

ENGL 262G: The Art of Literature
Fall 2026, Section 01 Fridays 1:00 pm- 3:45 pm
Wheatley-Peters W01-0061

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 12-1pm (or by appointment)

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Course Description: This course explores and imagines the world of literature—the imagination as it finds creative expression in language. Why do we call some writing "literature"? What makes us label something "art"? Through fiction, poetry, and drama, participants learn about literary devices and terminology and develop an appreciation for the writer's craft.

What is othering, and what does it mean to be labeled as an 'other'? Who belongs to the 'in' group and who belongs to the 'out' group, and why? This semester, we will explore texts featuring characters who don't 'fit in' and tackle what it means to defy order and societal expectations.

Introducing concepts rooted in schools of literary criticism—from semiotics to black feminism—and engaging with 'nontraditional' texts—from films to graphic novels—this course will further explore how we, as readers, can analyze and relate to art and literature in new and unexpected ways.



Prerequisites: Pre-req = ENGL 102, and a minimum of 30 credits. Degree students only. Students may not take more than one 200G (Intermediate Seminar) course.

About the Intermediate Seminar program:

Intermediate Seminars offer students with 30 or more credits the opportunity to work on essential university capabilities in small-sized courses that are often thematic or problem-oriented and interdisciplinary in nature. Designed in part to help students prepare for the Writing Proficiency Requirement, Intermediate Seminars put special emphasis on critical reading, thinking, and writing. They focus on other essential capabilities as appropriate to the course and might therefore include attention to library research and information technology, collaborative learning, oral presentation, and academic self-assessment. Students who practiced reading, writing, and critical thinking in a First Year Seminar at UMass Boston will practice them at a more advanced level in the Intermediate Seminar.

Only ONE Intermediate Seminar may be taken for credit. If you have taken another 200G-level course in any department at UMB, you cannot receive credit for this one.

Prerequisites: English 101, English 102, First Year Seminar (or waiver), and 30 credits. The First Year Seminar is automatically waived for students who enter UMB with 30 or more transfer credits. Non-degree students may not enroll in these seminar courses. Discuss your situation with the instructor if you have any questions about these prerequisites or your readiness for the work in this course.

The Writing Proficiency Requirement and EWRAP: Except for students in the College of Management and students with a previous Bachelor's degree, all UMass Boston undergraduates complete the University's Writing Proficiency Requirement through the Writing Proficiency Evaluation (WPE). The Writing Proficiency Requirement is sophomore/junior-level writing assessment and a graduation requirement. It is **not** the same as the writing placement test you may have taken when you entered UMass Boston.

The WPE is now given in two ways, both of which require portfolios of essays written in courses. One is by submitting a portfolio by a date scheduled several times a year. This requires a "challenge" essay, an essay not written in a course and based on a set of readings made available to you five weeks in advance.

The other is the Electronic Writing Assessment Portfolio (EWRAP), which is linked to each Intermediate Seminar section. Instead of a "challenge" essay, you are asked to reflect on the development of your writing in college, referring to the course papers you chose to submit. All Intermediate Seminar students will automatically be enrolled in the Electronic-Writing Assessment Portfolio (EWRAP). Through Canvas, which

houses the electronic portfolio, students will submit a paper from the Intermediate Seminar, English 102, and one other course at the end of the term.

Please see:

<https://www.umb.edu/academics/seas/undergraduate-studies/writing-proficiency/ewrap-electronic-writing-assessment-portfolio/> for additional information.

Students can also find support, including step by step directions for building and submitting their EWRAP portfolios, on the Canvas CAS 014: EWRAP course page. Remember that EWRAP is only an option for students currently enrolled in an Intermediate Seminar. If you choose not to participate in EWRAP in the semester you are taking an Intermediate Seminar, then you will need to participate in the WPE.

The linkage of EWRAP to Intermediate Seminars and the opportunity to write a reflection rather than a challenge essay should make EWRAP more appealing to you. But the criteria by which faculty readers evaluate the WPE and EWRAP portfolios are the same:

- **Writing with a clear purpose**, which involves having a sustained focus on a position, argument, or inquiry.
- **Effectively utilizing source material**, which involves carefully selecting, integrating, and explaining source material and meaningfully applying that material in service of an essay's purpose.
- **Organization**, which guides the audience from paragraph to paragraph with effective transitions and which connects sentences to form coherent paragraphs.

