

English 290 – Themes in Literature: Postmodernism

Fall 2012, Section 800 Online

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Office: MO 103D
Office Hours: MW 11:00-12:00pm and by appt.

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Required Texts and Materials:

- Nichol, Bran. *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction*
- Auster, Paul. *City of Glass*
- DeLillo, Don. *White Noise*
- Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five*
- Film: *Pulp Fiction* (may be purchased, rented, or checked out at the library)
- Microsoft Word and PowerPoint (If you do not have access, you can use “Tealware”)
- Technical Requirements as listed at <http://uncw.edu/ONLINE/techreq.html>
- Adobe Reader (free download here: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>)
- A saving device such as a flash drive

You may order textbooks online through UNCW’s bookstore at <http://www.uncw.edu/ba/bookstore/>. You should obtain your books as soon as possible, as your first reading assignment will be due during the second week of class.

Course Description:

What, exactly, is Postmodernism? In this course, we will discuss this question at length as we analyze the texts of Paul Auster, Kurt Vonnegut, Don DeLillo, and many others. In addition, we’ll consider postmodern art and film, and the relevance of Postmodernism in our daily lives.

Course Goals:

- To trace the development of Postmodern literature, and to explore the major concepts and issues presented in Postmodern literary texts. (AIL 2, WI 5)
- To demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, appreciate, and make cogent subjective judgments about Postmodern literature. (AIL 1)
- To sharpen critical and close reading skills and develop a familiarity with literary terms and conventions through assigned readings and lectures (AIL 1)
- To create sustained, thoughtful, and persuasive arguments according to the standard conventions of English (WI 1; WI 4)
- To select and choose textual sources to generalize, explain, and interpret content about issues in a given text. (WI 1, WI 2)
- To demonstrate an understanding of the ethical use and citation of others’ ideas used as supporting materials (WI 3)
- To sharpen intellectual curiosity and develop confidence as a speaker and facilitator of discussions (AIL 3)
- To analyze and evaluate the claims about the development and/or continuity of Postmodern literature. (WI 5)

Course Requirements:

Learning Activities – 10 points
Discussion Participation – 10 points
Essay 1 – 20 points
Essay 2 – 20 points
Midterm Exam – 20 points
Final Exam – 20 points

Final Grading Scale:

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 93-100 points – A (Excellent) | 73-76 points – C (Average) |
| 90-92 points – A- | 70-72 points – C- |
| 87-89 points – B+ | 67-69 points – D+ |
| 83-86 points – B (Good) | 63-66 points – D (Passing) |
| 80-82 points – B- | 60-62 points – D- |
| 77-79 points – C+ | Below 60 points – F (Failure) |

TECHNOLOGY

Getting Started:

We will be using *Blackboard 9.1* as the platform for this course. You should go to <http://learn.uncw.edu> to access the course. Your username will be your email username (without @uncw.edu) and your password will be your email password. Once you log in, you will be able to click on English 290. Once you reach the course homepage, you'll find a "Blackboard Orientation" on the left hand tool bar. Be sure to complete this orientation, especially if you are unfamiliar with Blackboard. **Blackboard works best with Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome.*

Before beginning this course, students should be sure they have the following skills:

- Basic use of Blackboard and UNCW email, including attaching and downloading documents
- Use of Microsoft Word and its comment tool
- Basic computer functions such as "copy and paste."

Online Support:

If at any point during the semester you have problems with Blackboard, you can receive assistance from the Technology Assistance Center. The email address is tac@uncw.edu and the phone number is 910-962-HELP (4357). If you do email the TAC, be sure to put "Blackboard 9.1" in the subject line. There is also a very useful online support center at <http://www.uncw.edu/ITSD/learning/UNCWITSDBBlackboardLearn.html>

