

Comparative Literature R1B, Section 9
Reading and Composition through the Reading of World Literature
CCN 000000

JOURNEYS, OTHERWORLDS, MONSTERS:
REPRESENTING ORIGINS, BURYING MEMORIES

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The College of Letters and Science requires all undergraduates to complete the Reading & Composition requirement. Comp. Lit. R1B fulfills the second half of that requirement. The general goals of the course are to bring students' reading, analytical, and writing skills up to the high standard suitable to future university work, and to teach students how to incorporate original research into their writing. Each department offering Reading and Composition courses designs its own framework for them based on the nature of its own discipline. This course represents one incarnation of R&C R1B that will both fulfill the University's aims and introduce students to a coherent area of inquiry in Comparative Literature.

STRANGE AND FANTASTIC WORLDS in literature produce wonder, humor, surprise, shock, terror, and—paradoxically—basic identities. As narratives delve into these worlds and their monstrous inhabitants, as they enact meetings between “people like us” and exotic or monstrous figures, they also furnish *safe* narrative spaces, places in which to experiment with the tensions, memories, and ongoing concerns of individuals and communities. Stories of origin, such as the *Aeneid* (first century B.C. Roman) and *Beloved* (late twentieth century African American), envision the emergence of communities out of horror, trauma, violence, despair. They also seek to embed reasons for or strategies of survival, hope, justice. Both of these movements—the traumatic and the hopeful—involve the representation of the past, the molding of memory through a sort of narrative exorcism; and in this way they inform the very nature of the community itself. This section of R1B will examine, among other things, the interplay of here and elsewhere, “our” people and abject monsters, memory and forgetting, in several important works of western literature.

Classroom activities will provide a theatre for students to test out their readings and try new ones, both individually and in collaboration with others. Significant class time and office hours will also be given to instruction in the skills of essay writing and critical thinking. Students should emerge from this class able to read a variety of text types analytically and critically; to distinguish valid interpretations or arguments from specious ones; to draft convincing interpretive arguments in clear, standard English; to read their own writing with a critical eye; and to give helpful, responsible feedback to colleagues on their written work.

Readings

Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated by Stanley Lombardo
Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain*, translated by Ruth H. Cline
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*
Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*
Reader, available at XYZ Copy
Further materials posted at course Web site or shown in class

Assignments

Diagnostic paper (3 pages)
Four graded papers ranging from 5 to 8 pages, increasing in length and sophistication; the third will be a comparative paper, the last will incorporate research activity
Revisions of one or two previously graded papers, accepted until fourteenth week of class
Daily homework page, except for days on which papers or drafts are due

Grading

Papers will be graded according to a standard rubric distributed to students at the beginning of the semester. The relative weight of the papers in the final grade is designed to reward improvement through the term.

Participation	10%
Paper 1 (4-5 pages)	15% (on a single text)
Paper 2 (4-5 pages)	20% (on a single text)
Paper 3 (7-8 pages)	25% (a comparison paper)
Paper 4 (7-8 pages)	30% (a <i>brief</i> review of research; particulars of assignment TBA)
One or two papers substantially revised (see “Revisions” below)	

The final page of this syllabus outlines the readings and writing assignments to be completed by the beginning of each class meeting. You will notice that there are three thematic units. The following lists the topics, activities, and skills to be emphasized in each unit:

UNIT 1 (6 weeks): Thesis, structure, argument; peer review, editing, revision; search strategies, close reading, critical reading.

UNIT 2 (5 weeks): Reading and critiquing scholarly arguments; narrative structure and thematic effect; structuring a comparative paper.

UNIT 3 (4 weeks): Presentation and discussion of student research in progress; incorporating research into writing; review of skills and course themes.

COURSE POLICIES

Classroom Climate

I envision the class as a cooperative learning community, not merely a collection of atomized or competing individuals. Learning happens best in an atmosphere of active, mutual respect for all; in a setting favorable to experimentation and dialogue; and in a group that together agrees to a set of protocols for discussion and disagreement. The class members will come up with such a protocol the first week of the semester, and will have opportunities throughout the semester to give feedback on how the class is going and how to improve it.

What Participation Means in This Course

This course is structured as a series of designed and sequenced learning activities, both individual and collective. To participate effectively, students must prepare for class in advance (two to three hours for every hour of class time); attend class; take part in all assigned learning activities, including group activities, within the class period; and contribute to the classroom community with questions, observations, and information that respond to or challenge fellow students’ ideas (not just the instructor’s).

Attendance

Students are expected to be in class on time every time. If you must for any reason miss a class, please let me know in advance. Low attendance will bring down the participation grade. Sleeping in class will be considered a form of absence and will bring down the participation grade. Lateness of more than fifteen minutes to any session will be considered an absence. Repeated or consistent lateness will bring down the participation grade.

Homework Guidelines

Some piece of writing is due in each class meeting. When a draft or paper is not due, students must turn in a typed, double-spaced written text of one-half to a full page in twelve-point type with one-inch margins all around. Generally the instructor will provide a topic or task for the homework, but if she does not the students are expected to come up with their own.

Formal Essay Format

Formal essays (draft and final) must be typed in twelve-point Roman (or comparable font with serifs). (This is a font with serifs—the sticky-outies at the ends of the strokes. This is a font without serifs, and as a text font it is harder to read, especially when you face several pages of it.) Margins must be one inch on all sides; page numbers are to be provided in the margin; at least 23 lines must fit on each page; papers must be stapled and turned in as part of a portfolio (see below).

Peer Review Workshops

All students are required to produce suitably advanced drafts and participate in reciprocal peer review on each of the dates noted. Bring in two copies: one to use in the peer review session (your partner can mark this one), and one to turn in to the instructor. In general, the instructor will assign peer review partners in advance based on students’ characteristics and habits as writers. Students who absolutely must miss a peer review session are required to notify the instructor in advance. Failure to participate or failure to attend will affect the participation grade.

