

Fall 2016 Honors College Seminars

HNRS 3000, Jordan, Video Games: A Narratological and Rhetorical Perspective

A literacy course in English studies that incorporates video games as part of the discipline's textual framework, demonstrating how video games can be used along with other texts in English classrooms to engage students in the kind of contextual, social, and constantly changing literacy practices that New Literacy scholars like Street, Gee, and the New London Group describe. These practices, in turn, can help students interrogate how texts are created and used as systems, and how they can learn, critique, and redesign these systems

HNRS 3000, Fasko, Creativity 101

The purpose of this seminar is to stimulate an understanding of, and appreciation of various forms of creativity, and to develop creativity and creative thinking skills. Readings: *Creativity 101* by Kaufman.

HNRS 4000, Diehl, Acts of Feminist Experimentation in Margaret Atwood's Fiction

This seminar will introduce students to Atwood's long fiction and specifically will explore the politics (e.g., feminism, environmentalism, nationalism) and experimental poetics at the center of Atwood's oeuvre. Over the semester, we will read and discuss ten novels from Atwood's diverse body of work, beginning with her first work of long fiction—that is, *The Edible Woman* (1969)—and ending with her most recent contribution, *The Heart Goes Last* (2015). Our readings will span five decades of work by Atwood and include novels that parody Gothic romances and fairy tales (i.e., *Lady Oracle*, 1976), that fictionally re-imagine salacious historical events (i.e., *Alias Grace*, 1996), that playfully parallel canonical literature (i.e., *The Penelopiad*, 2005), and that eerily speculate on the possible near-future consequences of current historical events (i.e., *The Handmaid's Tale*, 1985). [N.B. This course will coincide with a stage production of *The Penelopiad* which will be mounted by the BGSU Department of Theater and Film. This production, which enrolled students will be required to attend, will enable us to discuss the topic of adaptation as well.)

HNRS 4000, Stinson, *Making a Murderer*: Is it time for criminal justice reform?

This Honors seminar will examine recent high-profile cases to explore whether the criminal justice system in the United States is broken, and if so, what are the reforms necessary to fix it. The issue of wrongful conviction and criminal justice reform has become mainstream in the past year, largely through the efforts of the Marshall Project and the viral popularity of the Netflix documentary series *Making a Murderer*. The seminar will use *Making a Murderer* and a recent article on criminal justice reform by Judge Alex Kozinski (a sitting judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit) as the framework to facilitate discussion and explore issues relating to the realities of the American criminal justice system and the potential for reform (see Kozinski, 2015). The purpose of the class is to provide a forum for students to critically evaluate problems in the criminal justice system and explore potential remedies and reforms. Students will watch all ten episodes of *Making a Murderer*. Each of the ten episodes are approximately 60 minutes in length. Using the framework of *Making a Murderer* to facilitate class discussions, we will then identify problems, errors, police misconduct, prosecutorial misconduct, and sentinel events that can lead to wrongful convictions. In the second half of the semester students will conduct independent research, write a five page paper, and present on the selected topic, using the Kozinski (2015) article as a starting point in identifying research and remedies for reform.

General Studies Writing Honors Sections

GSW 1120H, Rzicznek, Relax! It's No Big Deal. Or Is It?

What does relaxation mean? How do we foster a state of relaxation in a society that prides itself on multitasking and never stopping—even on the weekends? Think about it. Sundays used to be a day for lounging; now they are a catch-up day—or better yet a work-ahead day—for homework, laundry, cooking, cleaning, yard work, etc. As a class we'll explore the medical, economical, cultural, and personal benefits of relaxation through rigorous academic and critical research, including scholarly articles, relevant documentaries, and various relaxation techniques—all of which we'll synthesize and use as support in several argumentative essays.

The majority of sources used throughout the course will come from scholarly journals, well-established magazines and newspapers, and popular books on the subject of relaxation. Also, I plan on incorporating several relaxation techniques so students may use their own first-hand experience with the content as primary source support. My goal is to incorporate all of these different sources to help students experience stress relief beyond the classroom. Ideally, I want this class to encourage students to question their values, and it's my hope that they will apply what we learn in class to their daily lives in order to reduce their stress levels and experience the benefits of relaxation.

GSW 1120H, Jordan, Technology

In recent years, we have seen an explosion in our visual culture, as computers and digital technology make the number of design choices in print advertisements, commercials, billboards, films, video games, and magazines almost infinite in their complexity and variety. This course is meant to interrogate these design choices and the rhetorical expression of visual culture through two avenues – written reflective writing, and visual/aural/written texts that students will compose.

GSW 1110H, Jones, Why College?

“The value of a college education is not the learning of many facts but the training of the mind to think” – Albert Einstein

College. The word has long conjured diverse images in the American imagination: Inspirational professors, acapella groups, toga parties, late-night study sessions, tailgating before football games. But what does it conjure today? One prominent presidential candidate is calling for free tuition at public colleges. Student-athletes are lobbying to be paid like professionals. Students are boycotting “offensive” reading assignments. What the heck is going on? In this special Honors section of GSW 1110, we will interrogate contemporary higher education via a series of thesis-driven academic essays. The primary goal of the course will be for students to develop mental habits and academic strategies typical of strong college writers, and to get there we will consider a number of books, essays and films that explore how both the mythology and reality of college seems to be changing in the 21st century.

English Special Topics

ENG 4310H, Emery, Early American Horror

This course will focus on Charles Brockden Brown and Edgar Allan Poe, two writers famous for depicting horrible events and horrified characters—and for attempting to instill horror in their readers. We'll discuss the Gothic literary tradition and its transformation/Americanization by Brown and Poe, investigate the significant psychological underpinnings of the Gothic, note ways in which American literary horror departs from the European variety, and consider the complex motives and strategies of writers who strive to depict and create horror. We'll be reading three novels by Brown (*Wieland*, *Arthur Mervyn*, and *Edgar Huntly*); a few of Poe's poems; and all of Poe's horrific fiction, including "The Black Cat," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Masque of the Red Death," and Poe's only novel, *The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym*. Course format: discussion. Course requirements: three 4-5-page interpretive papers, a take-home final exam, and intelligent and energetic participation in discussion. Warning: Course reading not to be done after dark.

ENG 4800H, Dickinson, EMBATTLED AVANT-GARDES: A SECRET HISTORY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

"Are you consumers or real participants?" Anonymous Situationist-inspired graffiti [1968].

What is everyday life? Critic Rita Felski characterizes it as that "most self-evident, yet . . . most puzzling of ideas" made up of the "essential taken-for-granted continuum of mundane activities." We discover everyday life in those places, spaces, and moments where we spend the majority of our time and yet to which, curiously, we seem to pay the least attention.

From the nineteenth-century on, modernity transformed the experience of everyday life. City streets and department stores became places for looking, for being seen, of movements through urban space, the disorienting sites of fantasy and distraction. But they were also the spaces of work, of the factory floor and the office, of alienation and habit, of bored routine. These two competing visions of everyday life animated a wide variety of art and literature across the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries.

Unsurprisingly, the great aesthetic projects of nineteenth- and twentieth-century modernism and the avant-garde were reclamation projects, aiming to turn the alienated spaces of everyday life into gateways for re-enchantment, realization and revolution. *This course* will trace a collage-like path through these imaginative practices, starting with nineteenth-century realism and the European dada, surrealist and post-WW2 avant-garde, to the spontaneous Beat poetics and projective verse of the American 1950s and 1960s, ending with 1970s British punk and postmodernism. How do these artists and writers reimagine everyday life? What does their secret history tell we citizens of the twenty-first century?

