

FYS 190G: Narratives of Captivity and Escape
Rachel Trousdale
rtrousdale@agnesscott.edu
Office 307 Buttrick, x.6209
Office hours T 2:00-4:00, W 2:00-4:00, and by appointment
Course tutor: Lessa Spitzer: lspitzer@agnesscott.edu

In this course we will examine different ways in which writers talk about escape from physical or psychological imprisonment. What do people need to escape from? What prevents them? What kinds of metaphors about captivity do writers use? And how is the writer an escape artist? We will look at a variety of different approaches to using art as escape, examining autobiography, novels, plays, and poetry. Discussions will draw on historical context and on literary analysis, and will address questions of freedom, responsibility, kindness, and self-awareness. In the course of these discussions, students will refine their ability to research, argue, and write.

Texts:

Robert Frost, Poems (photocopy packet)
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*
Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
Heinrick Ibsen, *Doll's House*
Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*
E. M. Forster, *A Room With a View*
Alexander Solzhenitsyn *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*
Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*

Thursday, January 18: Introduction

T 23: Robert Frost, "Home Burial," "A Servant to Servants," "The Hill Wife," "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," "The Silken Tent" (readings in photocopy packet)

Th 25: Robert Frost (photocopy packet)

T 30: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass pp. 47-100

Th February 1: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass pp. 100-159 **Presentation:**

Laws on the Education of Slaves

F 2: Paper #1 (Frost) due by 3:00

T 6: *Huck Finn* Explanatory Note and Chapters 1-13 **Presentation:** Runaway Slaves

Th 8: *Huck Finn* Chapters 14-22

T 13: *Huck Finn* Chapters 23-31

Th 15: *Huck Finn* Chapters 32-End **Presentation:** What Tom's Been Reading

T 20: *Jane Eyre* Volume 1, Chap. 1-9 **Presentation:** The Brontës

Th 22: *Jane Eyre* Vol. 1, Chap. 10-15 **Presentation:** Governesses

T 27: *Jane Eyre* Vol. 2, Chap 1-6
Th March 1: *Jane Eyre* Vol. 2, Chap 7-11
F 2: Paper 2 (on Douglass, Twain, or, by prior consultation, Brontë) due by 3:00

T 6: *Jane Eyre*, Vol. 3, Chap 1-6
Th 8: *Jane Eyre*, Vol. 3, Chap 7-End

T 13: SPRING BREAK
Th 15: SPRING BREAK

T 20: *Doll's House* Act 1
Th 22: *Doll's House* Act 2 **Presentation:** Ibsen and Censorship

T 27: *A Room With a View* pp. 3-106 **Presentation:** The Grand Tour
Th 29: *A Room With a View* pp. 107-204

T April 3: *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* pp. 3-70 **Presentation:** The Gulag
Th 5: *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* pp. 71-139
F 6: Paper #3 (captivity narrative) due by 3:00

T 10: *The Master and Margarita* pp. 1-70 **Presentation:** Bulgakov's Biography and Censorship Under Stalin
Th 12: *The Master and Margarita* pp. 70-132 **Presentation:** Ivan Bezdomny and John the Baptist

T 17: *The Master and Margarita* pp. 132-200
Th 19: *The Master and Margarita* pp. 200-263

T 24: *The Master and Margarita* pp. 263-end
Th 26: No class: SpARC

T May 1: Summary discussion. Paper #4 (on Brontë, Ibsen, Forster, Solzhenitsyn, or Bulgakov) due

Course Requirements:

Papers: Each student will write four 4-5 page papers. Papers 1, 2, and 4 will be traditional English papers on one of the texts we have read for class. Paper 3 will be a creative piece, in which the student will write some kind of captivity narrative of her own.

Presentations: Presentations are meant to provide context for a particular text by explaining the author's source materials (historical context, author's biography, references). Students may present alone or in pairs. Presentations will be about ten minutes long (a little less if a student is working alone). You should accompany your presentation with a handout containing the most important information you have

discovered, a few discussion questions to help us use that information, and citations of your sources. Be sure you consult with me well in advance of your presentation.

Reading questions: For every class, students should bring in a question about that day's reading. Questions should be geared towards generating class discussion and paper topics.

Attendance policy:

This class centers around discussion. If you don't participate in discussions, whether by contributing or listening to your peers, you haven't really taken the class. You will be allowed up to three absences over the course of the semester. Absences after the third will result in a lower final grade, even if they occur for legitimate reasons. Participation grades are based not on attendance, which is assumed, but on how you behave once you show up.

Late paper policy:

You may have one two-day extension (ie, from Friday to Monday) on any paper, no questions asked. Beyond that, late papers will incur a penalty of one third of a grade per day past deadline. Most importantly, let me know if you are going to hand a paper in late. Failure to hand in any one of the papers will result in failure of the course.

Honor Code:

Students are expected to abide by the Agnes Scott College Honor Code. Plagiarism is a very serious offence. The minimum penalty for plagiarism is a grade of zero on the paper, but Honor Court may determine the penalty to be failure of the class, suspension, or even expulsion. Be scrupulous in your documentation, and always make clear the difference between your own ideas and those of others. When in doubt, cite.

Some cases of plagiarism occur because a student is unwilling to turn a paper in late, or because she fears she does not understand the assignment. If you find that you're in trouble at the last minute, don't panic; just send me an e-mail or leave a message on my office voice mail.

Grading:

Papers: 20% each; presentation: 10%; participation and reading questions: 10%.

Office hours and how to reach me:

I hold walk-in office hours Tuesday and Wednesday 2:00-4:00, and will be glad to schedule extra appointments. Come to discuss paper topics, to ask questions about the class, to argue about a text, to get help with a confusing poem, etc. To make an appointment, or for any other contact, it's best to e-mail me at rtrousdale@agnesscott.edu.

Writing center:

Use the writing center! We are very fortunate to have Lessa Spitzer for our course tutor. All students must consult Lessa for help on at least one paper.