

COURSE BASICS

Term: Fall 2020

Dates: Sept. 7– Dec. 10

Professor:

Dr. Amanda DiPaolo

dipaolo@stu.ca

Meets:

Online, asynchronously

Technology requirements:

Moodle

Microsoft Teams

Office Hours:

By appointment

HMRT 2013

Human Rights and Literature

Please note: All relevant information will also be available on Moodle, including the course schedule.

Course Overview

The novel is a vehicle through which empathy and understanding may be garnered. This course explores various human rights questions through an examination of modern literary works. This term, our novels will deal with issues such as: police brutality, poverty, treatment of the indigenous community in Canada, ethics in scientific progress, and climate change. Some readings deal directly with racism and various others forms of discrimination.

The course is asynchronous but I expect we will have very robust and lively discussions nonetheless on our discussion forums as well as our small group reading assignments (more on that below).

REQUIRED BOOKS

Thomas, Angie. *The Hate U Give*. Balzer Bray, 2017.

Ward, Jesmyn. *Salvage the Bones*. Bloomsbury, 2011.

Wagamese, Richard. *Indian Horse*. Douglas & McIntyre, 2012.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. Vintage Canada, 2006.

Bradley, James. *Clade*. Titan Books, 2017.

Course objectives and goals

- You will gain an understanding and **comprehension** of the human rights issues presented in the novels.
- You will be able to **apply** what you have learned to real-world scenarios.
- You will be able to **analyze** the situations presented in the novels, to break social issues down into parts and to look for root causes.
- You will be able to **synthesize** information, bringing together ideas to come up with solutions.
- You will be able to **evaluate** proposed solutions to social justice issues.

How will learning be assessed?

The course uses a project-based format with collaborative and individual learning activities.

Breakdown

1. **Participation (55%)**
Self-Assessment due: Dec. 10
2. **Close readings (25%)**
Due: Sessional due dates
3. **Final project (20%)**
Final project due: Dec. 10

Participation (55%)

Regular and active participation is required in this course. Participation means completing the weekly readings and videos in a timely fashion, and logging into the course at the start, middle, and end of the session to participate in discussion forums as well as small group and individual assignments.

The first two weeks of class are worth 5% of your participation grade. Each novel session is broken down into 10% of your final grade. Rubrics for each aspect of participation can be found on the Moodle page under Assignment info, Rubrics, and Grade Criteria.

At the end of the first session, you will be asked to download a participation self-assessment form. You will need to fill out **the self-assessment form** at the end of each session to be passed in at the end of the semester. Do not wait until the end of the semester to fill in the form. **The self-assessment is due December 10, 2020.**

There are eight sessions in the course. With the exception of the first and last week of the semester, each session begins on a Monday and ends on a Friday. Each novel session has two weeks in it. At the beginning of each session, work your way through the learning activities listed on Moodle to earn your participation points.

Close Reading Assignments (25%)

You will automatically be assigned to a small group for a close-reading activity that is worth 5% of your final grade each novel session.

Your group will need to choose one passage of the novel that relates to a human rights issue to focus on. It could be as short as one paragraph or as large as several pages. This is not a traditional close reading you would do in a literature course. First, you will need to analyze the passage carefully, detailing narrative voice (who is speaking, perspective of the voice, etc.), tone (is there irony, what emotions are being evoked, are they being straightforward, etc.), and literary devices used (metaphors, imagery, etc.). Second, you will be asked to construct a descriptive thesis about the passage. Third, your group will be asked to construct an argument about the passage based on your thesis. Finally, you will be asked to add potential root causes of the issue/problem and possible solutions.

I have set up a small group wiki for each group to do their work in. Wikis work just like google docs in the sense that you all can collectively edit it. You cannot, however, edit at the same time. You have the freedom to present the wiki in any way you choose. You can include videos, links, images, or it can all be written text.

For more information on the small group assignments see **Assignment Info, Rubrics, and Grading Criteria** in Moodle.

