

## ENG 255.02: Contemporary Issues & Literature (3 units)



**Heinz Insu Fenkl**  
JFT 618, X2743  
fenkli@newpaltz.edu  
Office Hours: TBA

### Course Description:

Literature speaks to us by addressing central themes in our lives, and what distinguishes “literature” from popular culture is that it tends to address these themes consciously and seriously even when the work itself might be comedic, satirical, or genre-oriented. Literature touches on issues that are relevant to us contemporaneously and across time. By examining literary works from a wide spectrum of and by reading both true and fictional works as well as secondary sources, we will examine the way in which literary works address specific issues to provoke or inspire a response in the reader. These works may be classified in a variety of ways (genres) and may be in various forms (such as film, comics, mixed-media, blogs, etc.).

### Requires Texts:

Selected short stories and essays (in course folder online)  
Films: *Hills Like White Elephants* and other selected films

### Learning Outcomes:

- You will develop skills of close textual analysis informed by critical discourse in the humanities and social sciences
- You will learn to engage with the work of scholars and fellow students and learn to think critically about literature and literary texts.
- You will learn how to place literary texts in dialogue with each other and with various theoretical and critical approaches
- You will learn how to apply extrinsic approaches to illuminate intrinsic readings of literary texts (and vice versa)
- You will carry out an independent research project by conducting research, drafting a proposal, compiling a bibliography, and writing a long paper
- You will improve oral communication skills through discussions in class and online

### Course Requirements:

You are expected to attend every class and participate in class discussion. This means reading the texts and thinking about them in order to articulate your opinions. It is important to remember that what you invest in the class is what you will get out of it.

*Grading:*

attendance & participation (including short responses)	25%
short paper (4-5 pages)	20%
proposal & preliminary bibliography	10%
research paper (10-12 pages)	25%
final exam	20%

*Classroom Etiquette:* All students are expected to behave in a polite and courteous manner, both to the professor and to fellow students. Please remember to turn off cellphones, smartphones, etc. upon entering the classroom. If you are seen texting in class you will be asked to leave the room, resulting in an unexcused absence for that day.

*Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is the unacknowledged (intentional or unintentional) use of summary, paraphrase, direct quotation, language, statistics, or ideas from articles or other information sources including the internet. A student must cite all sources—whether quoted directly, summarized, or paraphrased—according to the Modern Language Association (MLA) format. In accordance with SUNY New Paltz policy, any instances of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the chair of the English Department, the Academic Dean, and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. In most cases, plagiarism will result in failure of the essay assignment (at the very least), and, in more egregious cases, recommend failure of the course. Plagiarism is academic stealing, a serious offense, and may result in failure of the course.

*College ADA Policy:* Students with documented physical, learning, psychological and other disabilities are entitled to receive reasonable accommodations. If you need classroom or testing accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center (Student Union Building, Room 205, 257-3020). The DRC will provide forms verifying the need for accommodation. As soon as the instructor receives the form, you will be provided with the appropriate accommodations. Students are encouraged to request accommodations as close to the beginning of the semester as possible.

*Student Evaluation of Instructor (SEIs):* You are responsible for completing the Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) for this course, which offer valuable feedback and are used to improve teaching and planning. Please complete the form during the last week of classes.

**Course Schedule:**

[www.heinzinsufenkl.net/contemp/contemp.html](http://www.heinzinsufenkl.net/contemp/contemp.html)