English 108P: Popular Potter – Fall 2019 - Syllabus

Instructor: Professor Neil Randall
Contact: nrandall@uwaterloo.ca or via Learn.
Class times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:00-5:20, ECH 1205
Office hours: T 1:30-3:30, EC1 1327 – or by appointment, or by email

Required Readings

Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*. 1997
------------------. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. 1998
------------------. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. 1999
------------------. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. 2000
------------------. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. 2003
------------------. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. 2005
------------------. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. 2007

*A note on the readings*

Reading the novels is mandatory. This is a course that studies the Harry Potter novels, not the movies. The two in-class tests on the course are designed, in part, to ensure that you have read the books. I make this requirement to ensure that the goals of the course – reading, studying, and writing about the novels, is upheld. The requirement does not devalue the film, stage, game, or theme park adaptations in any way (indeed, see Assignments A and D); it simply declares that reading, studying, and writing about the novels as novels is a worthwhile enterprise.

Assignments

*Note: All assignments are to be submitted to the appropriate dropbox on Learn, unless otherwise specified in the assignment details.*

**Assignment A (20% of final grade):** A 750-word essay outlining the differences between the *Philosopher’s Stone* novel and the *Sorcerer’s Stone* movie. Due Oct 3, 11:59pm Eastern time.

**Assignment B (20% of final grade):** A 1000-word essay outlining differences between the *Chamber of Secrets* novel and the *Prisoner of Azkaban* novel from the standpoint of literary analysis. Due Oct 24, 11:59pm Eastern time.

**Assignment C (35% of final grade):** A 2000-word essay on one of a group of topics. Due Friday, Dec 6, 11:59pm EST Eastern time.

**Assignment D (25% of final grade):** An assignment in the format of your choice, in which you may be as academic, as creative, as journalistic, or as technical as you wish. This assignment must still focus on the novels, but here you may venture far beyond them. For display Dec 3, 4:00-6:00 at the Games Institute (EC1). Materials to be uploaded to Learn by Dec 5, 11:59pm Eastern.
Schedule

**Sep 05** – Introductions; Discussion of syllabus and assignments; Why are you here? Groups: why are we studying Harry Potter?

**Sep 10** – Mythology and mythic literature; the fantasy literary genre; Groups: recent and current fantasy/sci-fi/young adult series.

**Sep 12** – Notes on fantasy literature; adaptation studies; literary analysis.

**Sep 17** – **No class** – instructor at conference and meetings in Ottawa

**Sep 19** – **No class** – instructor at conference and meetings in Ottawa

**Sep 24** – *Philosopher's Stone* chpts 1-11

**Sep 26** – *Philosopher’s Stone* chpts 12-end

**Oct 01** – *Chamber of Secrets* chpts 1-10

**Oct 03** – *Chamber of Secrets* chpts 11-end

**Oct 08** – *Prisoner of Azkaban* chpts 1-15

**Oct 10** – *Prisoner of Azkaban* chpts 16-end

**Oct 15** – **No class** – Fall Reading Week

**Oct 17** – **No class** – Fall Reading Week

**Oct 22** – *Goblet of Fire* chpts 1-14

**Oct 24** – *Goblet of Fire* chpts 15-28

**Oct 29** – *Goblet of Fire* chpts 29-end.

**Oct 31** – *Order of the Phoenix* chpts 1-12

**Nov 05** – *Order of the Phoenix* chpts 13-24

**Nov 07** – *Order of the Phoenix* chpts 25-end.

**Nov 12** – *Half-Blood Prince* chpts 1-12.

**Nov 14** – *Half-Blood Prince* chpts 13-24

**Nov 19** – *Half-Blood Prince* chpts 25-end

**Nov 21** – *Deathly Hallows* chpts 1-12

**Nov 26** – *Deathly Hallows* chpts 13-24

**Nov 28** – *Deathly Hallows* chpts 25-end

**Dec 03** – Assignment D displays
ENGLISH 108P, Fall 2019: ASSIGNMENT C

Assignment C (35% of final grade): A 2000-word essay on one of the topics below.

Assignment Due: Friday, Dec. 6, by 11:59pm Eastern, via LEARN.

Word length: Approximately 2000; block quotations do not count towards this total.

File format: Word or PDF.

Structure: Assignment C is an academic essay, which typically adopts the format of (a) an introduction with thesis statement; (b) a body that supports, grounds, and proves the thesis statement; (c) a conclusion that suggests further application of the thesis statement. This structure isn’t necessarily the one you must adhere to, but it’s quite standard and traditionally works well. If you decide on something else, please check with me first. But please keep in mind that the idea is to argue a specific point (your thesis statement) and demonstrate support for that point.

Format: Standard essay format, specifically either MLA or APA format. That said, there are no marks whatsoever for the format itself; it’s expected that you will cite the secondary sources appropriately, and as long as I can see where the citations came from, all is good. You do NOT need to cite the Potter novels themselves; simply give the page number in parentheses after each point you make.

