Fall 2015, 4 credits

**Instructor:** Andrea DeFusco

**Office:** St. Mary’s South, Ground Floor

**Office Hours:** by appt

**Schedule (class times and day(s):**

**Meeting time:** TH 6 15-9 15

**Period:** 9/3/2015 to 12/17/2015

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**STOKES HALL 131N**

**Telephone:** 617 552 3900

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**Boston College Mission Statement**

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.
Course Description
ADEN126501 Popular Novels with a Social Conscience

This is a hybrid course, which combines some in-person and some online class meetings. Please refer to the course syllabus on the Woods College website for more detailed information.

A look at novels that illuminate the injustices evident in cultures and communities, including injustices related to gender, race, and class. Memorable and moving literature opens learners hearts and minds to the universal nature of the human condition. Course examines and critiques works including Baldwin, Another Country; Dickens, Oliver Twist; Cisneros, The House on Mango Street; Steinbeck, Of Mice and Men, Carver, Short Cuts; Pollan, The Omnivore’s Dilemma and the collected short stories of Flannery O’Connor.


Course Objectives
John Gardner wrote In democratic society, where every individual counts, [literature’s] ability to instruct, to make alternatives intellectually and emotionally clear, to spotlight falsehood, insincerity, and foolishness—[literature’s] incomparable ability... to make us understand—ought to be a force bringing people together, breaking down barriers of prejudice and ignorance, holding up ideals worth pursuing. Literature...fulfills these obligations.

As students in a Catholic, Jesuit university, we will examine the works in this course in terms of their literary value, but also in terms of their greater worth as part of literature’s conversations about ethics.

Your specific learning objectives for this course are to
a) Deeply and critically read complex literary texts
b) Demonstrate familiarity with the social and political forces shaping the cultures of the period in which the text was conceived
c) Use textual evidence to support your claims in oral, virtual (online) and written discussion of assigned texts, without dismissing or oversimplifying views which differ from yours
d) Organize and develop your initial reactions to assigned texts, through writing, absorption of critiques, and discussion
e) Write a research paper that appropriately uses primary and secondary sources
f) Contribute actively to a positive learning environment both f2f and online
g) Maintain a physical, handwritten journal of your learning, sharing some of this content online

To that end, you will:

- read all assigned texts and reflect on them before class,
- complete quizzes and exercises to ensure that you are keeping up with the readings and to evaluate your progress,
- participate regularly in classroom and web-based discussions, and
- write and revise three formal papers (minimum 4, 6, and 10 pages).

At the end of this course, you should be able to demonstrate

1. Competence in the critical reading of complex literary texts
2. Intellectual engagement with your peers (in person and online)
3. Awareness of the historical, cultural, and formal issues that influence your developing responses to texts on the syllabus
4. Ability to plan, draft, revise, and polish a high-quality researched essay, appropriately using primary and secondary sources to defend a non-obvious claim (without minimizing or neglecting opposing or alternative views)

Grading
You will have to work very hard to fail this course. There are a couple of obvious ways to do it. The first is via plagiarism; the second is via “falling off the grid” in terms of attendance and participation.
WCAS Grading System
The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00), official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good; B- (2.67), C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (.00), failure.

Grade Reports. All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their semester grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

Attendance/Participation/Journal: 10pts
Quizzes: 20 pts
Paper 1: 10 pts
Paper 2: 15 pts
Paper 3: 20 pts
Final Exam: 35 pts

Text(s)/Readings (Required)
Dickens, Oliver Twist
Baldwin, Another Country
Cisneros, The House on Mango Street
Steinbeck, Of Mice and Men
O’Connor, Selected Stories
Carver, Short Cuts
Other readings and assignments online including but not limited to:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFeoS41xe7w (Baldwin)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLAp71b4Ycg (Steinbeck)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oapV2DzeYBw (Carver)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Pyf89VsNmg (Cisneros)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uN80z-yfjxE (O’Connor)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6ByG7q74qg (Dickens)

Texts (Recommended)
Pollan, The Omnivore’s Dilemma

Important Policies
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html

Written Work
Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructors decision. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html].
Scholarship and Academic Integrity

It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholarly dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholarly misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work.

