

Literature and Politics: Power, Writing, Resistance

Tu-Th, 4:00-5:15, Computer Sciences Building, 1325.

This course examines a series of political, philosophical, and literary texts in order to imagine the possible relations between power, writing, and resistance. Rather than using literature as a key to politics, or imposing political themes on literary works, we will attend to how literature—taken as a coded form of linguistic and aesthetic practice—and politics—understood both as the exercise of power and strategies of resistance—might be related. Throughout our readings we will attend to three related questions: What is the power of literature? Can literary writing affect political consciousness? Does literature enable modes of resistance? The goal of this course is thus to offer students of politics insights into how literary works represent and negotiate political questions in writing, and inversely, to encourage students of literature to read and think politically. Requirements include two papers (4-5 pages) and one in-class presentation (See presentation handout for details). Paper prompts will be distributed in class and by email.

Required Texts: Available at the UW Bookstore

- 1) Herman Melville, *Melville's Short Novels* (Norton, ISBN 9780393976410)
- 2) Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Penguin, ISBN 0143106589)
- 3) Franz Kafka, *Selected Stories* (Norton, ISBN 0393924793)
- 4) Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Harper, ISBN 0061120065)
- 5) Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (Touchstone, ISBN 9780684826806)
- 6) James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* (Vintage, 0345806565)
- 7) Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let me Go* (Vintage, 1400078776)
- 8) Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* (Pantheon, 0375714839)

Selected Electronic Reserves: Critical Readings for Presentations

Gilles Deleuze, "Bartleby or the Formula"
Michael Rogin, "Mutiny and Slave Revolt"
Lacoue-Labarthe, "The Horror of the West"
Chinua Achebe, "An Image of Africa"
Walter Benjamin, "Franz Kafka, On the Tenth Anniversary of his Death"
W.E.B. Dubois, *Souls of Black Folk* (excerpt)
Barbara Johnson, "Metaphor, Metonymy and Voice in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*"
Leo Strauss, "Persecution and the Art of Writing"
Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz* (excerpts)
Dawkins, "What's Wrong with Cloning?"

Learning Outcomes, Course Requirements and Guidelines:

As a cross listed course in political science and integrated liberal studies, PS 570/ILS 253 uses theoretical and critical texts as a way of inquiring into the political systems and beliefs of individuals, collectives, and institutions. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- think critically about their own societies and the larger global community.
- demonstrate knowledge of one or more methodologies in order to interpret literary texts.
- demonstrate knowledge of one or more theoretical approaches.
- synthesize and apply critical concepts in order to view issues from multiple perspectives.

Requirements:

- 1) Come to class. Do the readings. Bring your books, notes, comments, and questions for class discussion.
- 2) Write two original, well-written and well-argued papers.
- 3) Do one in class presentation based on the text and one critical source (5 minutes).

Grading Scale: 30% Presentation; 20% Attendance and Participation; 50% Papers

Assignments: Required assignments include two papers (4-5 pages), active and informed participation, and an in-class presentation.

Papers: Late papers will be penalized by a third of a letter grade per day. Extensions must be requested one week in advance, only for exceptional reasons. All your work must follow the principles of academic integrity. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade: <https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/>

Writing Center: <http://writing.wisc.edu> helps undergraduates in all disciplines become more effective writers. Workshops and individual help with writing are available onsite and online. You are strongly encouraged to work with the Writing Center before submitting your papers.

Participation: Presence in class is essential. Regular attendance and informed participation is a basic requirement of the course. Bring your texts and reading notes to class. If you must miss a session, send an email well in advance explaining why you cannot attend (sickness, religious holiday, exceptional circumstances are acceptable reasons).

Grader: William Broadway (wbroadway@wisc.edu).

Office hours: ILS Building, 228 N Charter Street, 3-4 pm Thursdays, and by appointment.

Email: Inquiries will be responded to within 24 hours, excluding weekends.

Week 1

Sep 6	Tu	Introduction: Politics and Literature
Sep 8	Th	Melville, "Bartleby, The Scrivener. A Story of Wall-Street", 3-34

Week 2

Sep 13	Tu	Melville, "Benito Cereno", 34-103
Sep 15	Th	Melville, "Benito Cereno", 34-103

Week 3

Sep 20	Tu	Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> , Ch 1
Sep 22	Th	Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> , Ch 2

Week 4

Sep 27	Tu	Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> , Ch 3
Sep 29	Th	Kafka, <i>Selected Stories</i> , 1-60 ¹

1st Paper Due Date: October 2, 2016 (to be emailed by 5 pm).
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Week 5

Oct 04	Tu	Kafka, <i>Selected Stories</i> , 61-124
Oct 06	Th	Kafka, <i>Selected Stories</i> , 124-162

¹ Special attention should be paid to the following Kafka stories: "The Judgment", "In the Penal Colony", "Before the Law", "The Worry of the Father of the Family", "A Report to the Academy", "A Starvation Artist", "Josefine, the Singer of The Mouse People", "The Hunter Gracchus."

Week 6

Oct 11	Tu	Hurston, <i>Their Eyes were Watching God</i> , Ch 1-5, p. 1-50
Oct 13	Th	Hurston, <i>Their Eyes were Watching God</i> , Ch 6-10, p. 51-99

Week 7

Oct 18	Tu	Hurston, <i>Their Eyes were Watching God</i> , Ch 11-16, p. 100-146
Oct 20	Th	Hurston, <i>Their Eyes were Watching God</i> , Ch 17-20, p. 147-193

Week 8

Oct 25	Tu	Levi, <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i> , p. 9-42
Oct 27	Th	Levi, <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i> , p. 42-87

Week 9

Nov 01	Tu	Levi, <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i> , p. 87-123
Nov 03	Th	Levi, <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i> , p. 123-175

Week 10

Nov 08	Tu	Baldwin, <i>Giovanni's Room</i> , Part One, Ch 1-3, p. 1-71
Nov 10	Th	Baldwin, <i>Giovanni's Room</i> , Part Two, Ch 1-4, p. 71-118

Week 11

Nov 15	Tu	Baldwin, <i>Giovanni's Room</i> , Part Two, Ch 4-6, p. 119-169
Nov 17	Th	Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> , Chapters 1-6, p. 1-76

Week 12

Nov 22	Tu	Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> , Chapters 7-12, p. 77-145
Nov 24	Th	No class (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 13

Nov 29	Tu	Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> , Chapters 13-18, p. 146-217
Dec 01	Th	Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> , Chapters 19-23, p. 218-288

Week 14

Dec 06	Tu	Marjane Satrapi, <i>Persepolis</i>
Dec 08	Th	Marjane Satrapi, <i>Persepolis</i>

Week 15

Dec 13	Tu	Marjane Satrapi, <i>Persepolis</i>
Dec 15	Th	Last Class Meeting

2nd Paper Due Date: December 18, 2016 (to be emailed by 5 pm).