

ENG 448.01 - Writing the Novel (4 units)



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Office Hours: TBA

Course Description:

The contemporary novel is a curious thing—both a commodity and a literary form—and the culture of its production is often controversial (or outright contradictory). In this course we will explore the distinctions between the “literary” and the “commercial” novel with the ultimate goal of producing a publishable work that maintains “literary” merits even if it is intended for “popular” consumption. We will engage with the “literary” aspect of the novel through a range of readings and we will also engage pragmatically with the nuts-and-bolts real world aspects of how a novel is bought and published in the commercial world. By the end of the course, you will have a finished proposal packet, having workshopped its contents with your peers under the guidance of your professor.

Requires Texts: (in sequence)

Ken Follett, *The Man from St. Petersburg*

Toni Morrison, *Sula*

Al Zuckerman, *Writing the Blockbuster Novel*

Selected short stories and essays (in course folder online), selected films (in class)

Learning Outcomes:

- You will develop skills of close textual analysis informed by critical discourse in the humanities and the culture of publishing.
- You will learn to engage with the work of scholars, industry professionals, and fellow students and learn to think critically about literature and literary texts as well as popular texts.
- You will learn how to place literary texts in dialogue with each other and with various theoretical, critical, and commercial approaches.
- You will learn how to apply extrinsic approaches to illuminate intrinsic readings of literary texts (and vice versa) to help make your work marketable
- You will carry out an independent research project by conducting research, drafting a proposal, writing a pitch, and writing a reader’s report
- 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 assignments)	20%
short analysis/reader's report (4-5 pages)	15%
query letter and pitch	10%
workshop	10%
final proposal packet (including opening chapters)	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:

For daily assignments, go to the class webpage: www.heinzinsufenkl.net/novel/novel.html