

ENGLISH 106 - READING FICTION: BANNED BOOKS

Fall 2016

Professor:	Lauren Gantz
Meeting Times:	MWF 12:00-12:50PM in CCC 224
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Office:	CCC 428
Office Hours:	M 9:30-11:00AM, T 11AM-12:30PM, by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What makes a text “dangerous” or “obscene”? Who gets to police the written word? How do we balance the desire to protect specific individuals or groups with the democratic ideal of the free expression of ideas? In this course, we will attempt to answer such questions by drawing upon a variety of texts by authors whose works have been banned or censored, as well as works that discuss censorship and its ramifications. We will engage in careful reading and analysis of novels and short stories, focusing both on their artistic merits and on the historical and cultural contexts that led to their censorship.

Our goal is to deepen students’ understanding and appreciation of these works. Some of this understanding will come with interpreting the works in historical context, so we’ll ask questions like why these texts were written, who comprised their intended audience, and how they spoke to those readers. To sharpen students’ perception of these works, we’ll also practice describing literary effects. In this way students will accumulate over the course of the semester a kind of toolbox of methods and frameworks for interpreting literature. Overall, the class will encourage attentive reading and reflection. We will read slowly and carefully, with close attention to language and detail. Learning to notice, describe and analyze details in a text will make students more thoughtful readers both of these few important works and, hopefully, of books that they encounter in the future.

English 106 is part of the Investigation Level of the General Education Program at UWSP, designed to hone students’ critical thinking skills and to prepare them to engage with new ideas. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Read closely, think critically, and write effectively about texts.
- Investigate and thoughtfully respond to a variety of ideas, beliefs, or values held by persons in situations other than your own.

TEXTS

Available at the UWSP University Store (or online):

Lord of the Flies, by William Golding

The Bluest Eye, by Toni Morrison

Shame, by Salman Rushdie

God Dies by the Nile, by Nawal el Saadawi

Available on D2L:

“A Good Man is Hard to Find,” by Flannery O’Connor
“God Bless You Dr. Kevorkian,” by Kurt Vonnegut
Secondary readings on the history of literary censorship
Additional short readings by the authors whose fiction we’ll be reading

ABSENCE AND LATENESS POLICY

You will be given **two free absences** for the semester. Absences beyond those two—for any reason other than religious observance—will impact your participation grade for the semester (see grading criteria for explanation). Please ensure you arrive to class on time; **three tardies will count as an absence, and if you are more than fifteen minutes late, you will be marked as absent for the meeting.**

If you have to miss class, you will still be responsible for turning in all assignments due on the date of your absence, and for completing the assigned course readings. I would also advise contacting a classmate for notes. Do not email me asking, [“Did I miss anything?”](#) The answer will always be, “Yes.”

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

By UWSP policy, you must notify me of a pending absence due to a religious holy day within the first three weeks of class. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

The assignments in this class will **not** require the use of sources. If you choose to use other sources in a writing assignment, you **must** cite them. MLA citation style is preferable, but use any format with which you are familiar. The use of an unacknowledged source will result, *at minimum*, in your being required to redo the assignment for reduced credit. Depending on the nature and extent of the misuse, such behavior may result in a zero for the assignment or an automatic F for the course. If you are unsure how to cite a source properly, you are welcome to ask me. Other forms of academic dishonesty, such as purchasing work, copying the work of classmates, cheating on exams, etc., will also result in a major course penalty, including possible failure of the course. A report may also be submitted to the Dean of Students. For more information about UWSP’s policies regarding academic misconduct, see: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf>

EMAIL

Your UWSP email account is the university’s standard method of communication with you, and you should check it regularly. I may at times use email to contact the class as a whole or individual students; I will routinely use the course home page in D2L for reminders and announcements.

Be advised that while I do check my email regularly throughout the week and on weekends, I only read and respond to messages between 7AM-7PM. If you need to contact me, please do so during those hours unless it’s an emergency.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Computers and tablets can be used for taking or referring to notes, D2L, or class readings, *if* you can resist their temptations. However, if you are found using these devices for purposes unrelated to our class, I will ask you to turn them off and put them away. Repeated issues may result in a ban on such devices for the entire class. Stay on task, and be considerate of my time and your classmates' time. Cellphones should be put away, and turned off or silenced. Refusal to comply with this policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability and need accommodations for this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services. Call 715-346-3365, email dissv@uwsp.edu, or visit the Office in room 609 of the Learning Resource Center.

SAFE SPACE POLICY

The nature of this course is such that we will frequently consider material that is offensive, unpleasant, or potentially triggering (causing an extreme emotional reaction or anxiety). In order for our classroom to be a safe space, there are several practices that you as students and I as an instructor can adopt.

