Senior Capstone: 20th- and 21st-century Literature and Writing
ENGL 4351.001
Topic: Literature and the Memory of September 11th
Fall 2015
MW 5:30-6:45
OCNR-258

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Course Description

On the morning of September 11, 2001, four commercial aircraft were hijacked and utilized as weapons with which to attack strategic and symbolic landmarks across the mid-Atlantic seaboard. These attacks—which were witnessed in real time by millions of television viewers around the world—would claim the lives of nearly 3,000 people (including the hijackers) and would result in the initiation of the global War on Terror and the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as an increased U.S. military presence throughout the world. On the home front, the attacks of September 11th would simultaneously result in both a solidification of national identity and a questioning of America’s role in global politics. This course examines the ways in which literature “remembers” 9/11 and its aftermath, seeking to answer questions about trauma, memory, politics, and the social iniquities that emerged in the wake of the attacks of that day. How do we remember traumatic events? Who has the right to claim ownership over trauma? What are the political dimensions of memory and, specifically, how we remember? What forces shape the production of memory? What are the social consequences of these memorial processes? What role does literature play in confronting trauma in the wake of political violence? Over the course of the semester, students will confront these questions and bring the skills developed over the course of their undergraduate study to bear on the examination of literature surrounding 9/11.

Drawing on the understandings of genre and cultural study that you have developed as an English major, this course will require you to write in a variety of analytic, interpretive, and expository modes. To this end, you will be asked to produce three major writing assignments: (1) a design proposal for a 9/11 memorial; (2) a major research project drawing on literary analysis and contextual research; and (3) the capstone portfolio that marks your completion of the major.

Required Texts

*The Submission*; Amy Waldman (ISBN: 9781250007575)
*Falling Man*; Don DeLillo (ISBN: 9781416546061)
*A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*; Ken Kalfus (ISBN: 9780060501419)
In the Shadow of No Towers; Art Spiegelman (ISBN: 9780375423079)
Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close; Jonathan Safran Foer (ISBN: 9780618711659)

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO): Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:
1. apply professional standards in argumentation, research, and documentation;
2. evaluate various uses of genre and textuality;
3. create independent research projects by applying the skills of literary and cultural analysis.

English Department Goals for the Capstone Class: Over the course of the semester, you will:
• explore course readings and issues with your peers in open and engaged discussions;
• expand and share your knowledge of literature, contexts, and genres in relation to our thematic focus;
• organize and reflect upon a portfolio of your college writings in three different discourse genres;
• engage in sustained research that you will share with your classmates and use to develop your own independent project.

Course Grading

The course will be structured on a 1000-point scale. The scores you receive on your assignments, portfolio, draft workshops, and participation will be totaled at the end of the semester, and your final grade will be calculated based on this score. The points will be distributed as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Written Memorial Design Proposal (Individual)</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorial Design Group Presentation</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capstone Independent Research Project:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Annotated Bibliography and Proposal</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• First Draft of Final Essay (and Workshop)</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Panel Presentation</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Literature Responses (4 total)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Final Essay</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capstone Portfolio</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
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Participation will be calculated based on class attendance, participation in class discussions, preparedness for class discussions, and involvement in oral presentations. If a student is absent for a class period, he/she is not participating. Students will be expected to bring their text to class every day, having read the assignment due for that day.

Memorial Design Proposal
Over the course of the semester, students—in groups of three or four—will construct a design proposal for a 9/11 memorial. Using secondary texts on trauma, memory, and the
politics of 9/11 as their theoretical foundation, groups will produce a design that provides a memorial space for confronting the events of that day. For the group project, students—using visual aids—will present their proposal to the class and defend their design against possible criticism. For the written component of the project, each student will individually produce a 1000-1300-word essay that explains each of the creative decisions incorporated into the design.

**Capstone Independent Research Project**

As part of the Capstone requirement, students will spend the semester working toward the completion of an independent research project that utilizes texts on the course syllabus, as well as secondary sources, to make an argument about 9/11 in literature. Divided into four stages, this project will require students to engage with all of the elements that go into producing an in-depth scholarly essay. Scaffolding throughout the semester, these stages include (1) an annotated bibliography and research proposal; (2) short, written responses to the primary texts on the syllabus; (3) a first draft of the essay, complete with an outline for potential growth; (4) and an oral presentation on the final project. Completing these steps, students will be prepared for to submit polished drafts of their final essay. This essay must offer a thorough examination of memory in the context of 9/11, using at least two primary texts on the course syllabus and a minimum of ten secondary sources. The essay must be between 3200 and 3500 words in length. Students should use close textual analysis and consider the cultural and historical contexts that inform the literature and topics under examination.

