Instructor: Judith Levy

Email: j.t.levy@emory.edu

Class Day/Time: M/W/F 9:00-9:50 am

Room: Rich Building 103

Office Hours: M/W 10:00-11:00 am, and by appointment

(In Peet’s on the bottom floor of Woodruff Library)

Course Website: <http://www.impossiblewriting.judithtlevy.com/>

**Course Description:**

In the “Notanda” to M. NourbeSe Philip’s poem(s) *Zong!,* she explains that she felt the imperative to write this “story that cannot be told yet must be told.” If this text and others present themselves as writing an impossibility, then what are they communicating? How do the choices of genre and medium affect the way we read these texts? This course will look at pieces of postcolonial poetry and prose that throw the concept of narration into question. It will therefore investigate the question of genre in postcolonial literature by considering how to read texts that ask to be read but have simultaneously rendered themselves opaque. As a result, this course will introduce the idea of reading comparatively as a means of analyzing texts that ascribe to a genre and violate that genre at the same time. In doing so, it will address questions of representation, visibility, and legibility in Postcolonial Studies by investigating imperative and impossible literary practices. Literary texts will include but are not limited to M. NourbeSe Philip’s poem(s) *Zong!*, Albert Camus’ posthumously published novel manuscript *The First Man*, and Maryse Conde’s novel *Crossing the Mangrove*. Reading materials will also include theoretical texts from authors such as Robert Young, Edouard Glissant, and Homi K. Bhabha.

**Course Outcomes:**

* Engage in critical thinking through reading and writing.
* Develop a nuanced understanding of and engagement with the writing process(es).
* Composing writing in various modes and genres through building and writing on a web domain.
* Gain an understanding of discourse, research, and rhetoric in the field of Literary Studies, especially regarding the different definitions of literatures, genres, and media.
* Gain insight regarding forms of narration in postcolonial literature, especially involving the politics of representation, legibility, and visibility.

**Required Texts:**

Camus, Albert. *The First Man*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1996.

ISBN: 9780679768166

Conde, Maryse. *Crossing the Mangrove.* New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1995.

 ISBN: 9780385476331

Philip, M. NourbeSe. *Zong!* Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2008.

 ISBN: 9780819571694

All other texts will be available online through the library’s course reserves.

**Other Required Materials:**

You will each be required to purchase a domain. If this is a financial burden, please talk to me, as there may be scholarships available, or you can use the free version of WordPress.

**Grade Breakdown**

20% Reading Response Blog Posts (5 total)

15% Rhetorical Analysis

15 % Secondary Source Review

10% Abstract and Annotated Bibliography

30% Research-Based Argument

10% Participation

**Grading Scale**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 93.00-100 | A |  |
| 90.00-92.99 | A- |  |
| 86.00-89.99 | B+ |  |
| 83.00-85.99 | B |  |
| 80.00-82.99 | B- |  |
| 76.00-79.99 | C+ |  |
| 73.00-75.99 | C |  |

**Participation**

This class relies heavily on class discussion and group work, so participation will be counted as a large portion of your grade. **You will be expected to come prepared, whether that means having completed the assigned readings or having written the assigned drafts or responses.** Because I understand that some people are less inclined to speak during class discussion, I will also take other in-class work (such as free-writes and group activities) into consideration when calculating your participation grade. I expect everyone to give his or her best effort when it comes to discussion and to also remain respectful of others who are contributing to discussion.

**Attendance**

With participation as an important factor for your success in this class, attendance will be noted and can affect your grade. You are allowed **three absences** throughout the semester that will **not** negatively affect your grade. After three absences, your final grade will decrease 3% for each subsequent absence. Similarly, significantly late arrivals will be recorded, so three late arrivals will be counted as the equivalence one absence. This policy is solely to encourage your success as an individual and foster growth for the whole class as a community. **If you have any emergency situations during the semester that will cause you to have a significant number of absences, please inform me, and we will work out the best solution.**

**Assignments**

**Reading Responses**

To prepare you for your larger assignments, to practice writing frequently, and to help facilitate class discussion, you will be responding to the out-of-class readings on your blog. You will submit a personal response to the reading, along with a multi-modal element to further your point. Your multi-modal element can be from another source or you can create it yourself; however, if you use someone else’s work, you must cite the source or include a link to the original content. Your response must be **at least 250 words, and the multi-modal element** can be anything from a video to a photo, or even a meme. You may choose any of the readings we have done between the last reading response and the time the new one is due. Reading responses may discuss any element of the readings; however, your **post must make a clear claim about the reading which is supported by evidence within the text or from external critical material.** The feedback you receive on these posts will help prepare you for submitting larger assignments.

