Chuck Etheridge, Associate Professor of English Department of English  
College of Liberal Arts  
Email: charles.etheridge@tamucc.edu  
Phone: 825-5755  
Office: FC 288  
Office Hours: 1:00-2:00 p.m. M, T, W, R

English 2335.002  
Themes and Genres in the Literature of the Americas:  
Comic Books to Punk Rock  
Summer I 2015  
OCNR 259  
2:00 - 3:55 p.m.

Texts:

Edward P. Jones. *The Known World.*  
Janet Egan. *A Visit from the Goon Squad.*

Description

Literature doesn’t have to be a bunch of old novels written by dead people; each of the novels we are studying was written since the year 2000, and each of the novels we will read has won the Pulitzer Prize for literature—a mark of literary quality. So, buckle your seat belt as we take a journey through contemporary literature, learning about comic book artists from Michael Chabon, African-American slave holders from Edward P. Jones, the lives of immigrants from Juno Diaz, and aging punk rockers from Janet Egan. We’ll also spend some time on an award-winning contemporary film. By the time we’re done, you’ll be literarily up to date and can make your own pronouncements about the contemporary literature scene.

Course Objectives

1. To examine the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts by reading texts by authors from a range of cultures and nationalities.
2. To explore the distinctive characteristics of relevant literary periods, genres, and writers.
3. To understand and use basic literary terms and concepts.
4. To develop analytic skills by close reading, class discussion, and writing.
5. To use writing as a tool for learning.

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will:

- Recognize the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts;
- Respond critically to literary works.

Grades

Presentation 10%
Creative Project 10%
Paper One 20%
Paper Two 20%
Final Exam 20%
Daily Work 20%

A 90-100
B 80-89
C 70-79
D 60-69
F below 60

Course Requirements:

Presentation:

You work in groups of two to four students to research, write, and present a group presentation of a topic relevant to the literature we are studying. You want to find GOOD information (beware Milt's Melville Website and other easy-to-find but not very accurate information you'll get on 'net search engines), you want to show how what you find relates to the work we're reading at the time, and you need to effectively present the information that you've found in an interesting way that engages your fellow students. Visuals, Power Point, interpretive dance—don't be afraid to try new things to make your presentation both engaging and educational. I once had a student learn and perform all the dances from The Great Gatsby. I want to meet with the members of the group two to three days before the presentation so I can give you feedback and help.

Presentations topics and due dates are here: http://falcon.tamu.edu/wiki/CEtheridge/GroupPresentationTopics

I also want to get a sense of what everyone in the group has contributed, so, on the class
period on which you give your presentation, you need to turn in an evaluation form.

Group Evaluation forms are available on Blackboard under the “Assignements” tab under “Group Presentation.”

If you do not turn in your group evaluation form on the same day as your presentation is given, there will be a penalty to your grade on the project.

Creative Project

Your creative project should respond to or interpret one of the course's literary works in relation to your own ideas about invented and what it has meant to the people of the Americas. You might rework a story from another character's point of view, you might write a short play, you might act out a scene, make a movie or multi-media presentation, write a song—if you have an idea, try it out on me. Two of my recent favorites were a group of students (they asked if they could collaborate) on a musical comedy based on a work we were reading, and another person who wrote a Poe-style murder-mystery based on class material. You should include a one-page reflection that shows how your project relates to the ideas we've been working on in the course and should "link" your project to one of the course objectives. These must be submitted via Blackboard prior to the beginning of class on the day your group does its presentation. You will be need to make a five-minute presentation to the class (if a group of you stage a musical comedy, we'll adjust the time accordingly). You'll be evaluated on your effort, on how creative you are, how your project illuminates the work we are reading, and how well you do. These will be presented throughout the semester.

