

ENG 1131 (1363): Writing Through Media

Fall 2013, CSE E211A

MWF 4 (10:40 AM – 11:30 AM)

Screening: M 9-11 (4:05 PM – 7:05 PM)

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Course Description:

This course originated as an extension of “writing about literature” to entertainment and popular culture media (cinema, television, music, video games, pop literature, comics, magazines, ’zines, and the like). One difference from 1102 besides the object of study is the method of study: writing **through** media. Students not only analyze and interpret media works but also use “creative” forms and practices to explore the production of meaning. ENG 1131 with its overview of pop media is distinguished from ENC 1145 (special topics) and ENG 2300 (film analysis). Specific forms of media covered in this course include literature, cinema, television, photography, comics, and the WWW, with an emphasis on adaptation. In particular, we’ll focus on recent Scandinavian novels, films, and television series that have been adapted for international audiences. By narrowing our focus, we’ll explore to what extent the original narratives change as they pass through various media on their way to broader audiences.

Course Goals:

The goal of the course is to introduce students to the transition underway between literacy and post-literacy (“electracy”) in contemporary culture. This shift is approached through its rhetorical implications, with the students as makers (and not just consumers) of new media effects. Hence this course is best taught in a computer classroom, in the context of which its more “writerly” assignments seem less experimental than they do in a conventional setting. At the same time, the course is adaptable to the conventional classroom.

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see <http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx#learning>.

Outcomes:

As a result of taking the course, students will gain an understanding of the following:

- The basic modes of organizing information that underlie and make coherent the apparent diversity of popular media: narrative (enigma), argument (enthymeme), image (trope). The desired understanding of transition from one apparatus or technological paradigm to another is achieved by comparing the way each of these modes manifests itself in print and image (tape).
- The first level of knowledge of these modes is the sort found in handbooks introducing the principles of story, argument, poem, photograph. Good sources include not only interpretive guides, but authoring guides. The ambiguity of “image” – referring to both word and picture – is made an explicit part of the course.
- The theoretical background for the method is based primarily on Roland Barthes, including his

semiotic readings of images as well as of stories, his invention of the five codes of narrative, and his exploration of third meanings in photography. Since 1131 is a general education course, original theoretical texts should be assigned sparingly. Students should become familiar with the basic principles of semiotics (sign-signifier/signified etc), the five codes introduced in *S/Z*, and third meanings. In general, the point is to increase “functional electracry” by pairing visual culture with print culture.

- Aesthetic authoring: while 1131 draws upon the analytical skills of literacy, it also asks students to compose stories and tropes in both words and pictures.
- Web: basic experience with all the authoring tools available for web design.

Required Texts:

The following texts can be purchased at the campus bookstore, OBT, or from another source.

- *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson
- *Smilla's Sense of Snow* by Peter Hoeg
- *Let the Right One In* by John Ajvide Lindqvist
- *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (graphic novel by Denise Mina)
- *Rape in Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy and Beyond: Contemporary Scandinavian and Anglophone Crime Fiction* Edited By Berit Åström, Katarina Gregersdotter and Tanya Horeck

Field Code Changed

*Additional readings will be available as eBooks via UF's library or as pdfs on our Sakai site.

Composition (C) or Humanities (H) Credit:

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

Writing Requirement (WR) Credit:

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/gordon.aspx>

General Education Learning:

You must pass this course with a grade of “C” or better and **complete all assignments (in full)** to receive the 6,000 University Writing Requirement credit (E6) and the Composition credit (C). If you are not in CLAS, check the catalog or with your advisor to see if your college has other writing requirements.

PLEASE NOTE: a grade of “C-” will not satisfy the University Writing Requirement credit (WR) or the CLAS Composition credit (C). Therefore, if you are taking this course to satisfy either of these requirements, be mindful of these expectations.

Grading Policies:

Grading for this course is rigorous. If an assignment illustrates disregard for spelling, grammar, citation guidelines, or does not meet the word count, it will not receive a grade above “C.”