You and your instructor should keep these criteria in mind during your Seminar.

Support services for Intermediate Seminar students: Not all students who have completed the pre-requisites for an IS are fully prepared to meet the demanding reading and writing challenges of these courses. These students may find it helpful to reach out to the [Center for Academic Excellence](#) (Pratna Kem pratna.kem@umb.edu) to work with an academic coach to practice their reading and time management and other academic strategies to support their success with the Intermediate Seminar. Non-degree students may not enroll in these seminar courses. Discuss your situation with the instructor if you have any questions about these prerequisites or your readiness for the work in this course.

The University Writing Center: The University of Massachusetts Boston Writing Center provides free writing support to undergraduate and graduate students. We believe that every writer benefits from supportive and generous interaction with a knowledgeable peer, both online and in-person, on their writing. As such, we work individually with writers on all writing projects – whether personal, academic, or

professional – at any stage of the writing process. During individual writing sessions, our trained undergraduate and graduate student consultants collaborate with writers on their goals and take into account academic and social contexts. The Writing Center also provides a variety of programming, including workshops and writing groups. Learn more about the Writing Center services or schedule an appointment by visiting our website: <https://www.umb.edu/writingcenter>

The Ross Center for Disability Services (CCUL-0211) provides accommodations and educational resources for students with demonstrated needs, as outlined on their website (<https://www.umb.edu/academics/seas/disability-services/>). Should you be eligible for these services, you should contact the Ross Center right away so that their staff can help you identify appropriate accommodations in this and other courses. Finally, if it appears that you might not pass this Intermediate Seminar and if the instructor cannot figure out how to support your success in the course, the instructor might inform one of the University advisers working with the Student Referral Program. This strictly confidential program is part of an early warning system designed to help students address personal and academic difficulties that may interfere with their progress in the University.

Assessment of these courses:

In addition to course evaluation forms that are routinely administered at the end of each course at UMass Boston, Intermediate Seminar students are asked to complete a self-assessment questionnaire addressing their progress as critical thinkers and writers. Additionally, each term an assessment committee will look at randomly chosen student writing from a small sample of Intermediate Seminars. Please save all your writing in this course so that, if you are chosen, you will have your work available. The purpose of this evaluation is to improve the program and to improve particular courses as necessary, not to evaluate individual students. You may remove your name from your papers if you prefer to submit them anonymously.

Statement from the Ross Center about Accommodations”

“UMass Boston is committed to creating learning environments that are inclusive and accessible. If you have a personal circumstance that will impact your learning and performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible, so we can discuss the best ways to meet your needs and the requirements of the course. If you have a documented disability, or would like guidance about navigating support services, contact the Ross Center for Disability Services by email (ross.center@umb.edu), phone (617-287-7430), or in person (Campus Center, UL Room 211). To receive accommodations, students must be registered with the Ross Center and must request accommodations each semester that they are in attendance at UMass Boston. For more information visit: Ross Center for Disability Services - UMass Boston (umb.edu). Please note

that the Ross Center will provide a letter for your instructor with information about your accommodation only and not about your specific disability.”

Ross Center website: <http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability/>

Resources for Students: The Office of Urban and Off-Campus Support Services (U-ACCESS (<https://www.umb.edu/campus-life/current-students/u-access/>)) offers students services they might need outside the classroom. “The mission of U-ACCESS is to help UMass Boston students meet their basic needs so they can achieve academic success. This office also provides leadership development and inspires student agency in mitigating systemic poverty. Along with various services to fulfill student needs, the office provides students with work and internship opportunities to empower them to fight campus poverty and support their peers.”

Student plagiarism and classroom behavior:

Students are expected to abide by the University’s Code of Student Conduct in all their classes at UMass Boston

<https://www.umb.edu/academics/provost/academic-integrity/academic-integrity-policy>.

In addition to the specific violations of student conduct itemized in section VII of the code, we urge all students to be mindful of broad standards of civility. Offensive and insulting behavior undermines the sense of community that the Intermediate Seminars strive to build. Class discussion and group projects can be productive only in a climate of respect for the opinions and beliefs of all. A healthy exchange about issues may include disagreement about ideas, but it must not demean the character or background of the individuals holding those ideas.