**Capstone Portfolio**

See the final page of this syllabus for more detailed instructions. Students must submit a cover letter and four essays that demonstrate engagement with a variety of discourse genres. Portfolios will be graded on completeness and the quality/pertinence of the cover letter.

**Class Policies**

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism.**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in severe disciplinary action.

**Classroom/professional behavior**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a)
the instructor's ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Grade Appeals**

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.

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**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Policy on class attendance:** Students are allowed a maximum of four (4) absences. All absences count equally, irrespective of the cause, and students who exceed four absences will be penalized fifty points on their final grade for every absence over the limit.

- If you are unable to attend class, you do not need to email me to explain the circumstances. You should contact another student in class and copy his/her notes.

**Dropping a Class:** I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

**If I am absent:** If I need to cancel class because my car broke down, or if I am ill, etc., I will try to get someone to post a sign. I also will try to email you all before class. However, if
you come to class and I am not here by the time 15 minutes has elapsed (from when class is to start), please assume that class is canceled.

**Late Writing Projects:** All papers are due on the date listed on the syllabus. Students submitting their papers after this time will lose one letter grade for every class period that the paper is late. Students must submit their assignments via the link provided on Blackboard.

**Blackboard Grade Center:** You will see grades for assignments, exams, and blackboard discussion postings appear on Blackboard during the semester. While these scores may be useful in tracking your grade throughout the semester, they should NOT be used to calculate your final grade. Several point categories will not appear on Blackboard (such as Participation and Reading Quizzes), and only I will have access to these scores. If you are ever concerned about your grade, visit me in my office and we can discuss the issue in person.

**Resources**

** Disabilities Accommodations**

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 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.

**Academic Advising**

It is imperative that all students visit regularly with an academic adviser. Each college within the university has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisers to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. To find out how to contact the right adviser, go to: [http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php](http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php)

Students who have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information, go to: [http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac](http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac)

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Adviser 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.

**Blackboard 9.1**: To log into Blackboard, go to: http://bb9.tamucc.edu. You must have a NET ID (also known as an Active Directory account) to log in. For instructions on how to get this account and more information about using Blackboard, go to: http://distance-education.tamucc.edu/student_resources.html. If you need additional help at any time to access, download, or print course materials on Blackboard, please contact the Island Online (IOL) Help Desk by telephone at (361) 825-2825 or by email at iolsupport@tamucc.edu.

**Course Calendar**

**UNIT ONE—The Personal**

Week One (August 26th)
- **Wednesday**
  - Syllabus Overview
  - Introductions
  - Assign Groups for Memorial Design and Peer Review Workshop
  - Morrison; “The Dead of September 11”

Week Two (August 31st, September 2nd)
- **Monday**
  - Duvall and Marzec; “Narrating 9/11” (Blackboard)
  - Douglass and Vogler; “Witness and Memory: Introduction” (Blackboard)

- **Wednesday**
  - DeLillo; *Falling Man* (1-75)
  - Stamelman; “Between Memory and History” (Blackboard)

Week Three (September 7th, 9th)
- **Monday**
  - Labor Day Holiday—No Class

- **Wednesday**
  - DeLillo; *Falling Man* (75-246)
  - Literature Reflection #1 Due 1 p.m. (Blackboard)
Week Four (September 14th, 16th)
• Monday
  o Foer; *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (1-100)
  o Edkins; “Remembering Relationality: Trauma Time and Politics” (Blackboard)

• Wednesday
  o Foer; *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (101-180)

Week Five (September 21st, 23rd)
• Monday
  o Foer; *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (181-310)

• Wednesday
  o Foer; *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (310-368)
  o Literature Reflection #2 Due 1 p.m. (Blackboard)

Week Six (September 28th, 30th)
• Monday
  o Waldman; *The Submission* (1-85)
  o Sturken; “Architectures of Grief and the Aesthetics of Absence” (Blackboard)

• Wednesday
  o Waldman; *The Submission* (85-156)
  o Online Memorial Exhibit
  o Literature Reflection #3 Due 1 p.m. (Blackboard)

