

**University of Waterloo
Isolation and Alienation
ENGL 108H
FALL 2011**

Instructor: Jessica Antonio Lomanowska
Course Meets: M, W, and F 9:30-10:20 AM, DWE 1502
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Office Hours: M, W, F 10:30-11:30AM, or by appointment
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Course Description:

This course examines themes of alienation and isolation in a variety of literary works and across historical and cultural contexts. The chosen texts feature the overarching theme of individuals in crisis, particularly as it extends to inner turmoil, conflict with others, and/or with his/her world. We will investigate how these literary accounts of isolation and alienation are constructed, what purposes they serve, and what these ideas and experiences reveal about our own identities. This course will challenge you to examine the many ways that these stresses collide and intersect with conceptions of gender, sexuality, power, race, and sub-themes of childhood, madness, war, disability, and love to name a few. Throughout the term, we will discuss the process through which wisdom, maturity, and healing are gained, but only, perhaps, as the consequence of personal trauma and crisis. Books, films, and music will be among the artifacts that we study in this course.

Required Texts:

Gaiman, Neil. *Coraline*
 Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*
 Perkins Gilman, Charlotte. *The Yellow Wallpaper* (online edition)
 Coetzee, J.M. *The Lives of Animals*
 Leavitt, Sarah. *Tangles*
 Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*
 McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*

Mandatory Film Screening:
Persepolis

Assignments:

In-Class Test: 10% **Oct 12**

Group Project 20%

Term Essay: 25% (1500 words, bibliography of two items, MLA style) **due Dec 5 (in class)**

Final Exam: 30%

Participation 15%

- Twitter Profile

Notes on Assignments:

In-Class Test: Will take place on **Oct 12** and will cover all material up to that date. It will be in essay format.

Term Essay: students will write one research paper in which they will investigate matters related to the course—both theoretically and contextually. Topics will be distributed in class, but you may devise your own topic provided it is approved by the instructor. The essay must include secondary research, and both must follow MLA guidelines. Essays will be marked for correctness of grammar, presentation and citation, and intellectual content.

Final Exam: Will take place during examination period and will cover all course material. It will be in short answer and essay format.

Group Project:

Groups will choose one of the course texts and work outside of class on research and on presentation. The purpose of the project is to present to the class important critical, cultural, and historical materials that will provide context through which the literature we are studying can be understood. Your presentation must be analytical and it should connect with the topics, writers and texts we are studying in the course. I would urge you to consider creative ways in which to approach and present your topic.

- The presentation should be 20 minutes long.
- Each group is required to speak with the instructor regarding your topic well in advance of the presentation date.
- Each member of the group will receive the same mark. It is up to each group to ensure that the work is shared equally. Presentations will be evaluated based upon the following criteria: the intellectual aspect of the presentation; organization and coherence of the presentation (you must demonstrate that you have worked together as a group in terms of research and written contributions, as well as for the presentation); your ability to **generate** and **respond to** comments and questions from other members of the class.
- You are also responsible for providing each member of the class with a one page outline relating to your topic and presentation.
- You must hand in one written copy of your work for analysis.
- N.B: All group members must be available to present. Absent group members will receive a zero on the assignment.

Participation:

- **Twitter Profile:**

This component will run throughout the semester. Students will be required to join Twitter for the duration of the course. If you already have a Twitter account, please create a new one to use only for English 108H. We will use the Twitter accounts to respond to questions, comments, critiques, and queries we are making of our course texts. Students will respond to each question posed by the instructor, as well as offer thoughtful commentary on peers' comments throughout the term. Remember, the online space is an extension of our classroom environment, and proper and professional etiquette is required.

Each comment should include a hashtag (#) to indicate which text you are referring to in your response: i.e, #Coraline

- **A General Note on Participation:**

Apart from the Twitter component, the grade for class participation will be based upon the student's prepared presence in class. This means that s/he will have the assigned texts read and available for reference, and be able to offer respectful and contextual comments to classroom discussions. Your participation grade will also be comprised via the completion of various in-class exercises, random reading quizzes, and professionalism (being on time and prepared for class). In order to excel in this category, it is necessary for students to take the responsibility to be prepared for class, be willing to offer personal insight, and listen to others. In general, we will collectively aim to make the classroom environment(s) a place of mutual learning.

Attendance is mandatory for film screenings and presentations.

Please **DO** bring books to class. Please **DO NOT** bring your cell phone/iPod, iPad etc., to class. Please **DO NOT** bring your picnic lunch to class.

Late Policy:

All work must be completed and handed in on the due date. Late work will be penalized 10% (a letter grade) automatically, and then 2% each day that it is late; assignments will not be accepted after one week past the deadline, resulting in a grade of zero for the assignment. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis. Essays can also be passed in to the English department drop box in Hagey Hall, the day **before** the due date, if a student cannot attend class.

Missed Exams or Midterms:

The midterm test and final exam can only be rescheduled if a doctor's note is provided.

University Policies:

Academic Integrity: in order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities:

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. If you require academic accommodations (such as alternate test and exam arrangements) please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term and inform the course instructor.

Schedule of Classes and Topics:

We will attempt to follow this schedule as closely as possible. Please have all readings completed for the class in which they have been assigned.

Week 1:

Sept 12 M: Introduction to course

Sept 14 W: Gaiman, *Coraline*

Sept 16 F: Gaiman, *Coraline*

Week 2:

Sept 19 M: Gaiman, *Coraline*

Sept 21 W: Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Sept 23 F: **NO CLASS**

Week 3: Sept 26 M: Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Sept 28 W: Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Sept 30 F: Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Week 4:

Oct 3 M: *A Clockwork Orange*

Oct 5 W: *A Clockwork Orange*

Oct 7 F: *A Clockwork Orange*

***Group 1 Presentation on CO**

Week 5:

Oct 10 M: **NO CLASS**, Thanksgiving holiday

Oct 12 W: **In-Class Test**

Oct 14 F: Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*

Week 6:

Oct 17 M: Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*

Oct 19 W: Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*

Oct 21 F: Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*

***Group 2 Presentation on TYW**

Week 7:

Oct 24 M: Essays on *The Lives of Animals*; Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*

Oct 26 W: Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*

Oct 28 F: Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*

***Group 3 Presentation on LOA**

Week 8:

Oct 31 M: Music Analysis, TBA

Nov 2 W: Music Analysis, TBA

Nov 4 F: Poetry Readings, TBA

Week 9:

Nov 7 M: Leavitt, *Tangles*

Nov 9 W: Leavitt, *Tangles*

Nov 11 F: Leavitt, *Tangles*

Group 4 Presentation on *Tangles

Week 10:

Nov 14 M: Film Screening, *Persepolis*

Nov 16 W: Film Screening, *Persepolis*

Nov 18 F: *Persepolis*

Week 11:

Nov 21 M: Gibson, *Neuromancer*

Nov 23 W: Gibson, *Neuromancer*

Nov 25 F: Gibson, *Neuromancer*

Group 5 Presentation on *Neuromancer

Week 12:

Nov 28 M: McCarthy, *The Road*.

Nov 30 W: McCarthy, *The Road*.

Dec 2 F: McCarthy, *The Road*.

Group 6 Presentation on *The Road

Week 13:

Dec 5 M: Review