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Because this is an online course, it is important that you keep yourself accountable for weekly assignments and deadlines. Deadlines can be found *at the end of this syllabus*. You will find it extremely important to stay organized and to check Blackboard several times a week. It is also a good idea to maintain contact with me throughout the semester. If I notice that you have not been logging in to Blackboard and completing weekly assignments, I will assume you have decided to drop the course.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Each week, you will be asked to complete readings and will be responsible for their content. In addition, you will complete Learning Activities including corresponding lectures, writing activities, quizzes and/or worksheets. Students are always responsible for this information, and should complete all readings and activities by 11:59pm (eastern time) on **Friday of each week**. Learning Activities can be found by clicking on the left hand tool bar on our Blackboard Homepage. Each week that there are Learning Activities, students will receive a grade out of 10 for that week's work. At the end of the semester, these grades will be averaged to arrive at a final grade. *Missed Learning Activities may not be made up.*

Grades for Learning Activities will be awarded as follows:

- 9.5-10 points: Student shows strong understanding of the readings and goes above and beyond in completing all assignments for the week.
- 8.5-9 points: Student shows good understanding of the readings and does a good job completing all assignments for the week.
- 7-8 points: Student shows some understanding of the readings and does a good job completing most of the assignments for the week.
- 5-6 points: Student shows partial understanding of the readings and completes some of the assignments for the week. Some assignments may be missing or only partially complete, may not be completed as directed, or may show lack of reading and participation.
- 2-4 points: Student shows little understanding of the readings, fails to complete most of the assignments for the week, or fails to complete most assignments as directed.
- 0-1 points: Students shows no understanding of the readings, completes no assignments for the week, or fails to complete assignments as directed.

DISCUSSION BOARD PARTICIPATION

Discussion boards are **located within Learning Activities**. Discussions for each week should begin on Monday's (or earlier) and should wrap up on Fridays by 11:59pm (eastern time). While I will usually post at least one discussion question each week, students should also occasionally post his or her own questions for discussion. All students must post *at least two of their own throughout the course of the semester, in a separate thread. At least one of these must be posted within the first eight weeks of class.*

Students should post 2-4 good quality discussion responses per week. At least one of these must be posted by Wednesday. These responses may be to my questions or to classmate's questions. Responses to discussion questions should be thoughtful and well written. Refer to "Netiquette" at the end of this syllabus for a list of guidelines. When replying to classmates, you should be sure to be polite and open-minded. The discussion board is a place where all students should feel comfortable expressing ideas. This does not mean that you cannot disagree with your classmates; it means that you should be conscious of your language and tone.

I will judge participation in discussion boards based on how often a student responds to instructor and student discussion questions, how often a student posts his or her own discussion questions, and the insightfulness and usefulness of all of the above. However, discussion posts should be concise, and should not exceed 200 words. Each week that there are weekly assignments, students will receive a grade out of 10 for that week's work. At the end of the semester, these grades will be averaged to arrive at a final grade. *Students who fail to post at least 2 of their own unique discussion questions for the semester, or who fail to post at least one of those questions in the first eight weeks will lose 1-2 points from the overall discussion board grade. *Missed discussions may not be made up.*

Grades for discussion participation will be awarded as follows:

- 9.5-10 points: Student shows strong understanding of the readings and posts 2-4 responses for the week. Responses are insightful, try out new ideas, and encourage further discussion among classmates.
- 8.5-9 points: Student shows good understanding of the readings and posts 2-4 or more responses for the week. Responses are insightful and relevant to the week's subject matter.
- 7-8 points: Student shows some understanding of the readings and posts the minimum 2 responses for the week. Responses are relevant to the week's subject matter.
- 5-6 points: Student shows some understanding of the readings, but posts less than the minimum 2 posts for the week. Student may post responses that lack relevance or insightfulness, or that simply repeat ideas stated previously by classmates.
- 2-4 points: Student shows little understanding of the readings and posts less than the minimum 2 posts for the week. Responses may be completely off-topic, may simply repeat ideas stated previously by classmates, or may fail to follow guidelines listed under "netiquette."
- 0-1 points: Students shows no understanding of the readings and posts less than the minimum 2 posts for the week. Responses may be completely off-topic, may simply repeat ideas stated previously by classmates, or may fail to follow guidelines listed under "netiquette."