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism is defined as the act of using another person’s ideas or work and presenting it as if it is your own. Plagiarism is a particularly serious violation, as outlined in the Academic Honesty section of the code (section VI) and will not be tolerated in this class. If you use the material of *any* third-party source in any of your work, you *must* properly cite that source. If you fail to do so, intentional or not, this is considered to be an act of plagiarism. All acts of plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty will be referred to the Chair of the English Department and the Dean of Students. Please note that academic dishonesty can result in further academic sanctions such as suspension.

AI/ChatGPT Policy:

The use of AI in any capacity is strictly prohibited. Unauthorized and/or undisclosed use of AI in any work submitted for this course may constitute as grounds for academic dishonesty and will be referred to the Chair of the English Department and the Dean of Students.

Technology Policy:

Unless explicitly stated otherwise, this will be a technology-free course. This means that students *must* come to class prepared with physical copies of each of our required readings, including printing supplemental readings when required.

Laptops will be permitted during class for in-class writing assignments and to access select course materials.

Overall, please be respectful with your use of technology. The use of technology, when not permitted, is disrespectful not only to the instructor and to the amount you are paying for your education, but also to the people around you.

Unauthorized, excessive use of cellphones, laptops, iPads, etc., during class may result in a loss of participation credit for the day, or in extreme circumstances, the student being marked absent for that day.

Assignments and Grading:

1. Attendance and Participation: 15%
2. Paper 1: 10%
3. Paper 2 Draft 1: 15%
4. Final Portfolio: 40%
 - a. What is Lit Statement: 15%
 - i. 2 rough drafts+final draft (5% each)
 - b. Reflection: 5%
 - c. Final Paper (Final Draft of Paper 2): 20%
5. Blog: 15%
 - a. Post+Presentation: 10%
 - b. Comments: 5%
6. Small in-class assignments/reading quizzes: 5%
 - a. Your lowest reading quiz will be *dropped*

Class Participation:

Attendance in this course is not only considered showing up but also being present, engaged, and participatory. A sleeping student or a student staring at a screen will not be considered a present student. Likewise, coming and leaving early without prior notice or approval will be considered an absence.

This course acknowledges that some students may feel uncomfortable with speaking in front of the class and embraces many different forms of participation. Participation can include acts such as attentively taking notes or remaining on task and engaged during group exercises. Above all, it is important that students come to class *prepared* and ready to *participate*.

Attendance Policy:

Each student is allowed *one* unexcused absence. If you exceed this limit, you will be asked to meet with me. Because our class meets once a week, it is vital to your success that you *do not miss more than two meetings*. Surpassing three absences puts you at risk of failing the course (think about this: missing this class three times equals missing a MWF class *nine* times. No good.)

Unable to attend class on a specific date or participate in an exam or class requirement due to a religious observance? Fill out the excused absence form (requires 2-weeks' notice) to request religious accommodation at [https://www.umb.edu/campus-life/current-students/policies/right-to-excused-absence-because-religious-belief/Links to an external site](https://www.umb.edu/campus-life/current-students/policies/right-to-excused-absence-because-religious-belief/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site).

Late Work Policy:

Work submitted after the deadline without an approved extension will be deducted a letter grade for each day it is late.

All extensions *must* be requested at least 48 hours before the deadline. If you request an extension 48 hours before the deadline, you will automatically be granted it, no questions asked. Life happens. However, if you take advantage of this policy and submit your assignment after the 2-day extension, it will be graded as a late assignment with points deducted accordingly.

If a student encounters extreme circumstances, they are encouraged to meet with me.

Required Texts (Physical Copies Mandatory):

- *Antigone* by Sophocles (Braun Translation *only*)
- *Sula* by Toni Morrison
- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel
- *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan

All other texts will be made available to students through Canvas

* Note on required PDF readings:

In addition to our main course texts, we will read several supplemental materials. Students are responsible for printing these materials and bringing them to each class session unless the instructor *explicitly* states that they may use technology to access them during class.