This course is worth 3 credits. Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla

Blount, Program Assistant. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade. UF has recently instituted minus grades. As a result, letter grades now have different grade point equivalencies. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

A	930-1000	4.0
A-	900-929	3.67
B+	870-899	3.33
B	830-869	3.0
B-	800-829	2.67
C+	770-799	2.33
C	730-769	2.0
C-	700-729	1.67
D+	670-699	1.33
D	630-669	1.0
D-	600-629	0.67
E	0-599	0.00

Grade	Assessment
A	Demonstrates excellent and insightful writing with careful attention to disciplinary vocabulary developed throughout the semester; may contain one or two minor stylistic or mechanical errors; and thoughts are clearly organized and structured to be most effective; impressive critical thinking writing skills that show nuance and complexity rather than extreme positions that ignore counter-arguments or positions; pushes limits of creativity for implementing medium-specific elements in to convey information for multiple, far-reaching audiences.
B	Demonstrates above average writing skills and ability to organize information; impressive use of terminology with some errors; discusses media in an intelligent manner but ultimately lacks signif in answering the “so what?” question; presents a clear argument but lacks discussion of tensions or complications in order to convey a deeper understanding of forms or modes of media; could use re-structuring of ideas and either more support or more meaningful support to back up arguments; claims; limited amount of stylistic and mechanical errors; creativity in composition could be stron
C	Demonstrates average level of media analysis or writing through media that lacks disciplinary terminology or consideration; shows little effort to contextualize ideas within specific historical or technological context of a medium; certain statements make sense but lack overall point in analysis needs both more support and more meaningful support to back up claims; presents unclear argum with ideas needing to be re-structured; multiple stylistic and mechanical errors throughout.
D	Demonstrates below average ability to critically evaluate a media text or write through existing structures of a medium; ignores disciplinary terminology to write an effective analysis as well as re information regarding history, theory, or criticism; offers little to no textual support or signific often makes unfound or contradictory pronouncements; difficult to read due to constant stylistic, mechanical, and organizational flaws; fails to make word count; reliance on clichéd notions of writ through media that convey little sense of creativity for the possibilities of expression.
E	Assignment fails for many reasons: does not use correct terminology at all; lacks basic understand media concepts, structures, and principles; does not attempt to point out significance of formal el in showing how an analysis is productive for understanding a medium; illustrates extreme lack of viewing, thinking, or writing skills; stylistic, mechanical, and organizational features seriously inhi

basic understanding of the assignment; does not meet word count.

Your final grade will consist of the following:

Narrative Essay	1000 words	10%	100 points
Argument Essay	1300 words	15%	130 points
Image Analysis	1200 words	15%	120 points
Class Exercises, Participation & Final Project Presentation	NA	30%	300 points
Blog Entries	1500 words	15%	150 points
Final Project	1000 words	15%	150 points
TOTAL	6000 words	100%	1000 points

Course Assignments:

In order to achieve the outcomes described above, the course is divided into 4 segments, one for each of the basic modes of organizing information through media: narrative (enigma), argument (enthymeme), image (trope), and synthesis of one or two modes. Thus, there is 1 major assignment for each unit, along with critical blog responses and reading quizzes.

Assignment 1, Narrative (100 points): In this assignment you will construct a narrative outline of a film and conduct a shot-by-shot breakdown of a single scene or sequence. The segmentation will consider Roland Barthes's Hermeneutic code for creating stories around a central "enigma," wherein a simple shot breakdown is used to open up a discussion of how these elements work to produce meaning through formal modes of structure and style.

Assignment 2, Argument (130 points): In this visual rhetorical analysis, you will critique and analyze another author's argumentative text through a visual documentary mode. You will analyze the rhetorical strategies employed by the author and determine if the text has any "logical fallacies" in proving its case. You will ultimately conclude if the author's argument is effective or ineffective based on a critical analysis of its rhetorical modes. In your analysis, you will have to summarize the text, determine the author's thesis statement, as well as effectively incorporate direct and indirect quotations not only from the text but also from one additional outside source.