EXAMS

This course requires a midterm and a final exam. You **must** take each exam on the date scheduled. Late exams will not be accepted. Exams will become available by 5:00am and must be completed by 11:59pm (eastern time). They will be made up of short answer and essay questions, and can be found by clicking the "Exams" button on the left of the Blackboard Homepage. Exams should be emailed to my campus email address as a .doc or .docx attachment. *Exams that are not turned in as a .doc or .docx attachment will not be accepted.* The subject line of your email should include your last name, class, section number, and the assignment. For example: "Smith, English 290-001 Final Exam."

ESSAYS

You will be writing two essays for this class. Part of your grade for these essays will be based on rough drafts, peer editing, and revision. Final drafts should be uploaded to Blackboard as a .doc or .docx attachment using the “Assignments” tool. *Essays that are not turned in as a .doc or .docx attachment will be considered late until they are turned in correctly.*

All deadlines in this class are firm. Be sure to plan wisely and save all work in at least two places. For each day that an essay is late, the grade for that assignment will be reduced by **2 points**. Your essay prompts can be found by clicking the “Essays and Exams” button on the left of the Blackboard Homepage. *Individual rubrics for each essay will be posted along with the prompt.*

The Writing Center:

I encourage all students to obtain online help from the Writing Center for their essays. You may either visit in person or submit drafts far in advance for online consultation. For more information, visit:

<http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/writing/index.html>

EXTRA CREDIT

I will offer one extra credit project in this class, in which you will have the opportunity use multi-media to explain an aspect of Postmodernism for up to 2 extra points on your final grade. ***Late or incomplete projects will not be accepted.*** More details for this project will be posted on Blackboard.

COMMUNICATION

Office Hours:

My office hours this semester are MW 11:00-12:00pm. Even though this is an online course, I encourage students to set up face-to-face appointments with me if they are able. Other options for contacting me include email, phone, and Blackboard IM. My username is: **bissettee** *You can download Blackboard IM by clicking the appropriate link on the left hand side of our Blackboard homepage. *If you would like to meet with me, but are unavailable during office hours, you may contact me to set up an appointment.*

Email / Phone:

I will often send information and updates via campus email, so you should check your campus email several times a week. All students will be responsible for knowing this information. “I forgot to check my email” is not an excuse. Email is also the best way to contact me if you have questions throughout the course. While I do check my email often, students should be aware that **I usually only respond to emails Monday – Thursday before 6:00pm, and Friday before 1:00pm (eastern time)**. Therefore, it is a good idea to work on assignments ahead of time in case you have questions.

My cell phone number is listed at the top of this syllabus. Students are welcome to call or text this number in cases when email is insufficient. **However, I do ask that students only call or text Monday – Thursday between 10:00am and 5:00pm, and Friday 10:00am-1:00pm (eastern time).**

*When using text messaging or voicemail, include your full name, course title, and section number.

***For email, include course title, section number, and a few words about your question in the subject line.**

Your email should use correct grammar and complete sentences. Also, be sure to use proper etiquette, including a greeting such as “Dear Ms. Sumerel” and concluding with a salutation such as “Sincerely, John Doe.”

NETIQUETTE

For this course, you will be expressing your thoughts in various types of writing. There are a few things to consider when writing online.

- **Avoid internet speak.** This means spelling out words instead of using abbreviations often seen in chat rooms and text messaging. For example, the following questions would be unacceptable: What did u think of the second paragraph? When r we supposed to turn this in?
- **Proofread.** Even in a reply to a discussion post, you should be sure to proofread what you have written. You should also try to use correct grammar in all situations.
- **Use proper capitalization.** The beginning of a sentence should always be capitalized, even in online writing. You should also take care to avoid speaking in all caps. For instance, you should not write: THE STYLE OF THIS ESSAY WAS EFFECTIVE. This is the equivalent of shouting.
- **Use names:** When responding to a discussion item, blog post, or email, use the name of the person you are responding to. Ultimately, we want to foster a positive community through this course.
- **Be polite.** This is an environment where students should feel comfortable communicating ideas. Therefore, when responding to classmates you should always be polite, even if you want to express disagreement. Excessive profanity, of course, is unacceptable.
- **Advance Discussion in useful ways.** Do not make off-topic posts in the midst of a thread. Also, contribute, don't reiterate. A post that says "I agree" is useless. It's okay to agree with a poster, but rather than simply agreeing, extend what they have to say by locating other examples or elaborating on the point.
- **Keep your discussion posts concise.** Think quality, not quantity. Discussion posts should not exceed 200 words.