First and foremost, we are all required to be respectful of each other's identities and opinions. There will be zero tolerance for slurs, derogatory language, harassment, or belittlement of ideas. If you need clarification, please refer to UWSP's Community Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (<http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf>). As a general rule, however, use common sense and treat others as you wish to be treated.

Second, because we will be dealing with subject matter (physical and sexual violence, child abuse, suicide) that might be triggering for you or your classmates, everyone needs to be sensitive to and respectful of each other's feelings. For my part, this means that I will alert you in advance to readings that might be triggering. For your part, if you find a reading or assignment triggering—or suspect that you will—I want you to contact me as soon as possible. I'm happy to offer you an alternate assignment. Likewise, if you feel troubled or unsafe in any class discussion, please speak to me immediately so that we can resolve the problem.

ASSESSMENT

UWSP regularly assesses the General Education Program (including this course) to ensure that we are providing you with the best education we can. As part of this effort, samples of student work may be shared, anonymously, with a small group of faculty members. If you have any questions about the assessment process or concerns about how your work may be used, please come talk with me.

GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS

Reading and preparation for class: For all class meetings, there will be assigned readings with specific suggestions of things to look for or to think about as you read. Doing the reading, thoughtfully, *before class* is necessary preparation for you to be able to participate fully in, and benefit from, the class meeting. You should also take some notes on your observations and reactions. I may call on individual students orally, have you write briefly about the reading early in class, or give a brief reading quiz as a way to check preparation and begin discussion.

Attendance and participation: You should attend class regularly and participate to the best of your ability. Class activities will include discussion, workshops, and presentations. See the next page for grading criteria.

Reading journals: Reading journals will be informal, low-stakes writing assignments. They're meant to help you reflect on readings and explore ideas. Prompts for these will be posted on D2L.

Short critical essays: You'll write two short papers (2-4 pgs.) outside of class. Details about these assignments, including grading criteria, will be provided in handouts and discussed in class. The final draft of each essay should be typed and submitted to me via email. You will be able to revise **one** of these essays. The revision grade will be averaged with the grade you received on the first draft. Instructions for revision, and revision deadlines, will be included on the assignment sheet for each essay.

Presentations: You will be assigned to a group of 3-5 students and asked to give a brief presentation (10 minutes max) providing biographical or historical context for one of our readings. Details about the presentations, including grading criteria, will be posted on D2L.

Exams: This course will have two exams consisting of identifications, fill-in-the-blank, matching, short answer questions, and short essay questions.

Your grades will be determined using the following rubric:

Reading Journals	15%
Short critical essays	25%
Presentations	10%
Exams	40%
Reading quizzes and participation	10%

I will be using the plus/minus system for final grades. Please note: to ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. Thus a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999.

A = 93-100 A- = 90-92 B+ = 87-89 B = 84-86 B- = 80-83 C+ = 77-79 C = 74-76
C- = 70-73 D+ = 67-69 D = 64-66 D- = 60-63 F = 0-60

Criteria for Participation

	Ideal	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Attendance	Is present for the entirety of each class meeting, or (rarely) is absent for a compelling reason, which is shared with the instructor promptly.	Attends consistently (at least 85% of the time). Occasional absences or late arrival are mostly for a valid reason.	Missing class, arriving late, or leaving early, more than 15% of the time, or less often but without explanation.
Preparation	Always gives evidence of preparation when called on.	Gives evidence of preparation when called on at least 85% of the time.	Gives evidence of being unprepared more than 15% of the time.
Attentiveness	Consistently comes equipped (book, notebook, etc.) to class. Is always listening actively when not speaking.	Usually comes equipped and is listening actively when not speaking.	Attends to something other than class activities (e.g. texting, Facebook, studying for another class).
Quality of Contributions	Makes comments that stand out for the level of careful thought they demonstrate about the material and the unfolding conversation.		Makes comments that reflect inattentiveness to others' contributions, are irrelevant, or otherwise tend to derail the conversation.
Classroom Community	Improves the conversation in a significant way. (E.g. helps draw others out, makes extra effort to contribute if shy, etc.)		Impairs the conversation in a significant way. (E.g. dominates discussion, talks while others are talking, treats other students or their ideas with disrespect.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND LATE WORK:

Take-home assignments: In order to pass the course, you must complete every assignment. Take-home assignments are due *by the beginning of class* on the due date.

Late take-home assignments will lose a letter grade **for each calendar day (note: not each class day)** they are late. Extensions are negotiable: if, knowing your own academic schedule and obligations, you anticipate needing more time for an assignment, you must speak with me in person **at least two calendar days before the assignment is due.** Together we will arrive on a later due date that must fit into the syllabus (i.e., the new due date must precede any other due dates for the unit). I will hold you to that new due date and deduct points if you miss it. Do not e-mail me the day before something is due to ask for an extension; I will refuse. Plan ahead.