Papers

Paper #1 should be a short (3-4) page analysis of some aspect of one of the works we have read to date. You could analyze a character, look for a theme, explore imagery or metaphor, etc. Papers should have a clear focus or main point, and supporting detail should be provided in the form of direct quotation. Paper #2 is a 4-6 page exploration of some aspect of the course's theme and the consequences it has had for the peoples of the Americas. Your essay should have a clearly stated main point, proposition, or theme with supporting arguments. In addition, your essay should refer to at least two of the texts covered in this course. Feel free to draw in relevant historical, political, cultural or personal examples to enhance your point. You will need to use some outside materials, but I am more interested in the connections you make between texts, your own ideas, and contexts. Please schedule individual conference with me at least two weeks before the due date so we can discuss your ideas and your progress towards completing this assignment. Papers should done in MS word or a similar program, with 12 point Times New Roman font, normal margins, and double spaced. Citation should be done in the MLA format. These must be submitted via Blackboard prior to the beginning of class on the day each essay is due.

Exam

For your exam, you will write an analytical essay responding to your choice of two of three prompts. The questions will center on thematic and genre concerns that link and distinguish the major texts that we will cover this semester, requiring you to use specific evidence from them to support your argument. They also will require you to make connections that show your understanding of relevant historical, cultural, and literary contexts that we will cover through group presentations, class discussions, and other readings. You will also be asked to
demonstrate your familiarity with key terms and concepts explored in the course. This exam will be given on July 3rd, the last day of class. You will need to bring a blue book to class that day.

**Daily Writing**

The major business of this class is to read. If you do the reading, you will do fine. Each novel is broken up into manageable “chunks,” so that I don’t expect you to read the whole book in one sitting. Reading is always due on the day it appears on the syllabus, so that, if the reading is *Great Gatsby* (Chapters 1-3), you should show up having already read the first three chapters of that book.

The exam will be in two parts, each worth a total of two points:

**Objective**—These will be fact based answers to determine whether or not you have done the reading. You can answer them quickly; I’ll give you a free answer now. At one point in *Devil in a Blue Dress*, Easy Rawlins goes into a speakeasy named John’s.

I will ask you, “What is the name of the speakeasy Rawlins went into?” You will answer “John’s.” You will receive maximum points for that answer; massive celebration will follow.

There will be up to four objective questions worth **a total of two points**.

**Discussion**—The other two points will be based on your ability to effectively answer a discussion question based on some idea or concept in the reading.

2 points—You wrote in a thoughtful, careful manner about the material.
1 point—You wrote in a way that showed you’d read the material.
0 points—You wrote in a way that showed you were present but not well prepared.

**These must be taken prior to class on the day that reading is assigned. You can find these daily writings in Blackboard under the tab “Daily Writing.”**

**Once you access the Daily Writing, you have 10 (ten) minutes to complete it.**

**Course Policies:**

**Communicating with Me**

I need to know if you are doing well, if you are having trouble, and if you have questions. I also like to kibbitz (engage in small talk face to face). I can be reached in the following ways:

**In Person/F2F:** My office is Faculty Center 288. I am in my office during my office hours, and, quite frankly, many more hours than my office hours. If you need to see me outside of office hours, give me a quick holler, just to make sure I’m “in.” If so, come on by.
Email. Grown ups use e-mail. I will communicate with the whole class regularly via e-mail. Checking one’s e-mail is a regular expectation in most professional jobs, so “I don’t check my e-mail” isn’t a good reason for missing something important. My e-mail is charles.etheridge@tamucc.edu. I am faithful about returning e-mails, and will return every e-mail within 24 hours. On the other hand, I am not glued to my computer and phone 24/7, so don’t email me with a question at 3:30 in the morning and expect an immediate reply. Weekend Exception. If you e-mail me late Friday afternoon or on Saturday or Sunday, you might not receive a reply until Monday morning.

