

English 201 – Reading and Writing about Texts  
Instructor – Sheila McMullin

Spring 2012 Section:  
Office:  
Office Hours:  
Email:

**Course Description:** English 201 has a dual mission: to promote careful reading and clear writing. In this class, our goals will be to: read literary texts carefully and critically; identify and understand literary terms and devices; analyze the ways in which literary devices contribute to the meaning of a text; identify and evaluate the contribution of the social, political, historical, and cultural contexts in which a literary text is produced; use that knowledge to support and defend your opinions using textual evidence and; put everything you have learned into a logically organized, formal academic argument (with a clear thesis, supporting sub-claims, and conclusion). We will pay attention to both content and form, learning the fundamentals of analyzing literature in the forms of short fiction, long fiction, drama, nonfiction, and poetry.

Writing is a means of communication. Each text in this course attempts to convey a deep sense of human emotion, thought, and experience. You will also notice the overlying themes of “the supernatural”. We will discuss, but not be limited to, how issues of “the natural” versus “the super” affect our social constructions of nature and human behavior. We will also make relevant how thematic elements from our readings have permeated contemporary culture. In our discussion of these works we will analyze the methods our various authors use to create their narratives and connect with their readers.

**Methods of Instruction:** You will be expected to read a minimum of 100 pages per week of literature. Most class meetings will be interactive and involve a significant amount of student exchange, discussion, group work, peer review and writing. Students may be asked to work individually as well as collaboratively as they investigate issues, practice writing strategies and techniques, learn research and critical reading approaches, and review their own and their peers’ writing. As an entire class we will welcome and encourage multiple points of view and engage with opinions in a respectful manner. Conflicting viewpoints that draw on a significant amount of textual evidence are all extremely valuable and should be discussed openly.

### Required Texts

*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert L Stevenson Oxford University Press ISBN: 0199536228  
*Frankenstein* by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley Norton Critical Editions Paperback ISBN: 0393964582  
*Bless Me Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya Warner Books Paperback ISBN: 0446600253  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare Signet Classics ISBN: 0451526961  
*Don't Let Me Be Lonely: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine Gray Wolf Press ISBN: 9781555974077  
*The Descent of Alette* by Alice Notley Penguin Poets ISBN: 9780140587647

### Required Materials

- Printing resources: All online readings must be printed out and brought to class.
- Computer access: Most homework assignments will require online submission through our class website.
- Electronic and hard copy methods of file back-up. Save all of your work, including rough drafts, peer reviewed drafts, and final copies. Technology failure will generally not excuse late work.
- GMU email account that you check regularly. Important class and university information will be announced in class and/or over Mason email.
- Pen/pencil and paper for note taking and other in-class activities.
- A good, up-to-date, dictionary and MLA style handbook.

## Course Requirements and Grading Percentages

10%	Essay 1: 750 words Process Analysis & Close Reading Report + Peer Review and Post-Script	Due: February 8
15%	Essay 2: 900 words Interpretative + Peer Review and Post-Script	Due: March 20
20%	Essay 4: 1000 words Close Read & Reflective Transition + Peer Review and Post-Script	Due: May 9
10%	In-Class Essay Exam	Due: February 29
10%	Creative Writing Piece with Post-Script	Due: April 30
5%	Submission to Outside Source and Presentation with Post-Script	Due: April 30 & April 2
15%	Beta Analysis and Reader Responses	
15%	Class Participation and Other Short Assignments	

**Course Grading Policy:** In grading essays, I use the following general percentage criteria:

<b>A</b>	95-100	<b>B</b>	84-86	<b>C</b>	74-76	<b>D</b>	64-66
<b>A-</b>	90-94	<b>B-</b>	80-83	<b>C-</b>	70-73	<b>D-</b>	60-63
<b>B+</b>	87-89	<b>C+</b>	77-79	<b>D+</b>	67-69	<b>F</b>	0-59

**Weekly Beta Analyses and Reader Responses:** Students will post **six** Beta Analyses (350-600 words) to the wiki over the course of the semester. Responses should be posted by Sunday at 10 PM, engaging some aspect of the reading for the following class session. **At least three of your Analyses should be posted by week 8. There will be no more than two Beta Analyses posted by an individual in one week.** The Analyses should connect to the themes of the class and deal with any aspect of the readings, prompts and discussions the student wishes to pursue in greater depth. In addition to your own Analyses, you will be expected to post a follow-up **Reader Response (200-300 words) to one or more of your classmates in at least three different weeks;** this means that each Monday or Tuesday, you should read what everyone else has posted, and when you come across something you find particularly intriguing, post a thoughtful and respectful response. Refer to the wiki for detailed instructions.

