

HR 496, Great books
Fall 2011–Spring 2012
Location: DesPeres Hall 208
6:30–9:00 alternate Wednesdays

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SYLLABUS

Texts

- Atwood, Margaret. *The Penelopiad*. Distributed by Publishers Group West. New York: Cannongate Books, 2005.
- Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. Reprint Edition. New York: Scholastic Press, 2010 [2008].
- Gardner, John. *Grendel*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989 [1971].
- Helprin, Mark. *Winter's Tale*. Reissue Edition. New York: Harvest Books, 2006 [1983].
- Hoban, Russell. *Riddley Walker*. Expanded Edition. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1998 [1980].
- Ishiguro, Kazuo. *The Remains of the Day*. Vintage International Edition. New York: Random House, 1993 [1988].
- Jaspers, Karl. *The Question of German Guilt*. 2nd Edition. Translated by E. B. Ashton With a New Introduction by Joseph W. Koterski, S. J. New York: Fordham UP, 2001 [1948].
- Kundera, Milan, *The Unbearable lightness of Being*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 1999 [1984].
- Nafisi, Azar. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. Random House Deluxe Trade Paperback Edition. New York: Random House, 2008 [2003].
- Nussbaum, Martha. *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.
- Potok, Chaim. *My Name is Asher Lev*. Anchor Books. New York: Random House, 2003 [1972].
- Porter, Katherine Anne. *Ship of Fools*. Back Bay Books. New York: Little, Brown, 2000 [1962].
- Pirsig, Robert. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. HarperPerennial Classics. New York: HarperCollins, 2006 [1974].
- Wallace, David Foster. *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men*. Back Bay Books. New York: Little, Brown, 2000 [1999].

These twelve books are required. I've listed good, cheap editions for most of them. It isn't necessary that you get the listed editions, but it sometimes helps discussion if we all have the same page numbers.

I've left room in the schedule for you to choose two books, one for fall and one for spring. We'll start talking about these choices at our first fall class meeting, but I'd like to put off making them until we've all had a chance to get to know one another a little.

I maintain a class web page on my blog. There will always be a current copy of this syllabus there, if you should need to check changes we make in class for any reason.

There is a style sheet there, as well, that tabulates the reader's marks I tend to use. You can download these texts and print them with Adobe Reader. If you don't have Adobe Reader, there's a link at the class web site to the Adobe Reader download page. Adobe Reader is a free program. The blog address is: <http://julianlong.net/wordpress/>.

Schedule

August 29: Fall classes begin.
August 31: Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*.
September 5: Labor Day holiday.
September 14: Atwood, *The Penelopiad*.
September 28: Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice*.
October 12: Gardner, *Grendel*.
October 17–23: Midterm Exams.
October 24–25: Fall break.
October 26: Hoban, *Riddley Walker*.
November 9: Wallace, *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men*.
November 23–25: Thanksgiving holiday.
December 7: Helprin, *Winter's Tale*.
December 14–20: Final exams.
December 20: 5:00 p.m., fall semester paper due.
December 21–January 12: Semester break.
January 16: Martin Luther King holiday.
January 17: Spring classes begin.
January 25: Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.
February 8: Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*.
February 22: Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*.
March 5–10: Midterm exams.
March 12–17: Spring break.
March 21: Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*.
April 11: Collins, *The Hunger Games*.
April 18: Porter, *Ship of Fools*.
May 2: Potok, *My Name is Asher Lev*.
May 9–15: Final exams.
May 15: 5:00 p.m. Spring semester paper due.

Overview

The course is primarily reading and discussion. Reading assignments include modern and postmodern classics.

Grades, writing, attendance

I'd like you to write a one-page paragraph essay detailing your reaction to each reading assignment and hand it in at the end of each class after the discussion. I want these to be honest, unprejudiced reactions, so generally I'll not accept them late. I'll plan to count ten

paragraph essays for each of you over the year—that will give you some flexibility about what to write.

In addition to the paragraph essays, I'd like you to write a more substantial semester essay each term in which you explore some theme that appears in more than one text. These should be original essays and not research papers. We'll talk about these essays at some length in class. At present, I'm thinking I'll base your final grade on class participation (25%), your paragraph essay average (25%), and the two longer essays (25% each).

I expect you to attend class and to be on time. If you need be absent, please let me know in advance and hand your paragraph essay in early unless you want to skip it. We meet mostly every two weeks. A hint to the wise: I'll not give quizzes as long as people come to class and/or unless I discover that people aren't reading.

The university uses the following grading scale:

3.9 – 4.0	A	2.2 – 2.5	C+
3.6 – 3.8	A –	1.9 – 2.1	C
3.2 – 3.5	B+	1.6 – 1.8	C –
2.9 – 3.1	B	0.9 – 1.5	D
2.6 – 2.8	B –	0.0 – 0.8	F

About form

Double space your essays, including any notes and references you may include. I have given you a simple style sheet at the class web site as well as links there to other sources of information about style. For questions you can't answer by going to these sources, check the *MLA Handbook*.

Academic Honesty

I expect you to conduct your work for this class in a manner consistent with university standards of academic honesty. The university *Policy on Academic Honesty* is available in the library.

Disability Accommodation

If you need disability accommodation, you should contact the Office of Disabilities Services at 314/977-8885 in addition to speaking to me, since some accommodations may require college-wide resources. The College of Arts and Sciences asks that you contact Disabilities Services “as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.”

Conferences

Office hours: TBD

I'll schedule hours at our first class after I've had a chance to talk with you about what your needs may be. I'll also make appointments for individual conferences within reason. Since I don't have a campus office, I'll use the little coffee lounge in Pius Library as a place to meet you. If you need me at other times, you can call me at my wireless number or at home; leave a message if I don't answer. Generally the best way to communicate with me is to write me email.

Helpful Phone Numbers

Campus Ministry	977-2425
Honors Program	977-3951
Julian Long	
Home	773-2876
Wireless	302-3267
Student Health and Counseling	977-2323
Student Housing and Residence Life	977-2811
Student Success Center	
Academic Support	977-3484
Career Services	977-2828
Disability Services	977-8885
Public Safety	977-3000

Please report any errors you find in this syllabus.