Your group can decide whether you want to meet outside of the Moodle platform for any portion of its work, but it is not required. Communication can be synchronous (perhaps using Zoom, MS Teams, Google Hangouts, etc), asynchronous (using the Moodle forums, or something like Google Docs), or in person should everyone in your group be available. Your small-group discussion forums in Moodle will only be visible to your group and to me. That said, I have set up small group discussion forums and at times they need to be used. For your discussions on the Moodle platform, I will check in to see how it's going and offer any assistance.

Final project (20%)

Please note: To ensure there is a variety of topics and novels explored for final projects, you will need to sign up for which novel you wish to present on. There is a maximum of 6 projects per novel.

The final project will be an assignment that focuses on an authentic assessment. This means that you will look at the real-world applicability of what we have learned throughout the semester. To do this, final projects will focus on human rights issues from our novels that we see in the real world around us today.

You will need to do the following:

1. Summarize the key human rights issues in the novel chosen.
2. Give a run-down of specific domestic and international human rights laws that apply and how they are violated.
3. Find a similar situation in the real world that you can showcase as a case study. Compare and contrast with the novel and repeat steps 1 and 2 for the case study.
4. Outcomes in the novel vs. outcomes in real life. What are they? How do they differ?
5. What can and should be done to alleviate the human rights issue. Here, I want you to think both as a human rights activist and as a realistic policy maker. If money is involved, where does the money come from? If specific training is involved, who will do the training? What sort of training is required.
6. Anything else you want to include.

You may present your information as:

- A series of infographics (e.g., using [Venngage](#) or [Piktochart](#))
- A video (e.g., using iMovie or [Powtoon](#))
- A series of comic strips (e.g., using [Pixton](#))
- A podcast
- A traditional PowerPoint presentation (with voice narration)
- A traditional 8-10 page essay

There is no specific word limit because it will vary wildly depending on the type of assignment you choose. Post your final product on Moodle under *Final Project* by December 10, 2020.

For more information on the final project see **Assignment Info, Rubrics, and Grading Criteria** in Moodle.

Things to know about assignments

Rubrics: See the Assignment Info, Rubrics, & Grade Criteria book in Moodle. Read these before you start your work. The rubrics provide details on what the assignments should include.

Questions: Post in General Questions About the Course. If they only apply to you, please email me (dipaolo@stu.ca).

Where to submit: On Moodle. Each place will be clearly marked so you know exactly where to put what.

Due dates: Specific assignments for the final project and the self-assessment are due on the date specified in this course outline. If a medical emergency or other situation prevents you from meeting a deadline, please let me know.

Grading Explained			
Grade	% of 100	Short Definition	Detailed Definition
A+	95 - 100	(extremely) Excellent	Demonstrating an exceptional knowledge of subject matter, the literature, concepts and/or techniques through analysis, criticism, articulation, and demonstrated originality.
A	90 - 94	Excellent	
A-	85 - 89	(nearly) Excellent	
B+	80 - 84	(very) Good	Demonstrating considerable knowledge of subject matter, concepts, and techniques through analysis, criticism, and articulation.
B	75 - 79	Good	
B-	70 - 74	(fairly) Good	
C+	65 - 69	(better than) Adequate	Demonstrating a reasonable knowledge of subject matter, concepts, and techniques. While not particularly good, performance is adequate to satisfy general University requirements and to indicate that the student has learned something useful.
C	60 - 64	Adequate	
C-	55 - 59	(barely) Adequate	
D	50 - 54	Minimally Acceptable	Marginal performance, demonstrating a low level of understanding and ability in an assignment or course. Product is less than adequate to satisfy general University requirements, but sufficient to earn a credit.
F		Unacceptable	Wholly below University requirements.

How is the course organized?

Session 1: Introduction – September 9-11
Session 2: The Novel, Empathy, and Human Rights – September 14-18
Session 3: <i>The Hate U Give</i> by Angie Thomas – September 21-October 2
Session 4: <i>Salvage the Bones</i> by Jesmyn Ward – October 5-16
Session 5: <i>Indian Horse</i> by Richard Wagaseme – October 19-30
Session 6: <i>Never Let Me Go</i> by Kazuo Ishiguro – November 2-20
Session 7: <i>Clade</i> by James Bradley – November 23-December 4
Session 8: Completing the Course -- December 7-10