

ENGL 488.001 & 588.002
MWF 10-10:50 a.m., FH 149
Fall 2014

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Office Hours: MWF 11:00 a.m.-12:45 p.m.
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**Contemporary Trends in American Literature:
21st Century Pulitzer Prize Fiction (4 Winners; 2 Finalists)**

Texts: Michael Chabon, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*
Richard Russo, *Empire Falls*
Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*
Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*
Louise Erdrich, *The Plague of Doves*
Karen Russell, *Swamplandia!*
One additional novel or short story collection written by one of the authors above,
selected from a list of texts

We will be reading and discussing these seven novels, the first four of which were awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for the years 2001, 2002, 2007 and 2008. Erdrich's and Russell's novels were 2009 and 2012 finalists for the Pulitzer, but not winners. Erdrich's novel lost to Elizabeth Strout's "novel in stories," *Olive Kitteridge*, while the fiction Pulitzer was not awarded for any of the three finalists in 2012. (The last time that occurred was 1977.) Each student will also read independently an additional novel or short story collection by one of the authors listed above.

Course Objectives: Among the objectives of the course:

- 1) to help students read literature actively and critically;
- 2) to familiarize and equip students with the vocabulary and critical tools necessary to discuss and write about literature successfully;
- 3) to facilitate and engage in thoughtful, critical assessment of these novels; and
- 4) to generate some understanding of what makes (or fails to make) these works representative and/or reflective of 21st century America.

Course Requirements: You will need to read all assignments *before* coming to class and come to class prepared to discuss them. You must bring the text we are reading and discussing to class each day. You will also write two single text formal (4-5 page) essays, read an additional novel or short story collection, give a presentation to the class introducing them to that additional text, write a 7-10 page comparative analysis (10-15 pages for graduate students) of some significant commonality between that additional text and one other from the course readings, and prepare a one page précis (concise summary) of that final paper to read to the rest of the class as a final presentation.

Grading:	Class Participation	100 points possible
	Paper #1	200 points possible
	Paper #2	200 points possible
	Additional Text Presentation	100 points possible
	Paper #3 (Comparative Analysis)	300 points possible
	Paper #3 Précis/Presentation	100 points possible

900-1000 points = A; 800-899 points = B; 700-799 points = C; 600-699 points = D

Please note: Failure to complete any of the course requirements means failing the course. None of these **requirements** is optional.

Class Participation: The best way to illustrate that you are an active, engaged, and interested reader is by contributing regularly to class discussions. On occasion, we will begin our classes with brief written responses to the literature or small group discussions. If students seem ill-prepared and merely "along for the ride," I reserve the right to give unannounced reading quizzes.

Formal Essays: Due on Monday, October 6, the first paper will consist of a 4-5 page essay on one of the first two novels of the course: *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* or *Empire Falls*. Due on Monday, November 3, the second paper will consist of a 4-5 page essay on one of the second pair of novels: *The Road* or *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. These essays will both require some thoughtful and detailed analysis of a specific and significant aspect of that work (e.g., a secondary character, a symbol or image, an issue, some element of form or style, etc.). You will receive a more detailed description of this assignment in a few days.

The third and final essay, which is due on Wednesday, December 3, will consist of a comparative analysis of some significant shared commonality you discover between the additional novel or short story collection you read independently and one of the novels we'll be reading in common. Later in the semester, I will offer more details and examples of paper topics for this particular assignment. This paper will be 7-10 pages in length (or 10-15 pages if you are a graduate student) and will require some library/literary research as well. This assignment will also require a properly formatted Works Cited page as well as a one page précis (i.e., concise summary) of the central idea of your comparative analysis essay.

For all three of these essay assignments, I encourage you to get feedback and assistance from me during the pre-drafting and drafting stages of writing them.

Late papers will be graded 10 points lower for each day (or portion) they are late. In addition to submitting a "hard copy" of the essays by the due dates above, students are required to submit their essays to Turnitin through MyClasses.

The numerous writing activities indicate that the instructor is a firm supporter of writing as a means of learning and of SU's Writing Across the Curriculum policy.

Additional Texts and Presentations: The additional, independently read, text mentioned above will feature prominently in both required presentations. Beginning on Wednesday, November 5, you will give a brief introductory presentation to the class about the substance of the additional text. During final exam period, you will read your prepared précis to your classmates. Both presentations will also likely require an ability and willingness to respond to questions from your classmates and instructor. You will receive more details about these presentations in separate handouts.

Turnitin: Salisbury University contracts with Turnitin for plagiarism detection and deterrence in support of The Salisbury Promise and academic integrity policy. As a condition of participating in this course, all required formal papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review and plagiarism detection through Turnitin (through MyClasses). All papers submitted to Turnitin will be included as source documents in the Turnitin reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism consistent with fair use principles under federal copyright law.

Plagiarism: The English Department takes plagiarism, the unacknowledged use of other people's ideas, very seriously indeed. As outlined in the Student Handbook under the "Policy on Student Academic Integrity," plagiarism may receive such penalties as failure on a paper or failure in the course. The English Department recognizes that plagiarism is a very serious offense and professors make their decisions regarding sanctions accordingly. Each of the following constitutes plagiarism:

1. Turning in as your own work a paper or part of a paper that anyone other than you wrote. This would include but is not limited to work taken from another student, from a published author, or from an Internet contributor.
2. Turning in a paper that includes unquoted and / or undocumented passages someone else wrote.
3. Including in a paper someone else's original ideas, opinions or research results without attribution.
4. Paraphrasing without attribution.
5. Turning in the same paper for credit in more than one class.

