

HR 496, Great books
Fall 2012–Spring 2013
Location: TBA
6:30–9:00 alternate Wednesdays

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SYLLABUS

Texts

- Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Penguin, 1994 [1963].
- Atwood, Margaret. *The Penelopiad*. Distributed by Publishers Group West. New York: Cannongate Books, 2005.
- Barenboim, Daniel. *Music Quickens Time*. Reprint Edition. London: Verso, 2009 [2007].
- Berry, Wendell. *Home Economics*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1987.
- Dillard, Annie. *Living by Fiction*. Revised Edition. New York: Harper Perennial, 1988 [1982].
- Eiseley, Loren. *The Unexpected Universe*. A Harvest Book. New York: Harcourt, 1994 [1964].
- 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].
- Nafisi, Azar. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. Random House Deluxe Trade Paperback Edition. New York: Random House, 2008 [2003].
- Potok, Chaim. *My Name is Asher Lev*. Anchor Books. New York: Random House, 2003 [1972].
- Schlink, Bernhard. *The Reader*. Trans. Carol Brown Janeway. New York: Vintage International, 1998.

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 or for any other 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/>.

This year, for the first time, I've created a little online community that we can use to communicate with one another in between class meetings. In addition to various content

pages, you'll find a discussion board at this site that will allow you to post your essays for your classmates to read and post comments. There's also an assignment tool that provides a place for you to send me your essay if you need to miss class but don't want to skip writing the reflection. And you'll be able to keep track of your grades there. Just click on the tools menu option and select "My Grades." The site is now online at SLU Global. Just go to MySLU and log in. You're already enrolled. You'll find SLU Global on the MySLU "Tools" menu. There's also a link to SLU Global at my blog, Just click on "What's behind the wall . . ."

Schedule

August 27: Fall classes begin.
August 29: Organizational meeting.
September 3: Labor Day holiday.
September 12: Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.
September 26: Atwood, *The Penelopiad*.
October 10: Dillard, *Living by Fiction*.
October 15–20: Midterm Exams.
October 22–23: Fall break.
October 24: Gardner, *Grendel*.
November 7: Eiseley: *The Unexpected Universe*.
November 21–23: Thanksgiving holiday.
November 28: **Class choice book.**
December 5: Helprin, *Winter's Tale*.
December 12–18: Final exams.
December 18: 5:00 p.m., fall semester paper due.
December 23–January 13: Semester break.
January 14: Spring classes begin.
January 16: Berry, *Home Economics*.
January 21: Martin Luther King holiday.
January 30: Hoban, *Riddley Walker*.
February 27: Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.
March 4–9: Midterm exams.
March 11–16: Spring break.
March 20: Schlink, *The Reader*.
March 28–April 1: Easter break.
April 3: **Class choice book.**
April 17: Barenboim: *Music Quickens Time*.
May 1: Potok, *My Name is Asher Lev*.
May 8–14: Final exams.
May 14: 5:00 p.m., spring semester paper due.

Overview

Reading assignments include modern and postmodern classics. The course is primarily reading and discussion. I'm hoping for some online discussion this term as well as the talk in our formal class meetings. Our numbers are great enough this year that I fear we

may not all be able to speak at every class. That's my main reason for creating the online community.

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

I will also use the grade of A+, though the university does not allow it in final grading. A+ will have a value of 4.2 – 4.5. I'll return your essays with letter grades, but I'll use numerical values in keeping the online grade book.

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*.

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.”

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.

Conferences

I'll 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 privately with me is to write me email.

Helpful Phone Numbers

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

Please report any errors you find in this syllabus.