Assignment 3, Image (120 points): Students will produce a short (3 minute) video document of an event at the University of Florida. Considering Cavell's definition of film as a "succession of automatic world projections" alongside our investigations of digital media, students' videos must express their own definition of the medium of video. A project statement will accompany each student's video.

Assignment 4, Online Blog Postings (150 points): You will complete a number of blog entries throughout the semester. These entries will be written as semi-formal responses uploaded to the online course blog. Feel free to post additional blog entries, but each entry must be at least 200 words. Posts should contain observations pertinent to our class readings and discussions. Whenever possible, these "field reports" will be integrated into class discussion.

Submission of Assignments:

All assignments must be submitted on the due date. You MUST be present in class in order to receive credit for in-class exercises and quizzes.

PLEASE NOTE: I do not accept late work unless you make reasonable arrangements ahead of time.

Attendance and Participation (300 points):

- Be present, on time, and prepared. Attendance during regular class periods on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and screenings is expected. In general, you are expected to contribute constructively to each class session by finishing the reading and bringing it to class (hard copy), and participating actively through class discussions. *Reading assignments are NOT optional if you expect to succeed in this course.*
- Please do not come late to class. If you are five or more minutes late, you will be counted as tardy; every two tardies you receive will count as one absence. Throughout the semester you may miss two classes, no questions asked. However, if you miss three class periods, your final grade will be deducted by a half-letter grade; four classes, one full letter grade. **If you miss more than six periods (seven, including excused AND unexcused) you will fail the course and receive an “E.”**
- The English Department exempts from this policy only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with me prior to the date that will be missed. When you miss class, you are responsible for getting any assignments and making up any work.
- If you ever have an emergency (e.g., family issue or extended illness), please contact me and let me know what’s going on ahead of time. Ninety percent of the time it is possible to work out some kind of arrangement to complete an assignment for the course in a way that is satisfactory to both me and you. Prolonged absences, though, cannot be excused.
- Participation is a crucial part of your success in this class. Sometimes you will be expected to work in small groups, engage actively in group discussions, or complete other composition-based activities. Writing workshops and peer review exercises also require that you provide constructive feedback about your peers’ writing. If you feel you have not participated enough in class, you can post additional comments and threads to the class blog as a means to boost your participation points and to continue the dialogue from the classroom online. Active class participation (e.g. speaking during discussion) and in-class writing activities contribute collectively 300 points toward your final grade.

Classroom Decorum:

Because the class is discussion-based whenever possible, conflicting viewpoints may often arise. Despite differences in opinion, be mindful to respect your peers’ opinions. As a courtesy, deactivate your cell phones and other potentially distracting paraphernalia while in the classroom. If you know of a potential personal emergency, please talk to me before class in case you have to leave while class is in session. Cell phone use during class will not be tolerated and will be considered as an absence for the day. ****If you use your phone during class, you will be marked absent.***

Important: Some of the visual and written texts we will encounter this semester represent varying degrees of violence, sexuality, and explicit language. If you feel that you may be uncomfortable watching or discussing this material critically in a professional academic environment, then you should reconsider taking this course.

Disability Services:

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. For more information, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Harassment:

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041>

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the [Student Honor Code](#). The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism. **Field Code Changed**

Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

- a.) Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- b.) Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student. (University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire [Honor Code](#). **Field Code Changed**

PLEASE NOTE: all acts of plagiarism will result in a score of zero for the assignment, and likely failure in the entire course. Cite all sources that you use; paraphrasing still constitutes plagiarism. You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without proper citation.