Course Schedule

**This schedule is open to change at the instructor's discretion.*

Week 1 (September 11): Introduction+Syllabus

“Childhood and Poetry” by Pablo Neruda (*available on Canvas*)

“The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas” by Ursula Le Guin (in class reading, *available on Canvas*)

Introduction Posts due by Thursday 9/17 at 11:59pm

Add/Drop ends September 15

Unit One: Focusing on Form

Week 2 (September 18): Short Stories

*Syllabus Quiz

Reading:

Excerpt from *Art Objects* by Jeanette Winterson (*available on Canvas*)

“Free Love” by Ali Smith (*available on Canvas*)

Optional: “To The Cinema” by Ali Smith

“A Perfect Day for Bananafish” by J.D. Salinger (*available on Canvas*)

“The Thing in the Forest” by A.S. Byatt (*available on Canvas*)

Week 3 (NO CLASS): *Antigone*

Reading:

Antigone (entire play)

Selections from *Deaf Republic* by Ilya Kaminsky (*available on Canvas*)

Antigone Reading Questions Due by Friday, September 25 at 5:00 pm.

Week 4 Blog Posts Due by Thursday, October 1 at 11:59 pm

Week 4 (October 2): *Antigone* cont.

** Reading Quiz 1

Reading:

Antigone (entire play)

Watch:

On Becoming a Guinea Fowl (Rungano Nyoni, 2024)

Annotation Assignment Due at Beginning of Class

Week 5 Blog Posts Due by Thursday, October 8 at 11:59 pm

Unit Two: *Sula* and the Idea of the ‘Other’

Week 5 (October 9): *I Am Not a Witch* (Rungano Nyoni, 2017)

Watch:

I Am Not a Witch (Rungano Nyoni, 2017)

*Available to stream for ~free~ on Kanopy

Paper 1 Due In-Class

Week 6 Blog Posts Due by Thursday, October 15 at 11:59 pm

Week 6 (October 16): *Sula*

** Reading Quiz 2

Reading:

Sula pages 1-79

Selections from *Burn This Book* by Toni Morrison (Essays 1, 5, 7, and 11)
(available on Canvas)

“The Masters Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master’s House” by Audre Lorde (available on Canvas; please bring printed out copy to class)

Week 7 Blog Posts Due by Thursday, October 22 at 11:59 pm

Week 7 (October 23): *Sula* cont.

** Reading Quiz 3

Reading:

Sula pages 79-174

Selections from *Sister Outsider* by Audre Lorde (available on Canvas)

“Approaching Abjection” by Julia Kristeva (in class reading)

Sula Deep Dive Packet Due

First Draft of Literature Statement Due

Unit Three: The ‘Theory’ Behind Fun Home

Week 8 (October 30): *Fun Home*

Reading:

Fun Home pages 1-54

Understanding Comics by Scott McCloud (available on Canvas)

“The Myth of Sisyphus” by Albert Camus (in class reading)

Watch:

[Introduction to Semiotics](#)

Week 9 Blog Posts Due by Thursday, November 5 at 11:59pm

Week 9 (November 6): *Fun Home cont.*

** Reading Quiz 4

Reading:

Fun Home pages 54-150

Epistemology of the Closet by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (*available on Canvas*)

“Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” by Adrienne Rich (*available on Canvas*)

Listen (optional):

[Alison Bechdel on the *Gender Reveal* podcast](#)

Paper 1 Revisions Due by Sunday, November 8th at 11:59pm

Week 10 Blog Posts Due by Thursday, November 12 at 11:59 pm

Week 10 (November 13): *Fun Home cont.*

** Reading Quiz 5

Reading:

Fun Home pages 150-232

The Second Sex by Simone de Beauvoir

Listen (optional):

[*Fun Home: A New Musical*](#)

Unit Four: Small Things, Safe, and the Inhospitable Present

Week 11 (November 20): *Small Things Like These*

** Reading Quiz 6

Reading:

Small Things Like These chapters 1-6

Cruel Optimism by Lauren Berlant (*available on Canvas*)

Paper 2 Draft 1 Due November 22nd at 11:59pm

Week 12 (THANKSGIVING BREAK): *Small Things Like These* cont.

Reading:

Finish *Small Things Like These*

Watch (optional):

Small Things Like These (Mielants, 2024)

Week 13 Blog Posts Due by Thursday, December 3 at 11:59 pm

Week 13 (December 4): *Small Things Like These* cont.

** Reading Quiz 7

Reading:

“Create Dangerously” by Albert Camus (*available on Canvas*)

Second Draft of Literature Statement Due + Peer Review

Week 14 Blog Posts Due by Thursday December 10 at 11:59 pm

Week 14 (December 11): *Safe* (Todd Haynes, 1995)

Watch:

Safe (Todd Haynes, 1995)

Final Portfolio Due December 18th