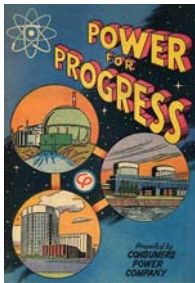


ENGL 250B: American Literature The American Imagination: Progress, Exploration, and Science Fictions

Instructor: Edmond Chang | changed@u.washington.edu
Office: B33 Padelford | TuTh 10:30 - 11:20 AM or by appt.
URL: <http://staff.washington.edu/changed/250/>
Blog: <https://catalysttools.washington.edu/gopost/board/changed/7056/>

ENGL 250
Section B
MTWTh
11:30-12:20 PM
SMI 407
Autumn 2008
University of
Washington



“I am among those who think that science has great beauty. A scientist in his laboratory is not only a technician: he is also a child placed before natural phenomena which impress him like a fairy tale.”
—Marie Curie

“An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all.”
—Oscar Wilde

“Writing is an exploration. You start from nothing and learn as you go.”
—E.L. Doctorow

HENRY DAVID THOREAU ONCE SAID, “The world is but a canvas to the imagination.” And central to the “American imagination” is a preoccupation with exploration, power, progress, innovation, and technology. It is no wonder then that writing about science, discovery, invention, and science fiction flourished in the United States. How then might we trace and track these themes, tropes, and formations as illuminating threads in American literatures from the US and its diaspora? What might these literatures reveal to us, reveal about us, and reveal about our culture? This class will take up these “threads” of possibility and impossibility in various American literatures, including texts not often considered sci fi, in order to see how and what these texts argue, narrate, hide, perpetuate, and complicate our understanding of American histories, politics, technologies, and ideologies. Texts may include in whole or in excerpt: Thomas Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mark Twain, Edward Bellamy, Emily Dickinson, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Edgar Allen Poe, H.P. Lovecraft, Jack London, Elmer Rice, Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*, C.L. Moore, Vannevar Bush, Ray Bradbury, Allen Ginsberg, Ralph Ellison, Thomas Pynchon, Samuel Delaney, Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner*, William Gibson, Don DeLillo, Cory Doctorow, Octavia Butler, and others.

A REQUIREMENT for this class is a well-developed curiosity about the world, about the culture we live in, and about the cultural productions we imagine, produce, and consume. In other words, this class is about reading, critiquing, and analyzing our culture through literature. Martin Lister and Liz Wells, authors of “Seeing Beyond Belief,” argue for just this kind of curiosity, a methodology for unpacking cultural productions, such as novels or images or websites or film; they say, “Cultural Studies allows the analyst to attend to the many moments within the cycle of production, circulation and consumption of [a text] through which meanings accumulate, slip and shift” (*Reading Contexts* 459). They argue that our understandings of identities, meanings, and power, as well as the intersections of cultural and social locations like race, gender, class, nation, and sexuality, can be excavated through the analysis of the texts we create and consume. This class will spend the quarter reading, thinking, writing about various literatures and how and what these texts argue, reveal, narrate, hide, perpetuate, and complicate the world we live in.

FINALLY, as a class, we will engage the techniques and practices of reading and enjoying literature. We will identify and develop different ways to read different kinds of texts—from verse to prose to visual and digital—and understand and develop strategies, habits, and perspectives of reading, thinking, and writing. Foremost, we will read with pleasure and for pleasure. We will also rhetorically read, close read, read for analysis. And lastly, we will read and deploy literature as theory, as dramatizing the concerns, wonders, struggles, and politics of lived life and experience.

We will do a bit of writing in this class and W Credit arrangements are available. The class will also include film and new media texts.