**Creative Writing Piece:** You will write one piece in any genre of your choosing in response to one of the readings with a 300 word post-script on why you choose this genre, how you are responding to the original piece, your process in writing creatively, and what you hope to accomplish with the piece. We will talk further about this in class. Refer to the wiki for detailed instructions.

**Outside submission:** You are required to share a formal writing piece from class or alternative creative writing piece with an appropriate and approved outside reader/audience and provide me proof of this submission/sharing with a 300 word post-script on why you chose this audience and what you hope your outside submission will accomplish. Groups will also be responsible for presenting on an appropriate place to submit. We will talk further about this in class. Refer to the wiki for detailed instructions.

**In-class Essay Exam:** This is an important academic skill to have since you will be asked to do it in many classes throughout your college career. You will be given a full class period and expected to write a complete essay from a choice of topics I will provide. I will not be as strict in grading this as I would be on a more formal essay, but I will still expect all the same elements: introduction, clear thesis, supporting points, and conclusion.

**Peer Review:** For essays 2 & 3 you will exchange rough drafts with a partner and, for homework, provide helpful and thoughtful feedback on your peer's essay concerning content, analysis, interpretation, and evidence. The effort you put into your peer's essay will be reflected in your own final essay score.

**Class Participation:** This means you should be actively present, implying cognitive awareness as well as the basic courtesies of formal social gatherings while providing thoughtful conversation pieces to the classroom. Each class day is worth 2 points, one point of on-time attendance and one point for participation. If you miss class or are significantly unprepared, you earn a zero for the day. Class officially begins at 9:00 (11752) or 12:00 (11754) when you are always responsible for turning in any required work. Being late will result in the loss of half the day's class-participation points. If you miss an assignment from the beginning of class you may lose those assignment points. However, in an emergency I would rather have you come late than not at all. If you miss a class, your first step is to do the assigned readings. Then, contact a classmate about what notes and activities you missed. Only after you have checked with your classmate, feel free to contact me with any specific and informed questions.

Record two classmates' contact information here:

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Schedule: Refer to the Wiki for Up-to-Date Planning and Detailed Research and Writing Assignments**

### **Week 1**

Jan 23 – Introductions and Literature Comprehension Evaluation Readings Posted on Wiki

Jan 25 – Introductions and Close Reading Readings Posted on Wiki

### **Week 2**

Jan 30 – Close Reading and Literary Terms Readings Posted on Wiki

*Tuesday Jan 31 – Last Day to Add a Course*

Feb 1 –Introduction to Fiction, Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde Context, and Close Reading  
Read Introduction Pgs vii-xxxii & xxxviii-xli

### **Week 3**

Feb 6 –Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Read Pgs 5-66

Feb 8 -Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Read Pgs 163-183

Due: Essay 1

**Week 4**

Feb 13 - Frankenstein & Context Read Preface Pgs vii-xii, Composition and Revision 157-160, Mary Shelley 169-173, Percy Bysshe Shelley 185-186, 5-63

Feb 15 - Frankenstein Read Pgs 63-101

**Week 5**

Feb 20 - Frankenstein Read Pgs 103-156

Introduction to Drama and Shakespeare's Comedies Read Shakespeare: An Overview Pgs vii-lxi

Feb 22 - Midsummer Night's Dream Read Act I-II and Online Supplemental Reading

*Friday Feb 24 - last day to drop classes*

**Week 6**

Feb 27 - Midsummer Night's Dream Read Act III-IV and Online Supplemental Reading

Feb 29 - In-class Essay Exam

*February 27 to March 30 - Selective Withdrawal Period*

**Week 7**

March 5 - Midsummer Night's Dream Read Act V & Myers' Tragedy and Comedy Pgs 98-112 & Bamber's The Status of the Feminine Pgs 129-131 & Barnet's Stage and Screen Pgs 136-147

March 7 - Midsummer Night's Dream Read Online Supplemental Reading

**Week 8** - March 12 & 14 - Spring Break Read Bless Me, Ultima Read Pgs 1-105

**Week 9**

March 19 - Introduction to Magical Realism and Multilingual Texts and Context  
Bless Me, Ultima Read Pgs 106-142 & Supplemental Online Reading

March 20 - Bless Me, Ultima Read Pgs 143-176

Due: Essay 2

**Week 10**

March 26 - Bless Me, Ultima Read Pgs 177-235

March 28 - Bless Me, Ultima Read Pgs 236-262 & Supplemental Online Reading

**Week 11**

April 2 - Outside Submission Presentations & Introduction to the Lyric Essay/Hybrid Genre & Context  
Read Pgs 133-154, 1-25 and other supplement online reading

