

CHID 496 G
**“Serious Research Mode”:
 Critical Approaches to Buffy (and Stuff)**

Ed Chang & Jane Lee | Winter 2011 | University of Washington

CHID 496
 Section G
 Wednesday
 12:30-2:20 PM
 MGH 248
 Winter 2011
 Ed Chang &
 Jane Lee
 University of
 Washington



“I’m standing on the mouth of hell, and it’s going to swallow me whole. And it’ll choke on me. We’re not ready? They’re not ready? They think we’re gonna wait for the end to come, like we always do. I’m done waiting. They want an apocalypse? Oh, we’ll give ’em one. Anyone else who wants to run...do it now. Because we just became an army. We just declared war. From now on we won’t just face our worst fears, we will seek them out. We will find them and cut out their hearts one by one until the First shows itself for what it really is. And I’ll kill it myself. There’s only one thing on this earth more powerful than evil. And that’s us. Any questions?”
 —Buffy

WHEN JOSS WHEDON’S *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER* television debuted in 1997, no one could have foreseen the cult following, the spinoffs, the cultural phenomenon, and the critical and scholarly interest it would inspire. Now, over a decade later, “Buffy Studies” is an established field that draws on a range of disciplines and perspectives. Our focus group will take up some of these critical approaches including film and genre studies, Victorian studies, feminism, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, and queer theory. Our goal is to address the critical question “Why Buffy?” and how might Buffy help us think about the recent resurgence of vampire culture, about the role of monsters, and about cultural anxieties over the body, the self, and the Other. Overall, we hope to explore in general the value of examining pop culture.

AS RHONDA V. WILCOX AND DAVID LAVERY say in their introduction to *Fighting the Forces: What’s at Stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (2002), “The many meanings of Buffy are reflected in [s]cholars from English, communications, women’s studies, sociology, religion, and other fields...[who] present their different perspectives, sometimes analyzing the series and lines in radically different fashion, from cultural studies to Jungian analysis, from problematizing to praise. [We] have chosen such a various group with a purpose: their multiplicity reflects the polysemic variety of this rich text” (xxvi).

THE COURSE will meet once a week for 2 hours to engage in watching episodes, reading, guided discussion, and some reflective writing. Our focus group will screen select Buffy episodes (and perhaps other things from the Whedon universe) as the focus of discussion. Students will be asked to participate in discussions both in class and online including brief weekly responses and an in-class presentation.

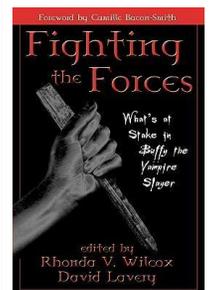
Requirements & Grading

What is a focus group? Focus groups provide a unique opportunity for undergraduate students to design and lead a class. Focus groups allow students with common interests to create a space to discuss topics which may not be covered elsewhere in the UW undergraduate curricula. As with all CHID courses, all students participating in focus groups are expected to engage topics critically, respectfully, and from varying perspectives.

What are they not? Focus groups are not spaces for students to promote one particular point of view. While students can take on one idea or concept, this topic should be explored from multiple vantage points. Focus groups should not depart from CHID’s guiding philosophy that “the questions are the content.” Focus groups are about critical scrutiny, not about ideological imposition.

This class is graded on a credit/no credit basis. All assignments must be satisfactorily completed, and you may not have more than two un-excused absences in order to get credit for this class.

“...the hardest thing in this world...is to live in it. Be brave. Live. For me.”
 —Buffy



Required Course Texts & Materials

- CHID 496 G course readings are available via e-reserve
- Web access and an active UW email account



Course Requirements

Play Logs and Close
Playing Presentation
(50%)
Class Participation
(50%)

“For a thousand
years I wielded the
powers of the Wish.
I brought ruin to the
heads of unfaithful
men. I brought forth
destruction and
chaos for the
pleasure of the
lower beings. I was
feared and
worshipped across
the mortal globe.
And now I’m stuck at
Sunnydale High.
Mortal. Child. And
I’m flunking Math.”
—Anya

Class Blog and In-Class Presentation (50%)

The majority of the writing you will do for this class is in the form of weekly short, critical, analytical response entries to the class blog. These single-spaced, 500-1000 word writings serve as reactions to, close readings of, and analyses of the episodes, texts, and the connections you see, read, and talk about in class. These blog posts are more than just summaries or personal reactions and will be graded on clarity, coherence, critique, and how well you concisely formulate arguments. Response entries are due weekly.

Also, by the end of the quarter, you will have practiced and performed what it means to close read *Buffy* and the texts at hand. You will be required to present on (most likely as a group) a topic of your choosing. These critical presentations will demonstrate what you have learned from and experienced in the class. Presentations will be 8-10 minutes.

Participation and Preparedness (50%)

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 contribution to the class blog:
6. and your interactions with us and other students.

Finally, failure to turn in homework, incomplete assignments, or late papers will negatively impact your participation grade.

Attendance

Attendance is strongly recommended. If you are absent, you miss the explanation of an assignment, the discussion of a reading, the chance to play and participate, and overall, the class as a community of learning. Also, you are expected to be in class on time. Class will start immediately at the appointed time. In the first minutes of class we may make important announcements, establish the agenda for the class meeting, begin immediately with an important lesson, or field questions. If you come in after we start class, even by only a few minutes, you are late and we will mark you as such. Chronic or conspicuous attendance problems will negatively affect your credit for the class. If you know you are going to miss class, please let us know ahead of time (via email), if you can, 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.