“The pleasure of reading is doubled when one lives with another who shares the same books.”
—Katherine Mansfield

“Imagination is more important than knowledge.”
—Albert Einstein



Required Course Texts & Materials

- ENGL 250B Course Reader Part A & Part B (available at Ave Copy, 4141 Univ. Way NE @ 42nd)
- Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*.
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland*.
- Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems*.
- DeLillo, Don. *White Noise*.
- William Gibson, *Neuromancer*.
- Some readings are also available via e-reserve.
- Web access and an active UW email account



Course Requirements

- Response Papers (50%)
- Critical Review (10%)
- Readings Presentation (10%)
- Class Participation (30%)

“When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature. If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young.”
—Maya Angelou

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”
—William Butler Yeats

“When we read a story, we inhabit it. The covers of the book are like a roof and four walls. What is to happen next will take place within the four walls of the story. And this is possible because the story’s voice makes everything its own.”
—John Berger

Requirements & Grading

Your grade should not be the sole exigence or motivation for this class. It is the hope of the course that you walk away from English 250 with something more. Find some pleasure and some edification and some knowledge from this class (or any class really) and success is usually not far behind. With that in mind, your grade will be a reflection of engagement, effort, close reading, critical thinking, writing, and participation.

Critical Response Papers (50%)

The majority of the writing you will do for this class is in the form of short, critical, analytical response papers. These single-spaced, one-page writings serve as reactions to, close readings of, and analyses of the texts and the connections you see, read, and talk about in class. These responses are more than just summaries or personal reactions and will be graded on clarity, coherence, critique, and how well you concisely formulate arguments. Response papers are due weekly, but you need only complete a minimum of 6. See the response paper prompt for more details.

Readings Presentation (10%)

You will be a required to sign up for a readings oral presentation. For your presentation, you will read the texts assigned for a particular day, generate a critical and analytical question, and get class discussion started for the day. You will be required to create a 1-page handout copied for the whole class that includes: a brief biography of the writer, a brief synopsis of the text, your critical question, and any other information you feel is useful or relevant. Presentations are 3 to 5 minutes.

Critical Review (10%)

You will be required to write a short, 500-750 word, single-spaced critical review of a text not covered by the course that you believe fits the critical, theoretical, and intellectual stakes of this class. You will locate a text, close read the text, and generate an academic critique and assessment of the text’s value for study. In other words, what text might you include in a class like ours? You must have your text approved by the instructor. The critical review will be turned in and published on the course blog and is due by the last week of class.

Participation and Preparedness (30%)

Preparedness and participation forms a large component of your final grade. It is essential that you prepare for class, attend class, and participate. Missing class may seriously compromise your ability to do well in this class. Again, negative participation will hurt your participation grade. Participation is determined by 1) your **respectful** presence in class, 2) your **willingness** to discuss, comment, and ask questions, 3) your **preparation** for class, which includes bringing required materials to class and doing all of the assigned reading for class, 4) your **engagement** in group work, 5) your use of the class blog, 6) and your interactions with me and other students. Finally, failure to turn in homework, incomplete assignments, or late papers will negatively impact your participation grade.

Beyond the written assignments, you will participate in the class web log. Please bookmark the blog address, check the site regularly, and feel free to comment and post regularly. The class blog will be used for announcements, assignment reminders, updates to the syllabus, as well as questions, inquiries, provocations, and an extension of in-class discussion. Blog commenting and posting will be taken into account in evaluating class



“Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without ever noticing it, live your way into the answer.”
—Rainer Maria Rilke

“I don’t pretend we have all the answers. But the questions are certainly worth thinking about.”
—Arthur C. Clarke

“A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.”
—Chinese proverb

“Read in order to live.”
—Gustave Flaubert

Blog commenting and posting will be taken into account in evaluating class participation. Your Critical Review assignment will be turned in via the blog. See the class blog for details on blog etiquette and rules of engagement.

Mash-Up “Mixed-Paper” Final Project (W-Credit)

If you are seeking W Credit for the class, you are required to complete a final “mixed-paper” project. The “mixed-paper” asks you to think critically about the course questions and texts, to make connections, and to create an argument across texts and different kinds of evidence. See the “mixed-paper” final project prompt for more details and explanations. You must earn a minimum of a 2.0 on the final project to receive W credit.

