

English 26801 Literature of Adventure

WOODS COLLEGE, BOSTON COLLEGE

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Adventure stories always capture our imagination—narratives of travel to exotic lands, battles with monsters, quests for treasure, the rescues of fair maidens and extreme experiences. Adventure means travel and quests as it intersects with technology, clashes with the forces of nature, sparks political intrigue and prompts growth and chance for all who reach for the challenge.

Texts:

Junger, Sebastian: The Perfect Storm

Allende, Isabel: Of Love and Shadows

Erdrich, Louise: Tracks

Barrett, Andrea The Voyage of the Narwhal

Weihenmayer, Eric: Touch the Top of the World

Benchley, Peter: Jaws

other short works (provided in class)

Objectives:

Students who have completed this course will be able to:

- read critically, evaluate, and interpret texts
- write coherent, organized, well-developed essays that demonstrate their understanding of concepts explored in the class
- appreciate the interaction between culture, environment and quest
- appreciate the beliefs and contributions of the many human communities that have shaped our global culture
- understand the issues of war, economics, population, environment, etc. in a global context
- evaluate primary documents to obtain perspectives on issues from a variety of sources--rulers, workers, merchants, women, reformers, colonial officials, nationalists, revolutionaries, artists, and writers, etc.
- understand the issues of gender, race, class in a cross-cultural and historical context
- understand that the promise and perils of their world are rooted in the past
- comprehend that the human species throughout the globe has followed a similar history: from isolated communities to intensive contact and penetration, to cultural expansion, amalgamation, to an emerging globalism
- find ways, either virtual or real, to experience the adventures and cultures which we encounter

Grading:

Your course grade will be based on three components:

Performance on quizzes and tests: 45%

Performance on papers: 40%

Attendance and Participation: 15%

****The Woods College, as part of the university that is Boston College, holds students to the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty via cheating, plagiarism or collusion will not be tolerated. Please consult your handbook or your professor for any clarifications****

Week One:

Intro to course: reading and writing culture: how you were raised to be who you are? What is your own family's "adventure narrative"?

Reading: Jack London, "To Build a Fire"; we begin The Perfect Storm

Week Two: The Perfect Storm; gender, race and class in Gloucester's fishing industry. QUIZ.

Week Three: Magic realism-- beginning Isabel Allende's Of Love and Shadows. FIRST PAPER DUE.

Week Four: Myth and Memory as We Take to the Woods: Tracks. Second EXAM

Week Five: Adventure, Courage, Spirit: Touch the Top of the World

Week Six: Once More We Take to the Seas: Narwhal and Jaws
FINAL PAPER DUE