ENGL 108001, Literature Core: Narrative Forms
Summer Session I: May 13 – June 17, 2015; 3 credits

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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 worldview that encounters spirituality 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
What forms can narrative take? What moods or tones do different narrative forms set and how does the choice of form affect the work overall? Are there kinds of stories best told through certain mediums and, if so, what mediums work for what stories? Are certain forms or narratives meant for certain publics and how does audience compel authors to write in specific ways? This course explores these questions by looking at a variety of narratives of varying forms and considering the intersections between the two. We will study traditional and experimental novels, the novella, novels written in verse and vignette, short essays, journalism, film adaptations of novels, and media storytelling.

Course Objectives
Students will:
1. Develop creative capacity: Though this is a critical literary course, it will ask you to think about analysis creatively and imagine new ways of defining and reading literature, especially in context of that literature’s form. You will learn to develop your own original thoughts and produce unique and creative theses about and close readings of our course texts. Your papers and discussion will be measured in part by your ability to contribute original, creative ideas and analysis.
2. Gain a broader understanding and appreciation of literature: This course will introduce you to a variety of narratives that will deepen your awareness of literature and literary study. In addition, our discussions and your written work will ask you to turn that awareness into active
thinking that grapples with our course inquiries. Your written and oral work in this class will thus reflect this appreciation as you draw parallels among our course texts, the ideas we discuss in class, and the broader theories introduced in our course. You will be evaluated based on how well you can draw these parallels.

3. Demonstrate knowledge of literature and skill in writing across cultural settings: The texts in our course will, in sum, help you explore and learn about the impact of culture, gender, and age in narrative. Our course texts will also provide models for your own writing. You will learn how to include references to and analysis of the multiple cultures and their differences covered in our texts in your own writing, and your effective use of this cultural knowledge will contribute to your overall grade.

4. Demonstrate ethical knowledge pertaining to the topics covered in our course texts: At the heart of every great story is an ethical story or a set of ethics; our responsibility to one another demands we study the humanities with an eye on these stories and what they mean. Your work for our class will acknowledge these ethics and include an analysis of them alongside your larger discussion, which I will measure in your papers by your willingness to incorporate and analyze the ethics of the text you are studying.

5. Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view: Through our course texts, discussions, and written work, you will learn the basic rubrics of literary study and how to apply them productively to your own analysis. Through our class discussions and written work, you will demonstrate this ability through references to outside ideas and critical arguments (that are not merely opinion based) about outside research and other writers’ theories. Your papers and discussion will be measured by your ability to construct and present your ideas logically with sound research and analysis based arguments.

**Grading**

Every student is expected to attend class regularly, actively participate in class, complete required readings and work on time, and respectfully engage with other students. Based on these requirements, grade breakdown is as follows:

- Attendance and participation (20%)
- Short responses (10% each)
- Midterm and final papers (15% each)
- Contribution to class wiki (10%)

Late short responses are not accepted; late papers lose a third of a letter grade for each day late (for instance, an A would become an A-) and are not accepted after a week.

**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- (1.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (0.00), failure; I (0.00), incomplete; F (0.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (0.00), official withdrawal from course.

**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 you don’t know your username or password, the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue you a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.
Texts/Readings/Media

Required
(all texts available in the college bookstore; films and episodes available on reserve in the library, those not available in the library will be screened outside of class; media texts are available on youtube or their own site; media not specified will be screened in class)


AsapSCIENCE, “Zombie Apocalypse Science” (youtube channel)
cpac, “Rockburn Presents: Chuck Klosterman” (on youtube)
TedTalks: Ken Robinson, “How Schools Kill Creativity” (online at ted.com)
Vsauce, “Why Don’t We All Have Cancer?” (youtube channel)
Vsauce3, “Could We Be the Last of Us?” (youtube channel)
Cosmos (TV show)
Dark Days (film, 2000)
I Am Legend (film, 2007)
The Muppet Movie (film, 1979)
The Omega Man (film, 1971)
World War Z (film, 2013)