UNIT TWO—The Political

Week Seven (October 5th, 7th)
• Monday
  o Waldman; *The Submission* (156-254)

• Wednesday
  o Waldman; *The Submission* (254-337)

Week Eight (October 12th, 14th)
• Monday
  o Memorial Design Group Presentations
  o Walter; *The Zero* (1-116)

• Wednesday
  o Walter; The Zero (116-194)
  o Memorial Design Essay Due 1 p.m. (Blackboard)
Week Nine (October 19th, 21st)
• Monday
  o Walter; *The Zero* (194-274)
  o Roy; “Come September” (Text available on Blackboard; video available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHz8cpULupo)
  o **Capstone Portfolio Due in Class**

• Wednesday
  o Walter; *The Zero* (274-326)
  o Sturken; “Consuming Fear and Selling Comfort” (Blackboard)

Week Ten (October 26th, 28th)
• Monday
  o Spiegelman; *In the Shadow of No Towers*
  o Breithaupt; “Rituals of Trauma” (Blackboard)
  o **Literature Reflection #4 Due 1 p.m. (Blackboard)**

• Wednesday
  o Kalfus; *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (1-56)
  o Radiolab; “60 Words” (podcast available at http://www.radiolab.org/story/60-words/)

Week Eleven (November 2nd, 4th)
• Monday
  o Kalfus; *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (57-145)
  o Kaplan; “Homeland Insecurities: Reflections on Language and Space” (Blackboard)
  o **Annotated Bibliography and Proposal Due 1 p.m. (Blackboard)**

• Wednesday
  o Kalfus; *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (146-192)
  o Žižek; “Welcome to the Desert of the Real” (Blackboard)

Week Twelve (November 9th, 11th)
• Monday
  o Kalfus; *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (193-237)
  o Preparation for Peer Review Workshop

• Wednesday
  o Research Day

Week Thirteen (November 16th, 18th)
• Monday
  o **First Draft Independent Research Essay Due 10 p.m. (Upload to Blackboard Group Discussion Forum)**
- Research Day

- **Wednesday**
  - Peer Review Workshop

**Week Fourteen (November 23rd, 25th)**
- **Monday**
  - Panel Presentations (Group 1)

- **Wednesday**
  - Panel Presentations (Group 2)

**Week Fifteen (November 30th)**
- **Monday**
  - Final Draft Independent Research Essay Due 1 p.m.
  - Panel Presentations (Group 3)

**Scheduled Final Exam Session: Monday, December 7; 4:30-7:00 p.m.**
- Panel Presentations (Groups 4 and 5)
The portfolio is due **Monday, October 19th**. Whatever portfolio binding you use, make it simple and flat (so when stacked the portfolios won’t topple over). Your portfolio must contain:

1. Four writings that you have done for classes in college. Clean copies (without teacher commentary/grade) are preferred. Each submission should come from a different course.
   - The selected pieces must **display or exemplify** at least three different discourse genres.
   - One piece must be a literary analysis from an upper-division English class.
   - One piece must be a documented research paper from an upper-division English class.
   - **One piece must show your ability to analyze a written text from historical, social, and/or theoretical perspectives** (this selection must be identified by an asterisk)

2. Introductory essay or letter, between three and four pages long, discussing and analyzing your use and understanding of genre as illustrated by the pieces in the portfolio. In this letter/essay, you should show your understanding of the different contexts, functions, audiences, and rhetorical purposes of the academic discourse genres you chose. In addition to the required literary analysis and research paper, other choices may include, but are not restricted to:

   **Fiction**: short story, poem, novel chapter, scene from a script.
   **Nonfiction**: biography, autobiography, argument, report, proposal, editorial, letter, memorandum, editorial, printout of a PowerPoint file created for an oral presentation.

Most of your grade for the portfolio will be based on this introductory essay/letter. Keep in mind, however, that English faculty will also use your portfolio to assess the “outcomes” of the English program. That is, you are producing this for an audience outside of our classroom.

3. Data sheet—please submit this page with the information below filled out.

   **Writings Submitted:**

   *Place an asterisk by the number of the piece you are submitting as evidence of your ability to analyze a text from a historical, social, and/or theoretical perspective.*

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<tr>
<th>Short Title</th>
<th>Genre type</th>
<th>Course/Level</th>
<th>Semester/Year</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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