

E 314 L  
Banned Books & Novel Ideas  
Spring 2017



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## Course Description

**The primary aim of this course is to help students develop and improve the critical reading, writing, and thinking skills** needed for success in upper-division courses in English and other disciplines. They will gain practice in using the Oxford English Dictionary and other online research tools and print resources that support studies in the humanities. Students will learn basic information literacy skills and models for approaching literature with various historical, generic, and cultural contexts in mind.

*To Kill a Mockingbird* (United States 1960) and *117 Days* (South Africa 1965) have been the subject/object of banning orders in their respective contexts (the US and South Africa). Written by internationally acclaimed women writers, and dealing with issues of race, class, and gender, each narrative also dramatizes the generational differences identified by parent/child relationships (Atticus and Scout, Ruth and her three daughters) – and each work’s protagonists and antagonists continue to inspire and inflame debate over the relevance of their specific historical and socio-political contexts to contemporary circumstances

and cultural crises. These continuities and their disconnections will focus our readings of these “banned books” and their “novel ideas.”

Building off of Dr. Harlow’s course description in the paragraph above, we will explore similar questions of community, justice, and family in other controversial texts that address political realities. Our reading this semester will be framed by James Baldwin’s critique of protest fiction in “Everybody’s Protest Novel,” and and by several texts from the mid-twentieth century America that shaped *To Kill a Mockingbird*. In the second half of the semester, we’ll follow our reading of *117 Days* with other texts that address the relationship between individual experience, community, and justice in the context of race, gender, and reproduction.

## Major Texts

(Available at the University Co-Op. Other texts will be uploaded to Canvas.)

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale*

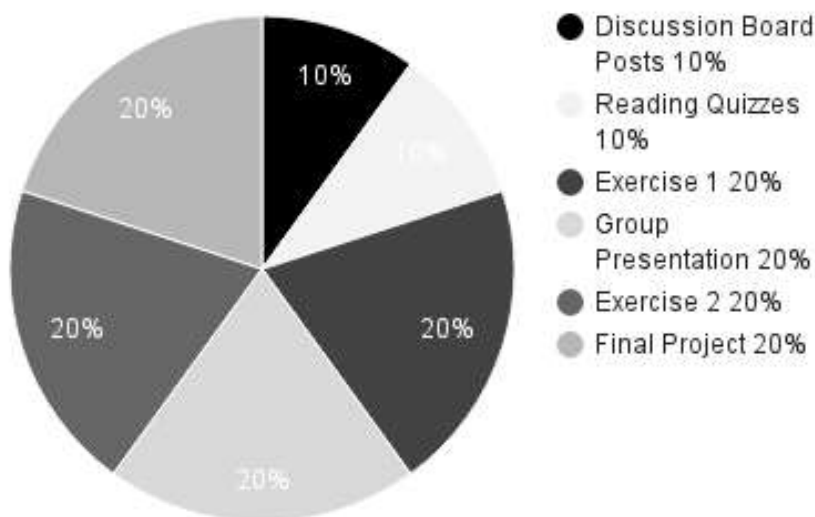
Truman Capote, *Other Voices, Other Rooms*

Ruth First, *117 Days*

Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric*

## Assignments



## Flags

This course carries a **Writing** flag. The writing assignments in this course are arranged procedurally with a focus on invention, development through instructor and peer feedback, and revision; they will comprise a major part of the final grade.

## Attendance

Attendance means being **mentally as well as physically present**: being prepared, participating in discussions and activities, and actively listening. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find notes and make up work.

**You have the right to up to five absences** before it will affect your grade. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. I do not need to know why you are absent, although **religious holy days and jury duty** do not count as absences, so you should let me know if those are coming up.

## Safer space

In this classroom, we respect each other's opinions and beliefs. We recognize that our behavior affects each other. We respect each other's identities and backgrounds, and don't assume anyone's gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, immigration status, economic background, survivor status, health, etc.

It's sadly probably not surprising that many of the texts we'll read feature homophobia, sexism, cissexism, and/or racism, or that many of them deal with depression. Several of the texts we'll read feature explicit sex scenes, and other visceral body things (menstruation, illness, abortion, etc.), as well as violence, substance abuse, suicide, self-harm and slurs. When talking about these and other sensitive topics, please be considerate of your classmates. If you need to step outside the classroom for any reason at any time, please do so. We can revise this policy as necessary.