The Writing Portfolio

Students are to turn their papers in to be graded in a pocket folder that contains the following: the graded diagnostic essay; all previous graded essays with instructor's comments; the draft copy of the paper currently due on which the peer review commented; the clean, fully edited and proofread final draft; and the writer's logs for all the papers turned in thus far.

Revisions

Students must substantially revise at least one, possibly two of their papers after the grade is assigned; successful revisions can improve the recorded grade by up to a full point (for example, C+ to B+). You must consult with the instructor in office hours before attempting the revision and come up with a revision plan. Only papers 1, 2, and 3 can be revised for grade improvement. Revisions will be accepted up to the fourteenth week of the semester. Earlier is better.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined in the [Berkeley Campus Code of Student Conduct](#) as follows:

"Plagiarism is defined as the use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source. This includes, but is not limited to:

- (a.) Copying from the writings or works of others into one's academic assignment without attribution, or submitting such work as if it were one's own;
- (b.) Using the views, opinions, or insights of another without acknowledgment; or
- (c.) Paraphrasing the characteristic or original phraseology, metaphor, or other literary device of another without proper attribution."

Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic and student conduct rules and is punishable with a failing grade and possibly more severe action. For more information, consult the following UC Berkeley website:

[Berkeley Campus Code of Student Conduct](#). University of California Berkeley: Student Judicial Affairs, 2001. 22 January 2004 <<http://students.berkeley.edu/sas/conduct.shtml>>.

Source: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Citations.html#Plagiarism>

Late Papers

This class is scheduled tightly to fit in a series of designed learning activities. Failure to turn assignments in on time puts the student at a disadvantage in all areas of the course. Late papers will not be accepted without grade penalty: one-third of a grade for each day late. However, to give students some flexibility to plan their academic work, I will accept from each student *one* paper up to a week late without penalty, subject to the following: the student must tell me before the day of the peer review session that he or she is taking advantage of this provision; the student must also arrange a peer-review session with another student and turn in the peer reviewer's comments as part of the portfolio. The purpose of this policy is to accommodate student planning, not to countenance procrastination. Any papers turned in late will also be graded late.

Accommodation Policy

Every student should find the class to be a suitable learning environment. University policy requires students needing accommodation for any disability to provide the instructor with a letter from the Disabled Students Program detailing what particular accommodations are necessary.

E-Mail Correspondence

Response time for e-mails sent to me may be up to 24 hours. It may take longer over weekends.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
1	<u>UNIT 1: MYTHMAKING AND MASTER TEXT</u> Introduction; enrollment issues; close reading workshop; reading an epic	Due: read <i>Aeneid</i> 1; turn in diagnostic paper
2	Due: <i>Aeneid</i> 2-4; homework page as directed	Due: <i>Aeneid</i> 5-6; homework page as directed diagnostic paper returned; writing workshop
3	Due: paper 1 draft peer review workshop	Due: paper 1 writer's log; library research session (location TBA)
4	Due: <i>Aeneid</i> 7-10; homework page as directed Research workshop	Due: <i>Aeneid</i> 11-12; homework page as directed
5	Due: <i>Yvain</i> 1-3300; homework page as directed Paper 1 returned	Due: <i>Yvain</i> 3301-4500; homework page as directed Reading literary criticism (article TBA)
6	Due: <i>Yvain</i> 4501-end; lit crit article; homework page as directed Reading literary criticism	Due: Paper 2 draft ; peer review workshop Critiquing scholarly articles
7	<u>UNIT 2: THE UNDERSIDE OF TRIUMPH</u> Due: Paper 2 ; writer's log Research workshop	Due: <i>Narrative</i> 1-50; homework page as directed
8	Due: <i>Narrative</i> 51-140; homework page as directed	Due: <i>Narrative</i> 141-end; homework page as directed
9	Due: <i>Beloved</i> 1-70; homework page as directed Paper 2 returned; writing workshop	Due: <i>Beloved</i> 71-120; homework page as directed Workshop on writing a comparative paper
10	Due: <i>Beloved</i> 121-200; homework page as directed	Due: <i>Beloved</i> to end; homework page as directed
11	Due: Paper 3 draft ; peer review workshop	Due: Paper 3 ; writer's log Research writing workshop
12	<u>UNIT 3: SPEAKING THE UNSPEAKABLE</u> Due: <i>Frankenstein</i> 1-50; homework page as directed Research writing workshop	Due: <i>Frankenstein</i> 51-120; homework page as directed Research writing workshop
13	Due: <i>Frankenstein</i> 121-170; homework page as directed	Due: <i>Frankenstein</i> 171-end; homework page as directed Paper 3 returned
14	Due: Student research presentations (5-7 minutes each); homework page as directed	Due: Student research presentations; homework page as directed Last day to turn in revisions of papers 1, 2, or 3
15	Due: Student research presentations; homework page as directed	Due: Paper 4 draft Peer review workshop

Day of Final Exam: **Paper 4 (research project) due**

Research Paper

Goals: Learn to locate materials in the Library

Come up with a research question based on course materials

Learn to evaluate library materials based on relevance to one's research question

Apply critical evaluation to library materials

Apply insights from library materials to course materials

Document others' writings used in one's own work

Topics

Find out something about the initial reception of one of the literary works read in class.

Read an extra couple of articles or a book on trauma theory and apply the theory critically to one of the works read in class.

Do close readings of passages involving monuments or memorials in two of the literary works read in class.

Compare and contrast two different approaches to trauma theory, and come up with your own synthesis on the topic.

Apply the methodological approaches used in class to a literary work not on the course reading list.