A few changes in wording do not make a passage your property. As a precaution, if you are in doubt, cite the source. Moreover, if you have gone to the trouble to investigate secondary sources, you should give yourself credit for having done so by citing those sources in your essay and by providing a list of Works Cited or Works Consulted at the conclusion of the essay. In any case, failure to provide proper attribution could result in a severe penalty and is never worth the risk.

Attendance: Your success in the course will be contingent upon your preparation for and participation in class sessions. You may miss three class meetings (for whatever reason) without direct penalty. For each day you are absent beyond those three “freebies,” you will lose 25 points per day. If you have a schedule conflict with this class, you should select a course that better fits your schedule. **Remember that YOU are responsible for meeting deadlines and making up any missed work. There is no such a thing as an “excused absence.”**

I will, of course, also expect you to arrive promptly for class and stay for the duration of each session. **Three “lates” will constitute an absence** (see the attendance policy above). Schedule your other activities around this course, not vice versa. In addition, students who come to class ill-prepared (i.e., without the novel or stories we’re discussing, having not read the assignment) may be asked to leave the classroom and invited to return another day on which they are better prepared.

Courtesy and Respect: I expect students to treat their fellow students and professor with courtesy and respect. Please abide by the following:

- Unless you are utilizing an ebook, no electronic devices should be visible during our class sessions. Stow them away.
- Take care of your dietary and eliminatory needs PRIOR to entering the classroom.
- Should you absolutely need to arrive late or leave early for a class session, sit as near to the door as possible and avoid disrupting class by drawing attention to your entry or exit.
- Listen attentively to what your professor and fellow classmates contribute to our discussions.
- Raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged before you enter the discussion.

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday & Friday 11:00 a.m.-12:45 p.m. These times are set aside for you; don’t hesitate to take full advantage of my availability at that time. Please feel free to speak with me about any concerns or interests during those hours or, if those times are inconvenient, by appointment.

Assignment Calendar

Aug.	25:	Introduction to course
	27:	Introduction ctd.
	29:	<i>The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay</i> (Part I; through 66)
Sept.	1:	Labor Day, No Class
	3:	<i>Amazing Adventures</i> (Part II; through 161)
	5:	<i>Amazing Adventures</i> (Part III; through 288)
	8:	<i>Amazing Adventures</i> (Part IV; through 421)
	10:	<i>Amazing Adventures</i> (Part V; through 468)
	12:	<i>Amazing Adventures</i> (to end; through 636)
	15:	<i>Amazing Adventures</i>
	17:	<i>Empire Falls</i> (Part One; through 150)
	19:	<i>Empire Falls</i> (Part Two; through 250)
	22:	<i>Empire Falls</i> (Part Three; through 353)
	24:	<i>Empire Falls</i> (to end)
	26:	<i>Empire Falls</i>
	29:	<i>The Road</i> (through 106)
Oct.	1:	<i>The Road</i> (through 198)
	3:	<i>The Road</i> (to end)
	6:	<i>The Road</i>
Paper #1 Due		

- 8: *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (to chapter three; through 75)
- 10: *Oscar Wao* (to chapter four; through 165)
- 13: *Oscar Wao* (to Part II; through 201)
- 15: *Oscar Wao* (to chapter six; through 261)
- 17: *Oscar Wao* (to Part III; through 307)
- 20: *Oscar Wao* (to end)
- 22: *Oscar Wao*
- 24: *The Plague of Doves* (through 86; to Judge Antone Basil Coutts)
- 27: *The Plague of Doves* (through 179; to Evelina)
- 29: *The Plague of Doves* (through 217; to Evelina)
- 31: *The Plague of Doves* (to end)

- Nov. 3: *The Plague of Doves*
Paper #2 Due
- 5: Additional Text Presentations
- 7: Additional Text Presentations
- 10: Additional Text Presentations
- 12: *Swamplandia!* (to Chapter Seven; through 94)
- 14: *Swamplandia!* (to Chapter Ten; through 170)
- 17: *Swamplandia!* (to Chapter Fourteen; through 224)
- 19: *Swamplandia!* (to Chapter Eighteen; through 310)
- 21: *Swamplandia!* (to end)
- 24: *Swamplandia!*
- 26: Thanksgiving Break, No Class
- 28: Thanksgiving Break, No Class
- Dec. 1: Wrap Up
- 3: **Paper #3 (Comparative Essay) and Précis Due**
Presentations
- 5: Presentations

Final Exam Period: Wednesday, December 10, 8:00-10:30 a.m.
No Exam but presentations continue

NOTE: This schedule of assignments is subject to change, with notice, of course.

Statement from the Writing Center: At the University Writing Center (directly above the Fireside Lounge in the Guerrieri University Center), trained consultants are ready to help you at any stage of the writing process. It is often helpful for writers to share their work with an attentive reader, and consultations allow writers to test and refine their ideas before having to hand papers in or to release documents to the public. In addition to the important writing instruction that occurs in the classroom and during teachers' office hours, the center offers another site for learning about writing. **All students are encouraged to make use of this important service.** For more information about the writing center's hours and policies, visit the writing center or its website at www.salisbury.edu/uwc.