Telephone. My phone number is 825-5755 (or 361-825-5755 if you are calling from outside of Corpus or have a non-Corpus cell phone number). Call me if you need me. Leave a message if I don’t answer. This is a generational thing; I know—I have noticed many younger students (including my own children) hang up if someone doesn’t answer the phone. If you call and I don’t pick up, leave your name and a message including the number at which I can call you back.

Facebook: The class will have a Facebook group which can be by searching for “English 2235 Dr E” in the Search function of Facebook. You can use this to ask questions of each other, share interesting ideas, post clips of protest lit you have found, and to otherwise communicate with your classmates and me. You are not required to join this group; but it might enhance your learning experience if you do. All materials and announcements will be made by regular e-mails.

Although Facebook is a way to communicate with me, I do not “friend” current students on Facebook. If you send me a request, please do not be insulted if I do not respond. I maintain both a personal and professional presence on the social media, as should you. Do you really want me to see your pictures of what you did last weekend, esp. if we have a test and you might have studies more?

Skype. My Skype ID is TechWriteDrE. I only have my Skype turned on during office hours.

Texting. Nope. I prefer not.

Attendance and Tardy Policy

You need to make every reasonable effort to attend every class. I realize this will not always be possible. Three types of absences may be excused: illness, personal emergency, and school business. If you are ill enough to miss class, you are ill enough to seek medical attention, and your illness will be excused when I receive some sort of medical documentation. If you have some sort of personal emergency, such as an illness or death in the family, please notify student affairs and they will arrange for you to make up any missed work. If you miss because of school business (band trip, athletic event, etc.), please let me know before you leave so that you will not return from your trip behind in your school work.

NOTE: If you accumulate two absences that are unexcused, you will have missed more than a week’s worth of class without explanation. If you do so, I reserve the right to penalize your grade up to and including failure of the course. If you miss four or more classes without reasonable explanation, you run the risk of failing.

Tardies: This is a 2:00 pm class. What are you going to do--oversleep? Don’t be late. If you come after class starts, you will be considered tardy. Two tardies count as an unexcused absence.
Late Work

Daily work cannot be turned in late for any reason. I will not accept late papers or projects unless you have talked to me in advance of the due date about an extension. Makeup exams will only be given in extraordinary situations that are discussed with me in advance. No late work will be accepted for any reason after the final exam.

Extra Credit and Make-Up Assignments

If you miss class, you can make up the related daily points by writing a review of a poetry or fiction reading, play, lecture, art exhibit, or other cultural event related in some meaningful way to multicultural America. If you miss no classes, you may write such a review for extra credit points. During the semester, I will announce these events as I hear of them. If you know of others, please tell the rest of us. The first step is to attend such a reading, play, or lecture. Then compose a brief summary of the event in which you describe what happened (or what you saw) with details. Finally, give your thoughtful opinion of the event: Was any particular part of the event moving, brilliant, or clever? What was it like to be there? Was it important or significant about the event? What did you learn? The review should be 1-2 pages (typed, double-spaced) and is due to me no later than 3 weekdays after the event. Reviews will be evaluated on a 4-point scale: 4 is for a detailed, specific, and insightful review; 3 is the score I will award most often; 2 is for reviews that are pretty vague; and 0 to is the score you will earn if I'm not sure you even attended the event. You may hand in no more than two reviews during the semester. Daily work cannot be made up in any other way for any reason. No reviews will be accepted after the final exam. Hint: You may be able to assure an evaluation score higher than a 0 or 1 if you are able to attach to your review an event ticket, program, brochure or other paraphernalia demonstrating your attendance.

Academic Honesty

I will follow the policy that appears in the university catalogue and in the student code of conduct. Plagiarism, which is "the presentation of work of another as one's own work" is only one form of academic dishonesty, which also includes falsification (the intentional alteration of information), fabrication (the intentional invention of information), and abuse of academic materials (the intentional destruction of resource materials). Sometimes students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example) because they are unaware of the standards that apply. If you are unsure of how to document or properly use information, please check with me WELL BEFORE THE PAPER IS DUE. Also, know that I have some heavy-duty anti-plagiarism web applications, so you'll probably get caught. If you have questions or doubts about what constitutes a breach of integrity, a violation of policies or a proper citation, it is important that you consult with me. The SMALLEST penalty you will get if you are caught is a zero on the project; you could, potentially fail the course, and, if you have plagiarized in other classes, you may face disciplinary action by the university.

