb. 19: Claire Messud, *The Woman Upstairs* (3-61); Roxane Gay, "Not Here to Make Friends" (Bb)
Second Salon, Group F; Contemplitapedia, Group C (by midnight on Bb)
- Mon., Feb. 22: Claire Messud, *The Woman Upstairs* (62-122); "An Unseemly Emotion: PW Talks with Claire Messud" (Bb)
Third Salon, Group A; Contemplitapedia, Group D (by midnight on Bb)
- Wed., Feb. 24: Claire Messud, *The Woman Upstairs* (125-190)
Third Salon, Group B; Contemplitapedia, Group E (by midnight on Bb)
- Fri., Feb. 26: Claire Messud, *The Woman Upstairs* (191-248)
Third Salon, Group C; Contemplitapedia, Group F (by midnight on Bb)
- Mon., Feb. 29: Claire Messud, *The Woman Upstairs* (249-302); Alison Lurie review in the *New York Review of Books* (Bb)
Third Salon, Group D; Contemplitapedia, Group A (by midnight on Bb)
- Wed., Mar. 2: Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (Chapters 1 and 2, 3-54)
Third Salon, Group E; Contemplitapedia, Group B (by midnight on Bb)
- Fri., Mar. 4: Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (Chapters 3 and 4, 57-120); Brian Grasso, "I'm a Duke Freshman. Here's Why I Refused to Read *Fun Home*"; Jacob Brogan, "No, Duke Freshman, *Fun Home* Is Not Pornographic"
Third Salon, Group F; Contemplitapedia, Group C (by midnight on Bb)
- Mon., Mar. 7: Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (Chapters 5 and 6, 123-186); Alison Bechdel on *Studio 360* (Bb)
Fourth Salon, Group A; Contemplitapedia, Group D (by midnight on Bb)
- Wed., Mar. 9: Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (Chapter 7, 189-232); Review of *Fun Home* in the *New York Times*
Fourth Salon, Group B; Contemplitapedia, Group E (by midnight on Bb)
Think piece proposal due to me via e-mail by midnight
- Fri., Mar. 11: Midterm
- SPRING BREAK
- Mon., Mar. 21: David Foster Wallace interview on Charlie Rose; Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" (Bb)
Fourth Salon, Group C; Contemplitapedia, Group F (by midnight on Bb)
- Wed., Mar. 23: Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (Part 1, 1-50, required; Part 2, 51-75, optional)
Fourth Salon, Group D; Contemplitapedia, Group A (by midnight on Bb)
- Fri., Mar. 25: Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (77-136); watch Díaz on *The Colbert Report* (Bb); refer to The Annotated Oscar Wao site as you read if you find it helpful (Bb)

Fourth Salon, Group E; Contemplitapedia, Group B (by midnight on Bb)
Give your review to your peer review partner, in class or over e-mail

- Mon., Mar. 28: Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (136-201); A. O. Scott review of *Oscar Wao* in the *New York Times* (Bb)
 Fourth Salon, Group F; Contemplitapedia, Group C (by midnight on Bb)
Peer review of review due on Blackboard and to your partner by 11:59 pm
- Wed., Mar. 30: Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (205-261); Francine Prose review of *This Is How You Lose Her*/essay on Díaz in the *New York Review of Books* (Bb)
 Fifth Salon, Group A; Contemplitapedia, Group D (by midnight on Bb)
- Fri., Apr. 1: Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (261-335); Joe Fassler, "How Junot Díaz Wrote a Sexist Character, but Not a Sexist Book" (Bb)
 Fifth Salon, Group B; Contemplitapedia, Group E (by midnight on Bb)
Last day to drop classes
- Mon., Apr. 4: Marilynne Robinson, "Facing Reality" (Bb)
 Fifth Salon, Group C; Contemplitapedia, Group F (by midnight on Bb)
Review project due on Blackboard by 11:59 pm
- Wed., Apr. 6: Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead* (3-50)
 Fifth Salon, Group D; Contemplitapedia, Group A (by midnight on Bb)
- Fri., Apr. 8: Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead* (51-100)
 Fifth Salon, Group E; Contemplitapedia, Group B (by midnight on Bb)
- Mon., Apr. 11: Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead* (100- 149)
 Fifth Salon, Group F; Contemplitapedia, Group C (by midnight on Bb)
Think piece opening paragraph due on Blackboard at midnight
- Wed., Apr. 13: Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead* (149-200)
 Sixth Salon, Group A; Contemplitapedia, Group D (by midnight on Bb)
- Fri., Apr. 15: Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead* (200-247); James Wood review of *Gilead* in the *New York Times* (Bb); I've also linked to a dialogue between Robinson and President Obama on Blackboard if you are interested (optional)
 Sixth Salon, Group B; Contemplitapedia, Group E (by midnight on Bb)
- Mon., Apr. 18: Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (3-49); bell hooks, "Postmodern Blackness" (Bb)
 Sixth Salon, Group C; Contemplitapedia, Group F (by midnight on Bb)
- Wed., Apr. 20: Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (50-105)
 Sixth Salon, Group D; Contemplitapedia, Group A (by midnight on Bb)
- Fri., Apr. 22: Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (106-153)
 Sixth Salon, Group E; Contemplitapedia, Group B (by midnight on Bb)
- Mon., Apr. 25: Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (154-199); Margaret Atwood review of *Beloved* in the *New York Times* (Bb)
 Sixth Salon, Group F; Contemplitapedia, Group C (by midnight on Bb)
Think piece due on Blackboard by midnight

Wed., Apr. 27:	Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> (200-275); Stephen Metcalf, "Why Is <i>Beloved</i> Beloved?" (Bb)
Fri., Apr. 29:	Hilton Als, "Ghosts in the House: How Toni Morrison Fostered a Generation of Black Writers" (Bb)
Mon., May 2:	Buffer Day
Wed., May 4:	Buffer Day
Fri., May 6:	Student Feedback Surveys; Cynthia Ozick, "The Novel's Evil Tongue" (Bb)
Mon., May 9:	Final Exam, 2-4:30
Fri., May 13:	Optional revision of think piece due on Blackboard by midnight; e-mail me to let me know you resubmitted.

Appendix A: Group Assignments

Group A: Allman-Gonzalez
 Group B: Harris-Hervey
 Group C: Hixon-Luna
 Group D: Maki-Minor
 Group E: Patman-Stewart
 Group F: Sullivan-Whittlesey

Appendix B: Author Information

Toni Morrison (1931-)

Pulitzer Prize winner for *Beloved* (1988)
 American Book Award winner for *Beloved* (1988)
 Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature (1993)

Marilynne Robinson (1943-)

Pulitzer Prize finalist for *Housekeeping* (1980)
 Pulitzer Prize winner for *Gilead* (2004)
 Orange Prize winner for *Home* (2008)

Jonathan Franzen (1959-)

National Book Award winner for *The Corrections* (2001)
 Pulitzer Prize finalist for *The Corrections*

Alison Bechdel (1960-)

Recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship (aka "genius grant"), 2014
 The musical adaptation of her graphic memoir, *Fun Home*, won a Tony for Best Musical in 2015

David Foster Wallace (1962-2008)

Pulitzer Prize finalist for *The Pale King* (2011)

Claire Messud (1966-)

Junot Díaz (1968-)

Pulitzer Prize winner for *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)
 Recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship (aka "genius grant"), 2012