Finding Help

We are available by appointment to help you. We encourage you to come see us early in the quarter even if it is just to talk about the class, about the assignments, or about school in general. We may ask you to meet with us when we think a conference would be useful. Ed’s office is located in B33 Padelford Hall Jane’s office is located in Art 351. See map below.

Assignment Format

All assignments must be typed. 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; if you do not have access to Word, then save your documents in RTF or Rich Text Format.

Treat all writing as formal, academic writing, even on the class blog. 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.

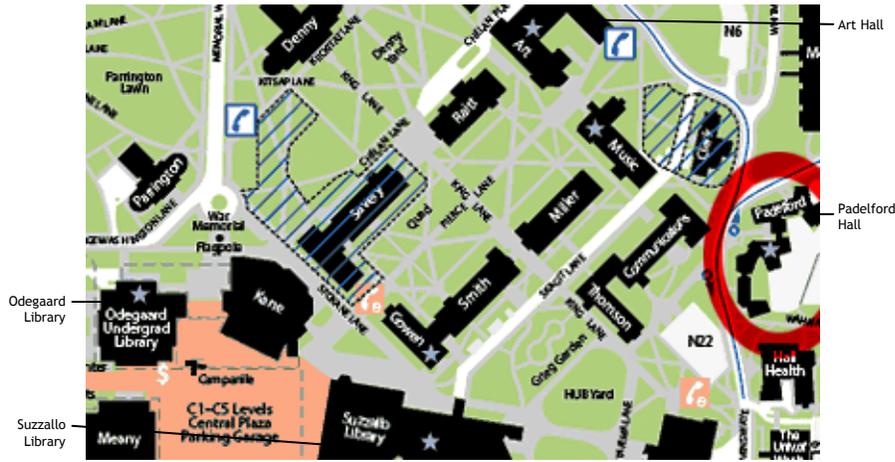


Contact Ed

Office:
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Office Hours:
by appointment
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changed@u.washington.edu
AIM & Google Talk:
EDagogy

Contact Jane

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351 Art
Office Hours:
by appointment
E-mail:
jlee33@u.washington.edu



We are also available electronically by email and the course blog. Email and the blog are the best means of contacting us. We will do our best to answer your emails and blog posts, usually within twenty-four hours. If there is an emergency and you need to reach us, please contact the CHID office in B-102 Padelford.

Ed is also available for virtual hours via instant messenger. Ed uses AOL Instant Messenger and Google Talk (AIM & Gtalk nickname: **EDagogy**). If he is 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 him – be polite and respectful – and please be patient because our responses may not be immediate.

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 cite 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>.

Accommodations

If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see me immediately. We will gladly do my best to provide appropriate accommodation you require. 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’ve been awake all night. I know I’m supposed to teach you self-reliance, but I can’t leave you out there to fight alone. To hell with what’s right, I’m ready to back you up. Let’s find the evil a-and fight it together.”

—Giles



“I, I’m having all sorts of...I’m dating. I, I’m having serious dating with a werewolf. And, and I’m studying witchcraft and, and killing vampires. And I didn’t have anyone to talk to about all this scary life stuff.”

—Willow

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

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Week 1: January 3-7

Wed 1/5

Introduction to the Course
Episode 1.1 "Welcome to the Hellmouth"
Wilcox & Lavery, "Introduction" and Jowett, "Introduction"

Week 2: January 10-14

Wed 1/12

Episode 2.7 "Lie to Me"
Pender, "I'm Buffy, and You're...History"

Week 3: January 17-21

Wed 1/19

Episode 2.17 "Passion"
Mendlesohn, "Surpassing the Love of Vampires"

Week 4: January 24-28

Wed 1/26

Episode 3.11 "Gingerbread"
DeKelb-Rittenhouse, "Sex and the Single Vampire"

Week 5: January 31-February 4

Wed 2/2

Episode 3.13 "The Zeppo"
Jowett, "New Men," "Dead Boys"

Week 6: : February 7-11

Wed 2/9

Episode 3.14 "Bad Girls"
Helford, "My Emotions Give Me Power"

Week 7: : February 14-18

Wed 2/16

Episode 4.10 "Hush"
Overbey & Preston-Matto, "Staking in Tongues: Speech Act as Weapon in Buffy"
Keller, Donald, "Spirit Guides and Shadow Selves"

Mon 1/3
First Day of Classes

January						
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					

There may be readings for each week. Be sure to read, make notes, and come to class prepared with comments and questions.

Keep up with the class blog.

Make sure to sign up for a presentation.

February						
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					

Mon 2/21
Presidents' Day
Holiday

Week 8: : February 21-25

Wed 2/23
Episode 5.7 "Fool for Love"

Week 9: February 28-March 4

Wed 3/2
Episode 5.16 "The Body"

March						
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		

Week 10: March 7-11

Wed 3/9
Episode 6.7 "Once More With Feeling"

Week 11:

Mon 3/14 - Finals Begin

Week 12:

Mon 3/21 - Grades Due

Fri 12/9
Last Day of Classes