## Course Calendar

<b>unit 1: reading/practices</b>	<b>reading due</b>	<b>writing due</b>
Tuesday, January 17		
Thursday, January 19	James Baldwin, "Everybody's Protest Novel"	
Tuesday, January 24	Jackson, "The Lottery"	
Thursday, January 26	<i>Other Voices, Other Rooms</i> Chapters 1-4	
Tuesday, January 31	<i>Other Voices, Other Rooms</i> Chapters 5-8	
Thursday, February 2	<i>Other Voices, Other Rooms</i> Finish	

Tuesday, February 7	Wright, "The Man Who Was Almost a Man"	
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<b>unit ii: close reading &amp; context</b>	<b>reading due</b>	<b>writing due</b>
Thursday, February 9	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	
Saturday, February 11		Exercise 1 Due
Tuesday, February 14	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	
Thursday, February 16	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	
Tuesday, February 21	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	
Thursday, February 23	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	
Tuesday, February 28	<i>117 Days</i>	
Thursday, March 2	<i>117 Days</i>	
Tuesday, March 7	<i>117 Days</i>	
Thursday, March 9	<i>117 Days</i>	
Friday, March 10		Exercise 2 Due
	SPRING BREAK	

<b>unit iii: context</b>	<b>reading due</b>	<b>writing due</b>
Tuesday, March 21	Butler, "Bloodchild"	
Thursday, March 23	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>	
Tuesday, March 28	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>	
Thursday, March 30	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>	
Tuesday, April 4	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>	
Thursday, April 6	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>	

unit iv: putting it all together	reading due	writing due
	Tuesday, April 11	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>
Thursday, April 13	Group work time	
Tuesday, April 18	Group Presentations	
Thursday, April 20	Group Presentations	
Tuesday, April 25	<i>Citizen: Parts I &amp; II</i>	

Thursday, April 27	<i>Citizen: Parts III – V</i>	
Tuesday, May 2	<i>Citizen: Finish</i>	
Thursday, May 4	Final celebrations & reflections	
Due date negotiable (between Friday May 5 and the official final exam time)		Final Project Due

#### Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

#### Academic Integrity

Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. When in doubt, cite! We will use MLA citation style in this course.

#### Documented Disability

Please let me know if you need any accommodations for a disability. If you have or suspect you have a mental or physical disability, having it officially documented can be really

helpful. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone), or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>

## Rubric

**A-level** work demonstrates serious, enthusiastic engagement with class reading and discussion; a willingness to ask questions and take risks; intellectual curiosity. A-level written work is clear and creative. A-level writers support their claims with evidence. They confidently engage with their sources and acknowledge them. They learn from criticism and from their own mistakes. They write with readers in mind. They are interested in process.

**B-level** work demonstrates an above-average engagement with class reading and discussion. B-level writers do not always consider their readers. Their writing is mostly clear and to the point, usually well-supported, but occasionally vague, general, or formulaic. B-level writers play it safe. They are interested in product.

**C-level** work meets minimum requirements. It is usually formulaic. Often the prose is overly grandiose and formal or too colloquial. Work is often sloppy. C-level writers make unsupported generalizations and overly broad claims. It is not always clear whether they have engaged seriously with the assigned reading. They are interested in passing.

**D-level** work does not always meet minimum requirements. They submit some work, but it does not clearly respond to the prompt or fit the parameters of the assignment. They do not demonstrate that they have read or engaged seriously with the assigned texts. Their attendance is sporadic, and even when they are physically present in class, they are not mentally present. They are not interested.

**F-level** students rarely attend class or turn in work. When they do, it does not clearly respond to the prompt or is incomplete.

## Grading Scale (for final grades)

A	100% to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0% to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0% to 87.0%
B	< 87.0% to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0% to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0% to 77.0%
C	< 77.0% to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0% to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0% to 67.0%
D	< 67.0% to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0% to 61.0%
F	< 61.0% to 0.0%