Attendance

Attendance is strongly recommended. If you are absent, you miss the explanation of an assignment, an in-class exercise or workshop, the discussion of a reading, and overall, the class as a community of learning. It is in your best interests to come to class. Also, you are expected to be in class on time. Class will start immediately at the appointed time. In the first minutes of class I may make important announcements, establish the agenda for the class meeting, begin immediately with an important lesson, or field questions. Therefore, it is particularly important for you to arrive on time, especially for a fifty-minute class. If you come in after I start class, even by only a few minutes, you are late and I will mark you as such.

Chronic or conspicuous attendance problems will negatively affect your class participation grade. If you know you are going to miss class, please let me know ahead of time (via email), provide any pertinent documentation, and we will make any necessary arrangements. And when you do miss class, always find another student to get class notes and see me in order to make up missed work in a timely manner. If you miss a great deal of the quarter, you are recommended strongly to take the course during a quarter in which you can more easily attend class.

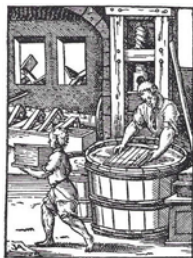
Assignment Format

All papers must be typed or produced on a word processor. Word processing is preferable because it makes the mechanics of revision—rearranging, adding, and deleting—easy. If you do not have your own computer with word processing capability, computer labs are available on campus with a variety of software that is easy to learn. All documents should be saved in Microsoft Word format, **preferably in Word 97-2003 format**; if you do not have access to Word, then save your documents in RTF or Rich Text Format.

All papers must follow the manuscript format outlined by the assignment. **All papers must use MLA citation and documentation conventions.** All papers must be neatly printed (in black), stapled in the top, left-hand corner if necessary, and not be three-hole punched. Papers that do not follow these format guidelines will not be accepted. They will be returned unread to you. Papers will be regarded as late until they are resubmitted in the proper format. Response Papers have their own format, and the Critical Review and “Mixed-Paper” Final Project will have different manuscript guidelines detailed by their assignment prompts.

Always make a backup copy of every paper you turn in, lest you be one of the unhappy people whose paper is eaten by the computer. You may even want to take the precaution of e-mailing your paper to yourself as an attachment at least a couple of times during the drafting process and

“For me science fiction is a way of thinking, a way of logic that bypasses a lot of nonsense. It allows people to look directly at important subjects.”
—Gene Roddenberry



Response Paper Formatting

- 1) 1” margins top, bottom, left, and right on each page.
- 2) Single-spaced block header with your name, date, course, my name.
- 3) Response number and title.
- 4) Response papers are single-spaced, block paragraph format.
- 5) Standard Times Roman Font, 12 point only.
- 6) Correct MLA citation and bibliographic format. Bibliography if necessary.



Late Assignments

All assignments must be done completely and turned in on time. Lateness will subtract from your assignment’s final grade and work must be turned in by the next class meeting after the original due date. Note that I will not comment on late work. However, you still need to complete late work or you will receive a zero. If you miss class on the due date of a paper, you must notify me and make arrangements to get the paper to me as soon as possible. **Unless previously arranged, I do not accept assignments via email.** Furthermore, all work must be seen and checked by my to be eligible for your final project! Remember that a paper has not been officially handed in until it is in my hands. Never turning anything in late is always the best policy.

certainly BEFORE you exit the document for the last time and leave the computer lab, your friend's computer, or even your own computer. This way, even if you lose your disc or your paper gets mysteriously erased, you still have a copy in your e-mail files.