I only feel it fair to notice that this issue is something the university is "Hot and Bothered" about right now, and that, if we suspect something, we are now REQUIRED to notify the administration. This isn't something we can keep "in house" anymore.

All of this can be avoided simply by doing your own work to the best of your ability.
Writing Center

The Writing Center of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi provides free help for students at any stage in the writing process. Writing center consultants are trained to work with writers one-on-one to help them find ideas, organize their thoughts, cite sources, and succeed at all aspects of the writing task. The writing center works closely with faculty across campus to understand the writing projects they assign and to help students meet the expectations of those assignments. The writing center is located in the Glasscock building. Both drop-in and scheduled appointments are available. More information is available at http://critical.tamucc.edu/wiki/WC/Home.

Academic Advising

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Grade Appeal Process

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Disability Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Reminder to English Majors
As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should keep a copy of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

A Note on Reading Assignments: Readings must be completed by the date noted. Some of the readings are lengthy. To avoid falling behind, you will need to determine how much time you require to get the reading done and build that time into your schedule. It is a good idea to use the weekends (and class days without reading assignments) to get ahead in your reading.

**Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>June 1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the Course; Discussion of &quot;American&quot; and &quot;The Americas&quot;; key concepts and ideas; Kate Chopin's &quot;Story of an Hour,&quot; hand out. Syllabus quiz must be taken on Blackboard before midnight.</td>
<td>Daily writing due, prior to class. Michael Chabon, <em>The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay (CK)</em>, Part One</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daily writing due, prior to class. CK Part Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Daily writing due, prior to class. CK, Part Four.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily writing due, prior to class. CK Part Five.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daily writing due, prior to class. Edward P. Jones, <em>The Known World (KW)</em>, Part One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Daily writing due, prior to class. KW Part Three Rough Draft of Essay #1 Due.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Daily writing due, prior to class. OW Part Two.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily writing due, prior to class.</strong>&lt;br&gt;OW Part Three</td>
<td><strong>Daily writing due, prior to class.</strong>&lt;br&gt;OW, Part Four.</td>
<td><strong>Film: Santitas Rough Draft of Essay #2 Due.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Daily writing due, prior to class.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Janet Egan, <em>A Visit from the Goon Squad</em> (GS), Part I. Paper #2 due.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily writing due, prior to class.</strong>&lt;br&gt;GS Part II.</td>
<td><strong>Daily writing due, prior to class.</strong>&lt;br&gt;GS Part Three</td>
<td><strong>Daily writing due, prior to class.</strong>&lt;br&gt;GS Part Four.</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Electronics Policies**

Cell phones may be used when they are relevant to the business of the class—if you purchase ebooks and access them via your phone, or if they are serving as PRDs (Portable Research Devices) for work we are doing. Otherwise, the no e-mail, shopping, and social networking rules apply. While we're on the subject of technology, note that you may not "record" any class, either in an audio or visual format, without the instructor's permission. I'll likely give it, but you do need to ask. Use of laptops and notebooks should be sparing, specifically only for the purpose of taking notes, or, when class activity calls for it, researching. And, although I don't like to have to say this, if you are e-mailing or on any social networking software during class, you'll be counted absent that day.

**In Conclusion**

This should be a worthwhile and even enjoyable class. You can count on me to do three things. I will read everything you have to, so depending on the author, we will either enjoy or suffer together. I will endeavor to make class as interesting and as stimulating as possible. Finally, I am here to help you, but I cannot do so unless you let me know when you need help. Communicate.