

English 290 – Themes in Literature: Postmodernism

Spring 2011 Section 005/800 Online

Instructor: Ms. Ashley Bissette
Office: MO 103B
Office Hours: TR 2:00 – 3:00 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>
- A saving device such as a flash drive

You should be able to order textbooks online through the UNCW bookstore. You will want to obtain your books as soon as possible, as your first reading assignment will be due during the second week of classes. The web address for the UNCW bookstore is <http://www.uncw.edu/ba/bookstore/>

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 Objectives:

Students should develop skills in analyzing, presenting, and defending interpretations and in writing thoughtfully about literary texts. Furthermore, students should develop an appreciation and an understanding of literature achieved through practice in asserting and supporting their interpretations of a literary work.

Course Requirements:

Learning Modules / Discussion – 15 points
Essay 1 – 25 points
Essay 2 – 25 points
Midterm Exam – 15 points
Final Exam – 20 points

Final Grading Scale:

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

Getting Started:

We will be using **Blackboard 9.1** as the platform for this course. Please note that **You will NOT be able to access this course from MySeaport**. 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.

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://uncw.edu/bbsupport>.

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 frequently. 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 MODULES / DISCUSSION**Learning Modules:**

Each week you will be asked to complete readings and will be responsible for their content. In addition, you will find learning modules which will contain corresponding lectures, PowerPoint presentations, writing activities and/or worksheets. Students are always responsible for this information, are expected to keep up with assignments, and should complete all readings and activities by **Thursday of each week**. Learning Modules can be found by clicking on "Learning Modules" on the left hand tool bar on our Blackboard Homepage.

Discussion Board Participation:

- Discussion boards will be **located within each week's Learning Module**. Discussions for each week should begin on Monday's (or earlier) and should wrap up on Thursdays. While I will usually post at least one discussion question each week, students should also occasionally post his or her own questions for discussion. I don't expect every student to post their own discussion question for each topic. Instead, I ask that students post *at least two of their own throughout the course of the semester*. Of course, this is only a minimum. I want students to post their own discussion questions when they have something particularly interesting to say or ask.
- *Students should post 2-4 good quality discussion responses per week*. 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.

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. Essays should be emailed to my campus email address as a .doc or .docx attachment. *Essays that are not turned in as a .doc or .docx attachment will be considered late until they are turned in correctly.* The subject line of your email should include your last name, class, section number, and the assignment. For example: “Smith, English 290-005 Essay 1.”

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 and other helpful materials can be found by clicking the “Essays” button on the left of the Blackboard Homepage.

The Writing Center:

I encourage all students to obtain online help from the Writing Center for their essays.

http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/uls/writing_newconsultation.htm

EXAMS

This course requires a midterm exam and a final exam. You **must** take each exam on the date scheduled. Late exams will not be accepted. Exams will become available at 6:00am 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 210-005 Midterm Exam.”

COMMUNICATION

Email / Phone:

I will often send information and updates via campus email, so you should check your campus email daily. 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 check email Sunday – Thursday before 6:00pm, and Friday before 3:00pm (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 Sunday – Thursday between 10:00am and 6:00pm (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. Bissette” and concluding with a salutation such as “Sincerely, John Doe.”

Office Hours:

I will have office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. If you’d like to discuss something with me during office hours, you have a few options.

1. See me in person: Morton Hall 103B
2. Office Phone: 910-962-2960.
3. *Ms. Bissette’s Virtual Office* on the Blackboard Course Homepage

**If you are not available to contact me during office hours, you can set up an appointment with me.*

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

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

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

**Learning Module Activities should be completed by Thursday of each week.*

**Discussions should be ongoing, beginning on Mondays and continuing through Thursdays each week.*

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| 1/12 – 1/13 | First Week of Classes – Read syllabus, Review Course Orientation (on the left hand tool bar), become familiar with Blackboard 9.1, and obtain necessary materials for the course. |
| 1/17-1/20 | “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 1/19 |
| 1/24-1/27 | <i>City of Glass</i> chapters 2-8 |
| 1/31-2/3 | <i>City of Glass</i> chapters 9-13
“Detective Fiction” 171-172 (CIPF)
“Paul Auster, <i>City of Glass</i> ” 178-183 (CIPF) |
| 2/7-2/10 | Rough Draft for Essay #1 due to instructor and peer editing groups on 2/7
Peer Edits and Responses due to instructor and original writer on 2/9
Final Draft for Essay #1 due to instructor on 2/11 |
| 2/14-2/17 | "The Trash Men" (online)
"Vegas" (online)
"Time is Filled with Beginners..." (online)
"Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" (online) |
| 2/21-2/24 | <i>Pulp Fiction</i> |
| 2/28-3/3 | Midterm Exam 3/3
* Last Day to Withdraw with grade of W is 3/1 |
| 3/7-3/10 | “Fiction of the ‘postmodern condition’” 184-185
<i>White Noise</i> chapters 1-20 |
| 3/14-3/17 | Spring Break |
| 3/21-3/24 | <i>White Noise</i> chapters 21-27 |
| 3/28-3/31 | <i>White Noise</i> chapters 28-40
“Don DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i> and <i>Libra</i> ” 191-194 (CIPF) |
| 4/4-4/7 | US Metafiction 72-75 (CIPF)
<i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> chapters 1-5 |
| 4/11-4/14 | <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> chapters 6-10
Rough Draft for Essay #2 due to instructor and peer editing groups on 4/14 |
| 4/18-4/21 | Peer Edits and Responses due to instructor and original writer on 4/18
Final Draft for Essay #2 due to instructor on 4/20 |
| 4/25-4/28 | Warhol, Magritte, and Duchamp – Find biographies and artwork in this week’s Learning Module. |
| 5/2 - 5/4 | Final Exam on 5/4 |