

Instructor: Kimberlee Gillis-Bridges
Class Time: MW, 11:30 a.m.-1:20 p.m.
Class Location: Mary Gates 251
Office Hours: MW, 10:30-11:20 a.m., and by appointment
Office Location: Padelford A-305
Phone/Voice Mail: (206) 543-4892
Email: kgb@u.washington.edu
Course Web Site: <http://courses.washington.edu/kgb2lit/342>

Description

"Simplifying to the extreme, I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives."
Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*

"[E]very position on postmodernism in culture—whether apologia or stigmatization—is also at one and the same time, and necessarily, an implicitly or explicitly political stance on the nature of multinational capitalism today." Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*

"But the fact in most developed societies remains: as an artistic, philosophical, and social phenomenon, postmodernism veers toward open, playful, optative, provisional (open in time as well as in structure or space), disjunctive, or indeterminate forms, a discourse of ironies and fragments, a 'white ideology' of absences and fractures, a desire of diffractions, an invocation of complex, articulate silences. Postmodernism veers towards all these yet implies a different, if not antithetical, movement toward pervasive procedures, ubiquitous interactions, immanent codes, media, languages." Ihab Hassan, "Toward a Concept of Postmodernism"

In this course, we will investigate the ideological and stylistic similarities and contrasts between novels termed postmodern. The texts we will analyze take a variety of forms—print, graphic novel, and hypertext. As we discuss these works, we will consider how contemporary novelists articulate the postmodern and how their ideas parallel and challenge those of selected postmodern theorists. We will also examine how postmodern novels emerge from, shape, and critique contemporary culture. By the end of the course, students will have acquired an understanding of what it means for contemporary culture and texts to be deemed postmodern.

Course Goals and Methodology

Students in the course work toward several goals: analyzing the contemporary novel through the lens of postmodernism and developing as critical thinkers and writers. Course activities promote active learning, with most class sessions including a mix of mini-lectures, discussion, short writing exercises, and group work. My role is to provide the tools and resources you will need to advance your own thinking and writing. I will pose questions, design activities to help you think through these questions, and respond to your ideas. Your

role is to do the hard work—the critical reading, discussion, and writing. You will analyze texts, generate ideas in electronic and face-to-face discussions, develop presentations with your peers, construct written arguments, and use feedback to revise those arguments.

Requirements

Class Participation

Class discussion constitutes one key method of developing your analytical skills. Thus, I expect prompt, regular attendance and active participation in discussions of novels and supplemental readings. You should come prepared for each class session, with assigned reading completed. You should also plan to ask questions, make comments, summarize critics' arguments, paraphrase your electronic postings, or contribute to small-group discussions. Like all skills, speaking in class becomes easier with practice. I do not expect fully polished analyses in class discussion; rather, your contributions represent ideas for further development.

Electronic Postings

Students will use the class discussion board to post responses to each novel. To facilitate discussion, I will post questions to which I want you to respond. Your posting should provide a 200- to 250-word answer to a selected question; you may also address your classmates' ideas as you respond to the question. The electronic posting area allows us to extend class discussion and raise issues to address in class. Your postings receive points on a credit/no credit basis, with full points granted to on-time postings that meet the length requirement and demonstrate serious engagement with the discussion questions. Occasionally, I will give you the opportunity to do optional postings in which you respond to your classmates or develop an idea only partially explicated in class. These postings will also receive full points for length and genuine engagement.

To access the electronic discussion board, go to the course web site, click on "Discuss," and follow the instructions. I have divided the class into four groups to keep the discussion manageable:

- ❖ Group One: Students with last names A-C
- ❖ Group Two: Students with last names D-K
- ❖ Group Three: Students with last names L-R
- ❖ Group Four: Students with last names S-Z

Group Presentation

Students will work together in groups of two or three to create a 15- to 20-minute lecture that draws connections between a course novel and an article from the reading packet, Viking critical edition, or reserve texts. Along with offering an overview of the article, the group will critique the reading, apply the writer's insights to a course novel, or extend the article's arguments to novel passages the writer does not discuss. Presenters will use visual aids (PowerPoint, transparencies, handouts) to structure their remarks and underscore key points. Groups should conclude their presentations with two or three questions for class discussion. Because packet readings and other critical analyses are quite challenging, groups should meet with me to discuss their articles before the presentation date.