**Rhetorical Analysis (750-1250 words and 1 multi-modal element):**

In this essay, you will be analyzing the one text (either literary or critical) which we have encountered in class or another text that is relevant to course material *which I have approved during office hours*. Using the interpretation tools and rhetorical devices we have been discussing in class, your paper will interrogate how the text generates its purpose.

**Secondary Source Review (750-1250 words and 1 multi-modal element):**

This assignment is designed to help prepare you for the Annotated Bibliography and Research-Based Assignment. In this assignment, you will read a secondary source that discusses any text that we have read in this course. You will review the source’s scholarship by assessing its claim and the author’s ethos. In doing so, you will locate its position in a discourse community, highlighting what purpose it serves in a bigger conversation on a specific topic of your choice.

**Annotated Bibliography and Research-Based Argument:**

Using texts we have encountered in class, this assignment will consider a debatable topic, consider the viewpoints and conversations surrounding that topic, take a stance, and support it with evidence. You must closely analyze at least one text from the course in order to make your argument, and you must use at least two outside sources to support this argument. If you use the same source as your rhetorical analysis, you may utilize key points from this assignment in order to add to any of the specific evidence used to prove your point. Please note that if you use key points from your previous assignment, they must be clearly adjusted in order to fit the scope of this specific argument. This assignment will require at least one multi-modal element that connects to your argument’s point. These assignments work together to help you prepare for your final research-based argument assignment:

* To prepare for the argumentative assignment, you will build a paper proposal in the form of an **250-500 word abstract and an annotated bibliography with a minimum of 5 sources.**
* Using these steps, your final argument assignment will be a **minimum of 1250 words and 1 multi-modal element.**

**Revision Option**

If you receive an A- or lower and are not satisfied with your grade on either of the earlier assignments of the **Rhetorical Analysis or Secondary Source Review,** you can opt to revise your assignment. To do this, you must provide the original document, the new document, and a one-page explanation of the revisions you made. You must also discuss your plans for revision with me (during an office hours visit) or with a tutor at the Writing Center. Should you choose to revise an assignment, **revisions are due two weeks after you have received your original, graded assignment.** Once your new assignment is graded, the grade that will be recorded will be the average between your grade on the original assignment and the revised assignment.

**Writing Center**

The Writing Center is an incredible resource, where fellow students give helpful feedback on your writing process. They can help you through any part of the writing process, so you may visit the Writing Center at any stage of writing (even if you just want to talk about your topic and see if it makes sense). You are able to go as frequently as you want (they allow one appointment per week, and one walk-in per day), so feel free to get extra assistance if you enjoy going to the Writing Center. Please take note that the Writing Center tutors will not simply “proofread” your papers; they are there to help you through the writing process, which means that you will be doing the work, they will just be giving you feedback and helpful advice along the way.

 Website (General Information): <http://www.writingcenter.emory.edu/>

 Appointment System Website: <https://emory.mywconline.com/>

 Phone: 404-727-6451

 Location: 212 Callaway North

**Conferences**

Conferences are a beneficial time where you can receive direct feedback from me on your assignments. For conferences, you will sign up for a specific time, and you will only have to show up at my office for that time the entire week. **However, if you do not show up for your scheduled conference, you will be considered absent for the all the days for that round of conferences (three class meetings total).**

**Web Domain**

For this course, you will use a variety of digital tools to compose your own website. No experience with web design is necessary for this work. Please be aware that your work will be published to the web and available for audiences beyond the class and university. Because of the public nature of your work, please consider your essay topics with care, and only write on material which you are comfortable sharing with others.

**Contact**

Generally, the best way to contact me is through email. I will respond quickly, within approximately 24 hours, except for weekends and holidays. Please be considerate of your email format, including relevant subject headings and clear communication. I will also occasionally send course information through email, so you are responsible for checking your own email regularly to receive such notifications.