Spelling, syntax, grammar: Make sure they’re good.

First-person pronoun: Acceptable, but don’t overuse.

Showing off your vocabulary: This isn’t an essay about demonstrating how many four- and five-syllable words you know. If they help, use them; if not, simplicity can be useful. Being overly simplistic, however, often suggests lack of thoughtfulness.

Making sure it’s your own work: Be absolutely sure of this. Cheating will be severely penalized. Cheating is a bad thing.

The Assignment

Write a 2000-word (approximately) essay on one of the following topics on the Harry Potter novels. Your goal is to argue a specific point about the works in question, demonstrating that you have read and considered the texts in detail. This is not an essay that demonstrates how much you know about the Potterverse or about even a particular novel or character or any such element; it is an essay that argues a point and backs up the argument with references to the Potter texts and the book of essays assigned to the course.

You must discuss at least three of the Potter novels. You must also include at least three of the assigned chapters from the essay collection, integrating those essays into your own discussion.

Topics for Assignment C

1. How do Rowling’s language and style drive forward the story, the setting, the characters, or the prevailing themes of the books? Be selective about how many elements to include: you have nowhere near enough space to deal with more than two characters, for example, or more than two relevant themes. The themes themselves are up to you to determine.

2. Discuss the relationship between and the importance of time and memory in the novels. You might wish to consider (but are not restricted to) the ways in which time and memory induce or
3. Argue for or against the possibility that magic is so powerful in the Potter novels that character personalities and actions are largely irrelevant despite Rowling’s best attempts to make them so. One way (but only one way) to consider this question is to discuss whether magic is a tool whose effectiveness depends on the characters using it, or a force that needs guiding more than creating or directing.

4. What is Hogwarts? Discuss at least three major roles the castle plays in the novels, beyond its simple existence as the physical school the characters attend.

5. Discuss the specific means by which Rowling renders the actions of Snape so that his actual role—hero or villain—remains mysterious until near the end of the final volume. Note that this is not simply a tracking of Snape’s actions, but a look at how Rowling, through her writing, makes us understand those actions. As an example, demonstrate how language concerning Snape factors into our failure to fully grasp his full role.

6. Discuss the relationship between life and death in the novels. You will need to be selective here; everything from ghosts through mortality through unicorns through horcruxes through Voldemort and Potter is at play here, and you can’t possibly write about everything. In addition, do not simply provide a list; analyze for how the relationship informs one or more important element of the books.

7. Do something else. Clear it with me by Nov 15.
ASSIGNMENT D

Assignments D (25% of final grade): An assignment in the format of your choice, in which you may be as academic, as creative, as journalistic, or as technical as you wish. This assignment must still focus on the novels, but here you may venture far beyond them.

Proposal Due: Friday, Nov 8, by email to the instructor.

Assignment Due: Tuesday, Dec 3. You will display your projects in The Games Institute in EC1. More instructions to follow. Materials for the assignment are due on Learn on Dec 5 by 11:59pm Eastern.

Word length: Approximately 1500 or equivalent if multimodal or differently modal.

File format: Whatever is appropriate for your specific project. You must submit one or more files (depending on your project) to the LEARN dropbox.

Structure: Assignment C is an assignment that is open to whatever you want to, as long as it pertains to the study and understanding of the Harry Potter novels. You may write an essay, you may write a series of blogs, you may write a short story, you may write a proposal for a novel, you may write a screenplay for a movie or a theatre presentation, you may write epic poetry or a sonnet series, you may write songs, you may do a music video, you may paint a portrait or a nature scene or a piece of abstract art, you may sculpt something, you may make a movie, you may build a lifesize thestral out of papier-mâché, you may choreograph a house elves ballet, you may write an enact a vicious satire, you may video yourself doing a TED talk … whatever. You will be graded on how your project illuminates some element(s) of the Potter novels.

Format: Whatever applies to your specific project. The only requirement except for the final submission is that you must decide what you want to do by Nov 8 and email me, through LEARN, to tell me of your plans. I will either approve or suggest revisions. You must also submit, by Dec 5, any materials you created for the display, as well as a paragraph on what you want me to pay attention to (unless it’s an academic essay) – I need your help knowing how to determine a grade based on what you consider important. NOTE: These are not presentations; they are displays. I will ask you to talk about the projects during that session, but you are not being graded on how you talk about them.

Okay, really … I’m serious about the openness of this project. It really is up to you what you do. So … go nuts and do what you’ve always thought about doing but never had an opportunity to make happen.
Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Academic Integrity

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage](http://example.com) and the [Arts Academic Integrity webpage](http://example.com) for more information.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (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://example.com). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](http://example.com).

**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](http://example.com), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](http://example.com).

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

**Note for students with disabilities:** The [AccessAbility Services](http://example.com) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.