Essays

You will complete two four- to five-page essays on assigned topics. I require at two drafts of all essays; only the final draft receives a grade. Before revising your draft and submitting it for a grade, you will receive feedback from me. You can also seek additional feedback from consultants at the English Department Writing Center, located in Padelford B-12.

Please submit essays on 8.5" by 11" paper, titled, paginated, typed and double-spaced, with one-inch margins. In the upper right hand corner of the first page, include your name, the course number, the assignment, and the due date; this information should be single-spaced. You may use a 10 or 12 point Arial, Bookman, Century Schoolbook, or Times New Roman font for your papers. You may submit essays in hard copy or via the course E-submit tool. I will include a link to the E-submit space on the web version of each essay assignment.

Take-Home Final

During the last week of class, you will compose a three- to four-page essay exam on Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*. You will have approximately 48 hours to finish the exam.

Policies

Lateness Policy

I will not accept late electronic postings, presentations, or take-home finals. Failure to submit essay drafts will result in a 10-point deduction from the final grade; I will also deduct 10 points per day for late essays, as the ability to develop an argument within time limits is an integral aspect of the essay assignment. I will make exceptions to the lateness policy only in cases of documented illness or family emergency. Technology glitches do not constitute valid excuses for lateness. To avoid computer problems, you should save frequently while working, and you should back up work saved to a hard drive on disk or your Dante account. Remember also to avoid storing floppy disks next to cellular phones. To avoid problems submitting essays and finals via E-submit, make sure to save in Word or Rich Text format; otherwise, the program will not accept your file. If the posting board or E-Submit breaks down, email your work directly to me.

Plagiarism Policy

In your electronic postings, essays, and take-home final, you may draw upon the ideas and words of other writers. However, you must make clear to your audience that you are incorporating another's work by placing quotation marks around exact words and citing the author's name whenever you quote, summarize or paraphrase. Failure to credit sources may result in a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, or expulsion from the university. The course links page contains information on when and how to cite sources.

Email and Access to Course Web Site

You must have a UW Net ID, a working email account and a way to access the course web site. I frequently upload schedule changes, assignment guidelines, and grading criteria to the course web site. The site also contains links and sample papers not distributed in class.

Texts

Texts in bold type are on reserve at Odegaard Undergraduate Library

Auster, Paul. ***City of Glass***.

DeLillo, Don. ***White Noise: Text and Criticism*** (Viking Critical Library).

Gaiman, Neil and David McKean. *Violent Cases*.

Jackson, Shelley. *Patchwork Girl* (CD-ROM).

Silko, Leslie Marmon. ***Ceremony***.

Xeroxed Reading Packet for English 342. Available at Professional Copy N' Print on the northeast corner of 42nd and University.

Reserve Texts

I have placed a sizeable collection of books on three-day reserve at Odegaard Undergraduate Library. These books contain articles and chapters I will assign for group presentations. You may also use them to do additional reading on postmodernism or course authors. Go the course web page, click on "Texts," and follow the reserve texts link to view a complete list of reserve books.

Grading

Grades in English 342 will be computed by points, with 400 points equaling a 4.0, 300 points a 3.0, and so on. If your total falls between grades, I will round up if you score one to five points below the higher grade and round down if you score one to four points above the lower grade. For example, 274 points equals a 2.7 and 275 points a 2.8. Each assignment is worth the following number of points:

- ❖ Class Participation: 60 points
- ❖ Electronic Postings: 80 points
- ❖ Essays: 160 points (80 points each)
- ❖ Presentation: 40 points
- ❖ Take-Home Final: 60 points

Schedule

This schedule may be altered at any point in the term at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete readings by the dates listed. The symbol (P) indicates a reading from the course packet, with page numbers referring to the hand-drawn numbers at the bottom of each packet page.

Date	Activity	Reading	Due
3/31	Course Introduction		
4/1			Posting on <i>White Noise</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
4/2	Discuss <i>White Noise</i> and Geyh, Leebron, and Levy introduction	DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i> , Chapters 1-11 (3-53) Geyh, Leebron, and Levy, "Introduction," 1-12 (P)	English 342 Student Profile and Release Form
4/7	Discuss <i>White Noise</i> and McHale	DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i> , Chapters 12-20 (54-109) DeCurtis, Begley, and James interviews with DeLillo, in Viking Critical Edition, 329-334 McHale, "From Modernist to Postmodernist Fiction," 13-17 (P)	
4/8			Posting on <i>White Noise</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
4/9	Discuss <i>White Noise</i> and Baudrillard	DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i> , Chapter 21 (109-163) Articles on Bhopal, in Viking Critical Edition, 353-362 Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," 18-27 (P)	
4/11			Optional response posting on <i>White Noise</i> due by 10:00 p.m.