**Late Work**

All essays and assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the days that they are due. **Late work for online responses will not be accepted; however, larger assignments will be accepted late with a 10 percent deduction for each day that it is late.** This class is fast-paced, so falling behind on essays will affect you negatively in the long run. Also, if you turn in a late essay, I cannot guarantee that it will receive as much feedback compared to if it were turned in on time.

**Classroom Etiquette and Electronic Devices**

Please be respectful of your other classmates by engaging in discussion in a kindly fashion. I expect you to not be disruptive of other students speaking. Cell phones use is not allowed, and the use of phones can result in deductions from your participation grade. Eating and drinking are allowed, so long as you clean up your mess and you are not causing any distractions. I would like to create a classroom community that is fun and engaging while maintaining respect and understanding of others.

Because we will be doing various sorts of digital, multimodal writing, **I encourage the use of laptops**; however, the use of laptops is only allowed for course-related activities, and participation will be deducted if laptops are utilized for purposes not related to class.

**Tutoring for Multilingual Students**

If English is not your first language and you are struggling with course materials, you may benefit from working with an ESL instructor. ESL instructors are undergraduate students who will help you develop your English language skills. They can meet with you to simply practice talking, or even to discuss specific assignments.

Visit the website of the Office for Undergraduate Education (http://college.emory.edu/oue/) and select "Student Support" and then "ESL Program" to schedule an appointment, read the tutoring policies, and view the offerings of the ESL Program (direct link to ESL Tutoring: http://college.emory.edu/oue/student-support/esl-program/esl-tutoring.html). If you do not have a scheduled appointment, you may want to meet with a drop-in tutor in the ESL Lab, Callaway S108. Here, you may have less time with a tutor if other students are waiting, but you can briefly discuss an assignment and some of your concerns. For more information, visit the website or contact Levin Arnsperger at larnspe@emory.edu

**Emory Counseling Services**

If you’re stressed or dealing with difficult challenges in your personal life, free and confidential counseling services and support are available from the Emory Counseling Center. Call (404) 727-7450 or visit <http://studenthealth.emory.edu/cs/> .

**Special Needs**

In order to foster a comfortable and productive classroom environment, I am happy to assist any special needs which you may have. Please register with Access, Disability Services, and Resources (ADSR) (<http://www.ods.emory.edu/index.html>) and present the Accommodation Letter from ADSR to me during the first week of classes, or once the letter is attained.

**Plagiarism**

Academic communities can only be successful through the means of critical thinking and honesty. Plagiarism violates this academic integrity, and it will not be tolerated. Do not submit the work of others, turn in work that you have already turned in for another class, or neglect to acknowledge any sources you use in assignments. Engaging in plagiarism can result in you receiving an “F” on the assignment, an “F” in the entire course, and can potentially result in dismissal from the university. Please go to <http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policy/honor_code.html> to review Emory’s Honor Code involving plagiarism.