April 4 - Don't Let Me Be Lonely Read Pgs 26-49

**Week 12**

April 9 - Don't Let Me Be Lonely Read Pgs 50-93

April 11 - Don't Let Me Be Lonely Read Pgs 94-131

**Week 13**

April 16 - Don't Let Me Be Lonely & Introduction to Poetry and Context  
Supplemental Online Readings

April 18 - Descent of Alette Read Pgs 3-42

## Week 14

April 23 – Descent of Alette Read Pgs 45-82

April 25 – Descent of Alette Read Pgs 85-148

## Week 15

April 30 – Due: Creative Writing Piece & Outside Submission Presentations

May 2 – Presentations

May 9 – Final Exam Week Due: Essay 4

**Behavior Policy:** Respect your classmates by turning off cell phones, iPods, etc. The use of laptops or other computer devices will not be permitted. Interruptions involving these devices count as a zero participation grade for the day after my first asking to put them away.

**Statement on Plagiarism: Do not do it.** Instructors in the English Department support the George Mason Honor Code, which requires them to report any suspected instances of plagiarism to the Honor Council. All judgments about plagiarism are made after careful review by the Honor Council, which may issue penalties ranging from grade-deductions to course failure to expulsion from GMU.

**Late Work Policy:** Late assignments are those arriving any time after the instructed due date. Any late in-class work will result in the deduction of participation points. Late essay assignments will earn a deduction of half a letter grade for each calendar day it is late. In a documentable emergency, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss what arrangements can be made.

In those rare “life happens” events you have **one free pass** for any **one** essay or class assignment, to be up to three calendar days late without penalty. To qualify, you **must notify me on or before the scheduled due date (in person or by email)** and then submit the pass with the essay/assignment when you turn it in. I will not automatically give late work a pass. **This pass may only be used one time**, so choose wisely.

**Revision Policy:** You have the opportunity to revise 1 of our three essays for a higher score. Revisions must demonstrate substantial change to the focus, support, approach, and/or organization of the essay in addition to comprehensive error correction, or they will be returned with no grade change. Revisions must be submitted with all previous drafts and completed **within two weeks** of the assignment’s return to you. I will not regrade the assignment after the two week deadline.

**Conferences:** Conferences are a chance for you to ask any questions about upcoming papers or grades received for previous papers, although there is a **24-hour** wait-to-talk-about-grade policy. Conferences are confidential and meant to foster open communication. If you have questions, please take advantage of my office hours or email me or talk to me after class to set up a conference time. All conferences will take place in my office in The Hub, Room 1232. I am happy to work with you on any of your concerns.

**Email Etiquette:** In order for me to respond quickly to your emails, please follow these guidelines:

- Start your subject line with “ENGH 201” and then summarize the point of your message. An email with the subject line “ENGH 201 Frankenstein Question” is much easier to find and act on than an email labeled “English.”
- Please include a greeting and a conclusion to your email. Always conclude with your first and last name. Be respectful, be specific, and use complete sentences with correct grammar.

Please note that I will not respond to any emails that do not adhere to proper etiquette. Please allow 48 hours for a response email.

**Students with special needs:** If you are a student with a learning difference or special needs and you require academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

**GMU Nondiscrimination Policy:** George Mason University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment free from any discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or age. GMU shall adhere to all applicable state and federal equal opportunity/affirmative action statutes and regulations.

**Final Note:** I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. I will inform you of the changes in class and on the wiki at least two class periods in advance. I am looking forward to the semester and the time we will be spending together. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have questions about the syllabus and/or schedule.

3-Day Late Pass
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<p>For any <b>one</b> essay or class assignment, you may be up to three calendar days late without penalty. To qualify, you <b>must notify me on or before the scheduled due date (in person or by email)</b> and then submit this pass with the essay/assignment when you turn it in. I will not automatically give late work a pass. <u>This pass may only be used one time</u>, so choose wisely. It cannot be taken back to be used for another assignment.</p>
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<p>NAME:</p>
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<p>ESSAY/ASSIGNMENT:</p>
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<p>SCHEDULED DUE DATE:</p>
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<p>MY NEW DUE DATE:</p>
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Major Assignment Revision Pass
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<p>For any one major assignment you may revise for a higher score. To qualify, you must notify me on or before the scheduled due date (in person or by email) and then submit this pass with the assignment. Revisions must be submitted with all previous drafts and completed within two weeks of the assignment's return to you. This pass may only be used one time, so choose wisely. It cannot be taken back to be used for another assignment.</p>
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<p>NAME:</p>
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<p>ASSIGNMENT:</p>
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<p>RETURN DATE:</p>
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<p>NEW DUE DATE:</p>
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