Date	Activity	Reading	Due
4/14	Discuss <i>White Noise</i> and reviews	DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i> , Chapters 22-30 (167-230) Review of <i>White Noise</i> (in Viking Critical Edition) Group 1: Yurick, 365-369 Group 2: Mobilio, 370-373 Group 3: Johnson, 374-378 Group 4: Iyer 379-384	
4/15			Posting on <i>White Noise</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
4/16	Discuss <i>White Noise</i>	DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i> , Chapters 31-36 (231-281)	
4/18			Optional response posting on <i>White Noise</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
4/21	Discuss <i>White Noise</i> Essay #1 assignment distributed	DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i> , Chapters 37-40 (282-326)	
4/22			Posting on <i>City of Glass</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
4/23	Discuss <i>City of Glass</i>	Auster, <i>City of Glass</i> , Chapters 1-6 (7-79)	
4/25			Optional response posting on <i>City of Glass</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
4/28	Discuss <i>City of Glass</i> and Foucault Midterm course evaluation	Auster, <i>City of Glass</i> , Chapters 7-10 (80-158) Foucault, "What is an Author?" 39-47 (P)	
4/29			Posting on <i>City of Glass</i> due by 10:00 p.m.

Date	Activity	Reading	Due
4/30	Discuss <i>City of Glass</i> , approaches to Essay #1 and ideas-in-progress	Auster, <i>City of Glass</i> , Chapters 11-13 (159-203)	
5/2			Essay #1 draft due by 12:00 p.m. in hard copy at Padelford A-305 or via E-Submit
5/5	Discuss <i>Violent Cases</i>	Gaiman and MacKean, <i>Violent Cases</i>	
5/6			Posting on <i>Ceremony</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
5/7	Discuss <i>Ceremony</i> Discuss revision strategies for returned essay drafts	Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> , pgs. 1-54	
5/9			Essay #1 revision due by 12:00 p.m. in hard copy at Padelford A-305 or via E-Submit
5/12	Discuss <i>Ceremony</i> Essay #2 assignment distributed	Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> , pgs. 55-127 (stop at mid-page break)	
5/13			Posting on <i>Ceremony</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
5/14	Discuss <i>Ceremony</i>	Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> , pgs. 127-188 (stop at top-page break)	
5/16			Optional response posting on <i>Ceremony</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
5/19	Discuss <i>Ceremony</i> and Ruppert Discuss approaches to Essay #2 and ideas-in-progress	Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> , pgs. 188-262 Ruppert, "No Boundaries, Only Transitions," 39-47 (P)	
5/20			Posting on <i>Patchwork Girl</i> due by 10:00 p.m.

Date	Activity	Reading	Due
5/21	Discuss <i>Patchwork Girl</i> , Coover, and Landow	Jackson, <i>Patchwork Girl</i> : read "Reading <i>Patchwork Girl</i> ," then open the text, begin anywhere, view 40 lexias, and save your reading Coover, "The End of Books," 48-51 (P) Landow, "Reconfiguring Narrative," 52-71 (P)	
5/23			Essay #2 draft due by 12:00 p.m. in hard copy at Padelford A-305 or via E-Submit
5/26	Memorial Day Holiday		
5/27			Posting on <i>Patchwork Girl</i> due by 10:00 p.m.
5/28	Discuss <i>Patchwork Girl</i> and Haraway Discuss revision strategies for returned essay drafts	Jackson, <i>Patchwork Girl</i> ; open saved reading and view 70-80 lexias Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," 72-81 (P)	
5/30			Essay #2 revision due by 12:00 p.m. in hard copy at Padelford A-305 or via E-Submit
6/2	Discuss <i>Patchwork Girl</i>	Jackson, <i>Patchwork Girl</i> ; open saved reading and view 70-80 lexias	
6/3			Posting on novel connections due by 10:00 p.m.
6/4	Course wrap-up and evaluation Take-home final distributed		
6/6			Final due by 12:00 p.m. in hard copy at Padelford A-305 or via E-Submit