**Tentative Course Schedule**

**\*Readings are to be completed on the date they are listed.**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **­­­­­** | **Reading/Topic** | **Materials Due** |
| **Week 1** |  |  |
| Wed. 1/16 | Introduction to Course |  |
| Fri. 1/18 | Hélèn Cixous, “Letter to Zohra Drif” |  |
| **Week 2** |  |  |
| Mon. 1/21 | **MLK Jr. Day; Class does not meet.** |  |
| Wed. 1/23 | Setting up Web Domains | Purchase domain. |
| Fri. 1/25 | David Carroll, *Albert Camus, the Algerian: Colonialism, Terrorism, Justice*, “The ‘Algerian’ in Camus”, 1-18Albert Camus, *The First Man,* Editor’s note-p. 28 |  |
| **Week 3** |  |  |
| Mon. 1/28 | Albert Camus, *The First Man,* p. 29-53 | Email me link to subdomain by the time class begins. |
| Wed. 1/30 | Albert Camus, *The First Man,* p. 54-77Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction,* “Postcolonialism”, p. 57-69 | Reading Response 1 |
| Fri. 2/1 | Albert Camus, *The First Man,* p. 78-97 |  |
| **Week 4**  |  |  |
| Mon. 2/4 | Albert Camus, *The First Man,* p. 98-135 |  |
| Wed. 2/6 | Albert Camus, *The First Man,* p. 135-176 | Reading Response 2 |
| Fri. 2/8 | Albert Camus, *The First Man,* p. 177-197Jacques Ferrandez, *The First Man*, p. 98-111 |  |
| **Week 5**  |  |  |
| Mon. 2/11 | Albert Camus, *The First Man,* p. 201-235 |  |
| Wed. 2/13 | Albert Camus, *The First Man,* p. 236-276 | Reading Response 3 |
| Fri. 2/15 | Thesis WorkshopAlbert Camus, *The First Man*, p. 277-End | Tentative Thesis for Rhetorical Analysis Due |
| **Week 6** |  |  |
| Mon. 2/18 | M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!,* p. 187-211 |  |
| Wed. 2/20 | M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!,*1-56 |  |
| Fri. 2/22 | Peer Review | Rough Draft of Rhetorical Analysis Due |
| **Week 7** |  |  |
| Mon. 2/25 | M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!,*p. 57-76 |  |
| Wed. 2/27 | M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!,* p. 99-124 |  |
| Fri. 3/1 | M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!,*p. 125-187 | Rhetorical Analysis Due |
| **Week 8** |  |  |
| Mon. 3/4 | **Library Day: Meet in Woodruff Library 312** |  |
| Wed. 3/6 | “The Slave Ship” (Painting),J. M. W. TurnerJames Walvin, *The Zong: A Massacre, the Law, and the End of Slavery*, 1-11 | Reading Response 4 |
| Fri. 3/8 | Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation,* “The Open Boat”, p. 5-9“The Atlantic Slave Trade in Two Minutes”, *Slate,* Andrew Kahn and Jamelle Bouie |  |
| **Week 9 (3/11-3/15)** | **Spring Break: Class does not meet.** |  |
| **Week 10** |  |  |
| Mon. 3/18 | Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation,* p. 86-7; 111-121; 169-188 |  |
| Wed. 3/20 | Maryse Conde, *Crossing the Mangrove*, p. vii-30 | Reading Response 5 |
| Fri. 3/22 | Re-read the source you’re using for your Secondary Source Review | Bring your source that you’re using for your Secondary Source Review |
| **Week 11** |  |  |
| Mon. 3/25 | Maryse Conde, *Crossing the Mangrove,* p. vii-30 |  |
| Wed. 3/27 | Maryse Conde, *Crossing the Mangrove*, p. 31-59 |  |
| Fri. 3/29 | Maryse Conde, *Crossing the Mangrove,* p. 60-93 | Secondary Source Review Due |
| **Week 12** |  |  |
| Mon. 4/1 | Maryse Conde, *Crossing the Mangrove,* p. 94-128 |  |
| Wed. 4/3 | Maryse Conde, *Crossing the Mangrove,* p. 129-161 |  |
| Fri. 4/5 | Maryse Conde, *Crossing the Mangrove,* p. 162-193 | Rough Draft of Abstract and Annotated Bibliography (Printed) |
| **Week 13** |  |  |
| Mon. 4/8-4/12 | * Conferences
* Revise Abstract and Annotated Bibliography
* Finish Reading *Crossing the Mangrove*
 | Come only to your conference time slot, at Peet’s in Woodruff Library.  |
| **Week 14** |  |  |
| Mon. 4/15 | Maryse Conde, *Crossing the Mangrove*, 193-208 |  |
| Wed. 4/17 | Suzanne Crosta, “Narrative and Discursive Strategies in Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la Mangrove*”, *Callaloo* (Winter 1992), 147-155 | Final Draft of Abstract and Annotated Bibliography (Printed) |
| Fri. 4/19 | Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse” |  |
| **Week 15** |  |  |
| Mon. 4/22 | Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster,* p. 1-7 |  |
| Wed. 4/24 | Writing/Research Workshop |  |
| Fri. 4/26 | Wrap-Up Discussion |  |
| **Week 16** |  |  |
| Mon. 4/29 | Last day of class. Peer Review of Research-Based Argument. | Rough Draft of Research-Based Argument due for Peer Review |
| **Exam Period: 5/3 2:00 pm** |  | Final Paper is due (posted online) at time of final exam. |