OTHER POLICIES

Zero Tolerance Policy:

UNCW practices a zero tolerance policy for violence and harassment of any kind. For emergencies, contact UNCW CARE at 962-2273; Campus Police at 962-3184; or Wilmington Police at 911. For University or community resources visit: <http://www.uncw.edu/safe-relate/campusResources.htm>. Violence prevention information and resources are available at <http://www.uncw.edu/safe%2Drelate/>.

Disabilities:

If you have a disability and need special accommodations, you should let me know *within the first week of classes*. You will also need to register with Disability Services for proper documentation. The phone number for Disability Services is 910-962-7555.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic Dishonesty is unacceptable and is grounds for failure for this course. All students are responsible for knowing the guidelines listed in this UNCW Academic Honor Code:

http://www.uncw.edu/policies/documents/03_100FINALHONORCODE_Aug2009.pdf

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty in which you take someone else's ideas and represent them as your own. Some examples of plagiarism include:

1. You write about someone else's work in your paper and do not give them credit for it by referencing them.
2. You give a presentation and use someone else's ideas and do not state that the ideas are the other persons.
3. You get facts from your textbook or some other reference material and do not reference that material.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS
(Subject to change)

**Learning Activities should be completed by Friday of each week.*

**Discussions should be ongoing, beginning on Mondays and continuing through Fridays each week. At least one discussion post must be completed by Wednesday.*

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| 8/22-8/24 (WK 1) | First Week of Classes – Read syllabus, become familiar with Blackboard, obtain necessary materials for the course, and complete first Learning Activities. |
| 8/27-8/31 (WK 2) | “Preface: reading postmodern fiction” xiii-xvii (CIPF) “Introduction: Postmodernism and postmodernity” 1-16 (CIPF) <i>City of Glass</i> , chapter 1 *Last day for Drop/Add is 8/29 |
| 9/3-9/7 (WK 3) | <i>City of Glass</i> chapters 2-8 |
| 9/10-9/15 (WK 4) | <i>City of Glass</i> chapters 9-13 “Paul Auster, <i>City of Glass</i> ” 178-183 (CIPF) |
| 9/17-9/21 (WK 5) | Rough Draft for Essay #1 due on 9/17 Peer Edits and Responses due on 9/19 Final Draft for Essay #1 due on 9/21 |
| 9/24-9/28 (WK 6) | <u>“A Supermarket in California”</u> (online) <u>“Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”</u> (online) |
| 10/1-10/5 (WK 7) | <i>Pulp Fiction</i> – Class Viewing on 10/1 at 6:00pm! Location TBA. If unable to attend, be sure to watch it on your own prior to 10/1. * Last Day to Withdraw with grade of W is 10/3 |
| 10/8-10/12 (WK 8) | Selected Postmodern art on Blackboard Deadline to post first discussion question <i>*Fall Break 10/8-10/9, Discussions may take place 10/10-10/12</i> |
| 10/15-10/19 (WK 9) | Midterm Exam on 10/18 |
| 10/22-10/26 (WK 10) | <i>White Noise</i> chapters 1-20 |
| 10/29-11/2 (WK 11) | <i>White Noise</i> chapters 21-27 |
| 11/5-11/9 (WK 12) | <i>White Noise</i> chapters 28-40 “Don DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i> and <i>Libra</i> ” 191-194 (CIPF) |
| 11/12-11/16 (WK 13) | Rough Draft for Essay #2 due on 11/12 Peer Edits and Responses due on 11/14 Final Draft for Essay #2 due on 11/16 |
| 11/19-11/23 (WK 14) | <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> chapters 1-5 <i>*Thanksgiving Break 11/21-11/23, Discussions and Learning Activities may be completed early this week.</i> |
| 11/26-11/30 (WK 15) | <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> chapters 6-10 |
| 12/3-12/7 (WK 16) | Final Exam on 12/7 |