Recommended
Serial (podcast)
TedTalks (online media & podcast)
ThugNotes (youtube channel)
Arrested Development (TV show)
No Country for Old Men (film, 2007)
Mikhail Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel”
David Bartholomae, Anthony Petrosky, eds., Ways of Reading
Cleanth Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn & “The Formalist Critics”
Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory
Mark Danielewski, House of Leaves
Boris Eichenbaum, The Theory of the Formal Method
David Foster Wallace, The Broom of the System
Northrop Frey, The Anatomy of Criticism
Irving Howe, “History and the Novel”
Henry James, “The Art of Fiction”
Fredric Jameson, The Political Unconscious
Samuel Johnson, “The Rambler No. 4 [On Fiction]”
Reif Larsen, The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet
Jean Lyotard, “Defining the Postmodern”
Cormac McCarthy, No Country for Old Men
Mark McGurl, The Program Era
N. Scott Momaday, House Made of Dawn
Laura Mulvaney, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”
Haruki Murakami, After the Quake
Richard Ohmann, The Shaping of a Canon
Jean-Paul Sartre, “What is Literature” & “Why Write?”
Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics
Germaine Necker de Staël, Essay on Fictions
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria
Leon Trotsky, Literature and Revolution

Course Schedule
(schedule may change as desirable or necessary; readings and assignments listed on due date)
W May 13 – introduction; in class media and readings
F May 15 – The Tropic of Orange, short response
M May 18 – I Am Legend (film and book), The Omega Man, “Could We Be the Last of Us?”
W May 20 – The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, “How Schools Kill Creativity,” short response
W May 27 – World War Z (film and book)
M June 1 – Underground, Dark Days, midterm paper
W June 3 – Only Revolutions, The Muppet Movie, short response
M June 8 – Space Chronicles, episode 1 of Cosmos
M June 15 – Eating the Dinosaur, “Rockburn Presents: Chuck Klosterman”
W June 17 – Cancer Vixen; “Why Don’t We All Have Cancer?”, final paper

Course Assignments (readings, exercises and/or experiences)
Expectations
Readings and media should be reviewed, as well as annotated and/or analyzed, prior to the class during which they are to be discussed. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late assignments will be graded accordingly (see above on grading) and if you skip reviewing the material for class, it will be apparent and will negatively affect your grade.

Short Responses: During the semester, you will write 4 short responses of 2 pages each that comment on one or more of the readings for that week. These cannot be made up if missed. These are meant to be analytic papers that look closely at a theme or motif in the reading you choose. A good format to follow is to present an argument about the text, close read one or two scenes germane to your argument, and conclude with a quick statement about why your argument helps understand the text better.
Wiki: After each class, you are expected to visit our wiki classroom page at https://litcorenarrativeforms.wikispaces.com/ and do one of the following: post a meaningful and thoughtful post on our Discussion Page (at least one in depth paragraph on the day’s work) and respond to at least one other student; contribute to one of our Pages with at least a paragraph of text and one link, uploaded feature, or outside reference and an explanation of whichever you choose and how it relates to our class; upload at least 3 files, along with a short explanation of the file and why it is relevant to our class; or create your own page with at least 3 links and/or files.

Midterm & Final: Your midterm and final are extended close readings of one of the texts we read for the course (of your choosing). If you choose to write on media (film, short media, etc), you must write on a book as well. As in the short responses, you are expected to have an argument that you support through close readings of scenes germane to your argument; you are additionally expected to find and use two outside sources in each paper. These can come from the “Recommended Reading” list on this syllabus or found through the MLA Bibliography or any other academic resource. The midterm is to be 4-6 pages; the final 8-10 pages.

Work Ethic: It is expected that 8 hours per week of your study time out will be spent on class assignments, readings, and exercises as listed. Please note that some weeks will require more time and some weeks less time but the average is approximately 8 hours per week over the semester. Because much of this time will be on reading for class that is tightly packed in the semester, I recommend you begin reading each text, especially those assigned close to another text, early. Through those 8 hours of work, as well as our outside class media viewings, and work on our class wiki, you will maximize your 4 credit hours required of this class. Without completing one of these components, you will miss out on the benefits of learning in a dense academic environment.

Important Policies
see: 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 MLA format. 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. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not 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. Scholastic misconduct may involve, but is not 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, or acts that interrupt the course.

**Attendance & Participation**

Class attendance and participation are important components of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period, and actively participate in discussion. If you fail to actively participate in group work or discussion, that choice will negatively affect your grade. 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. I permit 1 excused absence, barring extenuating circumstances of which I am made aware. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. If you miss more than one class, your attendance and participation grade (20% of your total grade) will be dropped 2% for each class missed.

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.

**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 AHD) 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.