Evaluation Rubric

Over the course of the quarter, your assignments will receive feedback and comments that will identify what you are doing well and what still needs improvement. Your grades assess your fulfillment of the assignment, the quality of work, detail, analysis, and argumentation, overall effort, and finally, style, polish, and risk taking. Consider the following evaluation rubric as signposts or a kind of legend to your progress and evaluation:

- **Outstanding (3.7-4.0):** Offers a very highly proficient, even memorable demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), including some appropriate risk-taking and/or creativity.
- **Strong (3.1-3.6):** Offers a proficient demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), which could be further enhanced with revision, additional support, and creativity.
- **Good (2.5-3.0):** Effectively demonstrates the trait(s) associate with the course or assignment goal(s), but less proficiently; could use revision to demonstrate more skillful and nuanced command of trait(s).
- **Acceptable (2.0-2.4):** Minimally meets the basic course or assignment requirement, but the demonstrated trait(s) are not fully realized or well-controlled and would benefit from significant revision.
- **Inadequate (1.0-1.9):** Does not meet the course or assignment requirement; the trait(s) are not adequately demonstrated and require substantial revision on multiple levels.

"I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library."
—Jorge Luis Borges



"My imagination makes me human and makes me a fool; it gives me all the world and exiles me from it."
—Ursula K. Le Guin

"Learn as much by writing as by reading."
—Lord Acton

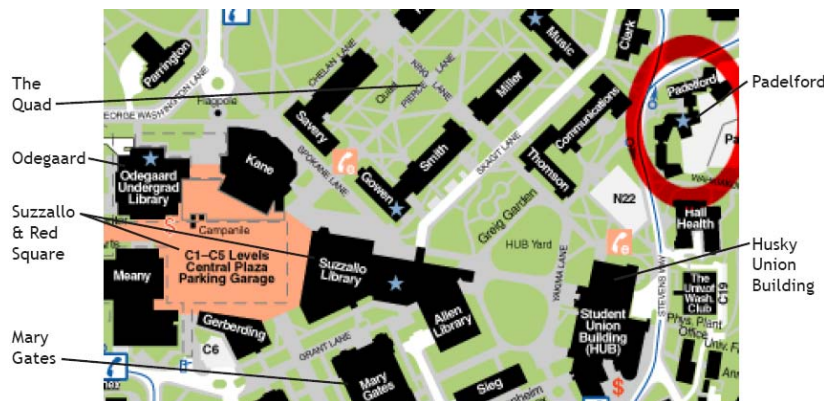


Finding Help

My office and office hours are listed at the front of the course policies. I am available during that time and by appointment to help you. I encourage you to come see early in the quarter even if it is just to talk about the class, about the assignments, or about school in general. I may ask you to meet with me when I think a conference would be useful. My office is located in the ground floor of Padelford Hall (northeast of the HUB), Room B-33. See <<http://www.washington.edu/home/maps/northcentral.html?pd>>.

Contact Ed

Office:
B33 Padelford
Office Hours:
MW 10:30 AM
to 12:00 PM
E-mail:
changed@u.washington.edu
AIM:
EDagogy



I am also available electronically by email and the course blog. Email and the blog are the best means of contacting me. I will do my best to answer your emails and blog posts, usually **within twenty-four hours**. If there is an emergency and you need to reach me, please contact the Undergraduate English office in A-2H&G Padelford. Furthermore, when time permits, I will

supplement my office hours with virtual hours via AOL Instant Messenger (**AIM nickname: EDagogy**); if I am logged in, during reasonable hours, you are more than welcome to discuss the class or ask questions. Please, when you initiate an IM conversation for the first time, please identify yourself to me; also, be **patient** because my responses may not be immediate.

You can find additional writing help at the English Department Writing Center (**EWC**) <<http://depts.washington.edu/wcenter/>> located in B-12 Padelford Hall. Call (206) 685-2876 or email wcenter@u.washington.edu with questions or to make an appointment. You must make an appointment to see a writing tutor.

Or, try the Odegaard Writing and Research Center (**OWRC**) is a good resource for this class and other classes. OWRC is located on the third floor of Odegaard Library and offers a variety of services including help with papers, brainstorming ideas, help with reading, and research. See <<http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/>> for more information.

Moreover, the Center for Learning and Undergraduate Enrichment (**CLUE**) is also a good resource. CLUE is located in Mary Gates Hall Commons and offers tutorial sessions for most freshman lecture courses, skills courses, access to computer labs, and drop-in centers for math, science and writing. See <<http://depts.washington.edu/clue/>> for more information.