You must build in time for possible technological failure ("my computer crashed") or contingency ("I left my flash drive with my paper on it at home"). Late work is late, regardless of circumstance.

In-class assignments and activities: In-class work (quizzes, exams, etc.) can **only** be made up under extraordinary, unavoidable circumstances. You must provide me with documentation of the reason for your absence.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Copies of all course documents and additional resources will be available in **Desire2Learn**.

The **Tutoring-Learning Center**, located in the basement of the library (Room 018), can provide help with writing and many other skills you will need to succeed in college. Their regular hours are Monday – Thursday 9:00am – 8:00pm, Friday 9:00AM – 1:00PM. Appointments are recommended but not required. Phone 715-346-3568 or email tlctutor@uwsp.edu.

COURSE SCHEDULE

**Subject to change at instructor's discretion*

W 9/7	Introduction to the course: Free speech, censorship, and literary value
F 9/9	Words and/as action <i>Snyder v. Phelps</i> (D2L)
M 9/12	Reading Closely Nabokov, “Good Readers and Good Writers”; O’Connor “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (D2L)
W 9/14	Reading Closely O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find”
F 9/16	Reading Journal 1 Due Reading Closely O’Connor “A Good Man is Hard to Find” O’Connor, “The Nature and Aim of Fiction” (D2L)
M 9/19	Vonnegut, “God Bless You, Dr. Kevorkian” (D2L) Vonnegut’s censorship history, from <i>120 Banned Books</i> (D2L)
W 9/21	Vonnegut, “God Bless You, Dr. Kevorkian” Vonnegut’s letter to Charles McCarthy (D2L)
F 9/23	Reading Journal 2 Due Online writing workshop: brainstorming paper ideas
M 9/26	In-class writing workshop: writing literary analyses
W 9/28	Presentation: William Golding’s Biography, Reactions to <i>Lord of the Flies</i> <i>Lord of the Flies</i> chapters 1-2

F 9/30	First short critical essay due <i>Lord of the Flies</i> chapters 3-4
M 10/3	<i>Lord of the Flies</i> chapters 5-7
W 10/5	<i>Lord of the Flies</i> chapters 8-9
F 10/7	Reading Journal 3 Due In-class writing workshop: common issues and concerns with short essay one
M 10/10	<i>Lord of the Flies</i> chapters 10-12
W 10/12	Presentation: Nawal el Saadawi's Biography <i>God Dies by the Nile</i> chs. 1-2 el Saadawi's censorship history, from <i>120 Banned Books</i> (D2L)
F 10/14	Reading Journal 4 Due <i>God Dies by the Nile</i> chs. 3-4
M 10/17	Presentation: Basic Tenets/History of Islam <i>God Dies by the Nile</i> chs. 5-7
W 10/19	<i>God Dies by the Nile</i> chs. 8-10
F 10/21	Reading Journal 5 Due <i>God Dies by the Nile</i> chs. 11-14
M 10/24	<i>God Dies by the Nile</i> chs. 15-end
W 10/26	el Saadawi, "The Arrest"
F 10/28	Reading Journal 6 Due Review for exam
M 10/31	Exam 1
W 11/2	<i>The Bluest Eye</i> , pgs. 1-32 Morrison's censorship history, from <i>120 Banned Books</i> (D2L)
F 11/4	Presentation: Toni Morrison's Biography <i>The Bluest Eye</i> pgs. 33-58
M 11/7	Presentation: Race in the U.S. in 1941 <i>The Bluest Eye</i> pgs. 58-93
W 11/9	<i>The Bluest Eye</i> pgs. 94-131
F 11/11	Reading Journal 7 Due

The Bluest Eye pgs. 132-53

M 11/14 *The Bluest Eye* pgs. 154-83

W 11/16 *The Bluest Eye* pgs. 184-end

F 11/18 **Reading Journal 8 Due**
Presentation: Salman Rushdie Biography
Shame, chapters 1-2

M 11/21 **Presentation: Fatwa and *The Satanic Verses***
Shame, chapters 3-4

W 11/23 **Second short critical essay due**
Rushdie, "On Censorship" (D2L)

F 11/25 *Thanksgiving Break*

M 11/28 *Shame*, chapters 5-6

W 11/30 *Shame*, chapter 7

F 12/2 **Reading Journal 9 Due**
Shame, chapter 8

M 12/5 *Shame*, chapter 9-10

W 12/7 *Shame*, chapter 11

F 12/9 **Reading Journal 10 Due**
Shame, chapter 12-end

M 12/12 Reflecting on Censorship and Freedom of Speech
Stanley Fish, "There's No Such Thing as Free Speech" (D2L)

W 12/14 Course evaluations and review for exam 2

Final Exam Tuesday Dec. 20th, 2:45-4:45pm