

English 355: Post-Modern Fiction

MW 1:00-2:15

Rachel Trousdale

rtrousdale@agnesscott.edu

Office: Buttrick 307, x6209

Office hours MW 2:30-3:45, T 1:00-3:00, and by appointment

Books:

Borges, *Ficciones* (1956)

Heller, *Catch-22* (1955)

Nabokov, *Pale Fire* (1962)

Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966)

Dick, *The Man in the High Castle* (1962)

LeGuin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1974)

Winterson, *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit* (1985)

Morrison, *Beloved* (1987)

Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (1989)

Photocopy packet: excerpts from Frederic Jameson and Brian McHale

W August 27 Introduction

M September 1: LABOR DAY. No classes.

W 3 Borges, "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*," "A Survey of the Works of Herbert Quain"; Photocopy packet: Frederick Jameson and Brian McHale

M 8 *Pale Fire* pp. 13-69. Handout: Nabokov's biography

W 10 *Pale Fire* pp. 70-154. Handouts: *Timon of Athens*; Intertextuality

M 15 *Pale Fire* pp. 154-234. Handout: Pope's "The Rape of the Lock"

W 17 *Pale Fire* pp. 235-315 Handout: Decoding the Ghost

M 22 *Crying of Lot 49* pp. 1-79. Handouts: Thomas Pynchon's biography; Maxwell's Demon; Remedios Varo; The Thurn und Taxis postal system

W 24 *Crying of Lot 49* pp. 80-152.

F 26 **Paper #1, 4-5 pages**, on Borges, Nabokov, or Pynchon, due by 3:00 in the wallbox outside my office.

M 29 *Catch-22* pp. 15-127 Handouts: Heller's biography; WWII in Italy

W October 1 *Catch-22* pp. 128-249

M 6 *Catch-22* pp. 250-361

W 8 *Catch-22* pp. 362-463

M 13 *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit* pp. 3-89 Handouts: Winterson's biography; The Book of Revelations

W 15 *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit* pp. 93-176 **Due in class: notification of which paper-writing option you are electing: one 20-page paper or two 10-page papers.**

Th 16-Su 19: October Break

M 20: *Man in the High Castle* pp. 3-129 Handouts: Dick's biography; Science fiction and postmodernism

W 22 *Man in the High Castle* pp. 130-259

F 24: **Paper #2 due by 3:00** for students electing to write two 10-page papers.

M 27 *Left Hand of Darkness* 1-148 Handouts: LeGuin's biography; Judith Butler on performative gender

W 29 *Left Hand of Darkness* 148- 301

M November 3 *Beloved* pp. 3-86 (Chapters 1-7) Handouts: Morrison's biography; Postmodernism and history

W 5 *Beloved* pp. 87-158 (Chapters 8-14) Handout: 19th Century theories of race

M 10 *Beloved* pp. 159-247 (Chapters 15-21)

W 12 *Beloved* pp 248-end

M 17 *Midnight's Children* pp. 3-104 Handouts: Rushdie' biography; A brief history of Bombay; The partition of the Indian subcontinent; Rushdie's use of Stanley Wolpert's *A New History of India* **Due in class: students electing to write the 20-page paper must turn in a bibliography and a one-page prospectus for their papers.**

W 19 *Midnight's Children* pp. 105-213 Handout: *Tristram Shandy*

M 24 *Midnight's Children* pp. 214-319

W 26: THANKSGIVING BREAK

M December 1 *Midnight's Children* pp. 321-429

W 3 *Midnight's Children* pp. 431-552 Handouts: The Emergency; Sanjay Gandhi and the sterilization campaign

M 8 Last day: So what's this Postmodernism stuff? McHale and Jameson revisited

W December 10: **Final paper due by 3:00** in the wallbox outside my office.

Course requirements:

Students will write 20-25 pages worth of papers: one 4-5-page paper, and either two 8-10-page papers or one 16-20-page paper. Students will also prepare a 1-page research handout for the class, and hand in reading questions for each class.

Papers are literary-critical analyses. The short (4-5 page) paper should be primarily based on close readings of the text. The longer papers (8-10 or 16-20) should also include critical and/or theoretical research. You must notify me in writing by the beginning of class on Wednesday, October 15, whether you are choosing to write two ten-page papers or one twenty-page paper. If you are uncertain which option you should choose, I'll be happy to discuss it with you. Students who choose to write the 20-page paper should meet with me well in advance of the deadline to discuss their papers. These students should also hand in a brief prospectus and a bibliography on Monday, November 17th. Regardless of which option you choose, you are encouraged to consult with me at any stage during the writing process: choosing a topic, refining an argument, polishing a draft. And be sure to use the Writing Center!

Research handouts are meant to provide context for a particular text — either by explaining the author's source materials (historical context, author's biography, references) or by providing a theoretical context for class discussion. Handouts should be approximately one single-spaced page, and should contain the information you have discovered, a few discussion questions to help us use that information, and citation information.

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 and late paper policies:

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.

You may have one three-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're going to hand a paper in late.

Handouts, since they are designed to be included in a day's discussion, cannot be turned in late. If you are really unable to write your handout in time for the discussion which it is intended to inform, please contact me and we can work something out.

Grading:

Paper 1: 15%

10-page papers: 30% each OR 20-page paper: 60%

Handout: 10%

Participation: 10%
Reading questions: 5%

Honor Code:

Students are expected to abide by the Agnes Scott College Honor Code. Plagiarism is a very serious offence, so be scrupulous in your documentation, and always make clear the difference between your own ideas and those of others. Should Honor Court find any student guilty of plagiarism in this class, she will, in addition to any sanctions Honor Court imposes, automatically fail the class.

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; send me an e-mail or leave a message on my office voice mail.

Office hours and how to reach me:

I hold walk-in office hours every Monday and Wednesday from 2:30-3:45 and Tuesday 1:00-3:00. If you can't make those times, I will be very happy 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 chapter, etc. To make an appointment, or for any other contact, it's best to e-mail me at rtrousdale@agnesscott.edu.

Course evaluations:

At the end of the semester, you will receive an e-mail asking you to submit online course evaluations. Please fill them out! I pay very careful attention to them. I want to know what you thought so that I can improve this course in the future. Course evaluations are also used by the college during faculty performance reviews.