Further resources, both on- and off-campus can be found on the Links page of the course website:

<<http://staff.washington.edu/changed/250/links.html>>.

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing – as long as you cite them. Many students do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes plagiarism, so feel free to ask questions about these matters at any time. Plagiarism includes:

- a student failing to cite sources of ideas
- a student failing to cite sources of paraphrased material
- a student failing to site sources of specific language and/or passages
- a student submitting someone else's work as his or her own
- a student submitting his or her own work produced for another class

If you have any doubt about how to cite or acknowledge another's writing, please talk to me. It is always better to be safe than sorry. As a matter of policy, any student found to have plagiarized any piece of writing in this class will be immediately reported to the College of Arts and Sciences for review. For further information, please refer to UW's Student Conduct Code at <<http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>>. **Play it smart, don't plagiarize!**

Accommodations

If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see me immediately. If you have a disability and have not yet registered it with Disability Resources for Students in 448 Schmitz Hall, you should do so immediately. Please contact DRS at 206-543-8924 (Voice) or 206-543-8925 (V/TTY) or 206-616-8379 (FAX) or via their website at <<http://www.washington.edu/admin/ada/dss.htm>>. I will gladly do my best to provide appropriate accommodation you require.



"I was attracted to science fiction because it was so wide open. I was able to do anything and there were no walls to hem you in and there was no human condition that you were stopped from examining."

—Octavia Butler

"Every time I see an adult on a bicycle, I no longer despair for the future of the human race."

—H. G. Wells

"I entered the classroom with the conviction that it was crucial for me and every other student to be an active participant, not a passive consumer...[a conception of] education as the practice of freedom... education that connects the will to know with the will to become. Learning is a place where paradise can be created."

—bell hooks

"If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities."
—Maya Angelou



"You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them."
—Ray Bradbury

"Science does not know its debt to imagination."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

**syl-la-bus: n 1: a summary outline of a discourse, treatise, or course of study or of examination requirements
2: subject to change**

Chang / ENGL 250 B / Autumn Quarter 2008-09 / University of Washington

Wed 9/24
First Day of Classes

September 2008						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Week 1: September 24-26

Introduction to the Course

Keywords

Thomas Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence" (1776)

Week 2: September 29-October 3

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Merlin" (1847)

Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889)

Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (1888)

Week 3: October 6-10

Edgar Allan Poe, "The Man That Was Used Up" (1845)

H.P. Lovecraft, "Pickman's Model" (1927)

Jack London, "To Build a Fire" (1902)

Week 4: October 13-17

Emily Dickinson, Selected Poems (1890-91)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (1915) & "If I Were a Man" (1914)

Week 5: October 20-24

Elmer Rice, *The Adding Machine* (1923)

Week 6: October 27-31

C.L. Moore, "No Woman Born" (1944)

Vannevar Bush, "As We May Think" (1945)

Ray Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains" (1950)

Week 7: November 3-7

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1953)

Allan Ginsburg, "Howl" (1955)

Thomas Pynchon, "Entropy" (1960)

Samuel R. Delany, "Aye, And Gomorrah" (1966)

Week 8: November 10-14

Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (1985)

Week 9: November 17-21

Don DeLillo, *White Noise*

William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (1984)

Week 10: November 24-28

William Gibson, *Neuromancer*

Week 11: December 1-5

Octavia Butler, *Dawn* (1987)

Bruce Sterling, "Maneki Neko" (1998)

Cory Doctorow, "Ownz0red" (2003)

Week 12:

12/8 - Finals Begin, 'Mixed-Paper' Final Project Due

Week 13:

12/15 - Grades Due

November 2008						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Critical Review due
by the end of Week
11 (posted to the
class blog).

Week 2 Response
Paper is required

October 2008						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Tue 11/11
Veteran's Day
Holiday

Thur & Fri
11/27-11/28
Thanksgiving Holiday

December 2008						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			