Request for Accommodations

If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or ADHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. For further information, you can locate the disability resources on the web at http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.

Attendance

Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student’s obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate’s notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, many instructors give points for participation in class. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the WCAS at 617-552-3900 for consultation.

Deadlines

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late assignments will be graded accordingly.
Course Assignments
Please note that our course assignments don’t end when we leave the physical classroom. A good rule of thumb is to spend at LEAST two hours on reflection/research/reading for every hour of class time.

Computer Requirements
- Reliable Internet connection
- Access to Canvas
- Use of your BC email address (I will only send mail to your BC email address, and will only receive mail at my BC email address)

Hybrid Course Structure
This course is designed to provide a “hybrid” experience, including both face-to-face (f2f) and online activities. Most of your direct contact with me will be during our class meetings although I will be holding “virtual” office hours in addition to my regular office hours. You may, of course, email me whenever you want at defuscoa@bc.edu

Online sessions will be a blend of self-paced and group activities using Canvas and other Web sites. Between classroom sessions you will be required to do the assigned readings, view the online lectures, create reading journals and comment upon the journals of other students, and complete other activities as detailed in the schedule of assignments. I will assume you have completed the online assignments before our face-to-face sessions; it will be very difficult to follow my lectures if you have not completed the online work, and you most likely will not pass the quiz if there is one.

Face-to-face sessions will be held on Thursday evenings in STOKES HALL 131N. These sessions will include additional lecturing, discussion groups, quizzes, and important instructions about online assignments. Different material will presented during the face-to-face sessions than online, so it is a mistake to think you can pass the tests based solely on the material you consume online.

Canvas Access
This course will be delivered partially online through a course management system or LMS named Canvas.

To access material on Canvas, you will need access to the Internet and a supported Web browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari).

Hybrid Class Work Standards
Writing quality is a crucial issue in online work, and this course requires consistently high-quality writing that includes well-expressed, concise argumentation. Your writing will be evaluated on the presence of these qualities. Your expressions online—even in formats as “informal” as emails to me or on our chat board--should be written with full benefit from correct spelling, grammar, and a complete assembly of writing skills.

Public writing is a feature of online life and of this course. Just as you should anticipate that anything you write online can and will be read by others, so too shall you write as if any entries in this course will be open and available for reading by the entire class. During the course, students will read the writing of other students and the instructor may, at his discretion and with student permission, post anonymized student writing for general reading. All instructor comments and grades remain private information.

Each of our face-to-face (f2f) sessions is listed below along with the homework that will be assigned this semester. You are required to finish all homework assignments BEFORE our f2f sessions. Some online assignments will have additional deadlines, typically noon on class days. Activity and assignment details will be explained in detail within each week's corresponding notes from me, and in f2f sessions, but the general course assignments are as follows:
NOTE: ODD NUMBER WEEKS (1, 3, 5, etc) will be IN PERSON. EVEN NUMBER WEEKS (2, 4, etc) will be ONLINE.

Week 1, 2
- Dickens, Oliver Twist – read text; immersion in the emergence of social criticism (online, BBC)
- Paper 1 assigned; quiz

Week 3, 4
- Steinbeck, Of Mice and Men – read text; journal, online.
- Paper 1 due; quiz

Week 5
- Baldwin, Another Country -- read text; journal, online.
- Paper 2 assigned; quiz

Week 6
- Cisneros, House on Mango Street -- read text; journal, online.
- Paper 2 due

Week 7
- O'Connor—read text; journal, online
- Graphic Essay

Week 8, 9, 10
- Carver—read text; journal, online
- Midterm

Week 11
- Thanksgiving Break

Week 12, 13, 14
- Do the Right Thing; online roundtable

Week 15
- FINAL

Any supplementary readings will be announced for background to journal entries and paper-writing; this syllabus and its schedule and contents are subject to change depending on class needs.