For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (August 21-23) Introduction

W Introduction
Discuss syllabus and course expectations

F *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Part 1

Week 2 (August 26-30) First Mode: Narrative

M *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, Chapter 1 (pdf)

W *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Part 2

F *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Part 3

Week 3 (September 2-6) Semiotics and Narrative Codes

Narrative Form: the Novel

M *Labor Day* (no class; no screening)

W *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Part 4
due: *Dragon Tattoo* blog post

F Roland Barthes, *S/Z* excerpt

Week 4 (September 9-13) Narrative and the Modern American Novel

M Barthes, continued

Screening: *Män som hatar kvinnor* (Oplev, 2009)

W Film discussion

F *Rape in Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy and Beyond: Contemporary Scandinavian and Anglophone Crime Fiction*, Chapter 1 (e-book through UF library) **Field Code Changed**

Week 5 (September 16-20) Adaptation in Classic Hollywood Film and Contemporary Tele-film

M *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, Chapter 3 (pdf)

Screening: *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (Fincher, 2011)

W *Rape in Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy and Beyond: Contemporary Scandinavian and Anglophone Crime Fiction*, Chapter 3 (e-book through UF library) **Field Code Changed**

F Due in-class: Narrative Essay Outlines

Week 6 (September 23-27)

M Grammar and Mechanics Workshop (based on *Dragon Tattoo* blog posts)

W Peer Review for Narrative Assignment

Thursday: Narrative essays due via email

F *Rape in Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy and Beyond: Contemporary Scandinavian and Anglophone Crime Fiction*, Chapter 11 (e-book through UF library) **Field Code Changed**

Week 7 (September 30 – October 4) Second Mode: Argument

M *Smilla's Sense of Snow*, The City (part 1)

Screening: *Forbrydelsen*, episodes 1 & 2

W *Smilla's Sense of Snow*, The City (part 2)

F *Smilla's Sense of Snow*, The Sea

Week 8 (October 7-11)

M *Smilla's Sense of Snow*, The Ice

due: *Smilla* blog post

Screening: *Forbrydelsen*, episodes 3 & 4

W Rape in Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy and Beyond: Contemporary Scandinavian and Anglophone Crime Fiction, Chapter 5 (e-book through UF library) **Field Code Changed**

F Grammar and Mechanics Workshop (based on *Smilla* blog posts)

Week 9 (October 14-18) Contemporary Documentary: Constructing Arguments on Global Issues

M "Approaches to Scandinavian Crime Fiction" (Agger, pdf)

Screening: *Smilla's Sense of Snow* (August, 1997)

W Due in-class: Argument Essay Outlines

F Peer Review for Argument Assignment

Week 10 (October 21-25) Third Mode: Image

M Roland Barthes, excerpt from *Camera Lucida*

Screening: *The Killing* (episodes 1 & 2)

Tuesday: Argument essays due via email

W *Let the Right One In* (part 1)

F *Let the Right One In* (part 2)

Week 11 (October 28 - November 1)

M *Let the Right One In* (part 3)

Screening: *The Killing* (episodes 3 & 4)

W *Let the Right One In* (part 4)

F due: *Let the Right One In* blog post

Week 12 (November 4-8)

M Grammar and Mechanics Workshop (based on *Let the Right One In* blog posts)

Screening: *Let the Right One In* (Alfredson, 2008)

W Due in-class: Image Essay Outlines

F *No Class (Homecoming)*

Week 13 (November 11-15)

M *No Class or screening (Veterans Day)*

W Peer Review Image Essays

F Final project and scholarly research discussion

Friday: Image essays due via email

Week 14 (November 18-22)

M *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* graphic novel (by Denise Mina)

Screening: *Let Me In* (Reeves, 2010)

W Final project proposals due in-class

F Reference list due in-class (formatted as MLA “works cited” page)

Week 15 (November 25-29)

M *TBA*

Screening: *Brodre* (Bier, 2004)

W “Adapting National Identity: Ethical Borders Made Suspect in the Hollywood Version of Susanne Bier's *Brothers*” (Shriver-Rice, pdf)

F Presentations

Week 16 (December 2-6)

M Presentations

Screening: *Brothers* (Sheridan, 2009)

W Presentations (*final class*)

Monday, December 9th – Final Projects Due (submission format depends on project)