

ENGLISH 2120-02: BRITISH LITERATURE MELANCHOLY AND THE LITERARY IMAGINATION

Fall 2018 * M/W 3:30-4:45 * Pafford 109

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Office Hours: M 9:45-10:45 and 2-3; W: 9:45-10:45 and 5-6; or online/in person by appointment



Course Description

As human beings we place a lot of value on happiness. As a result, not being “happy” can and frequently is seen as some sort of shortcoming. But how can we possibly know what happiness is without other emotions, including what many would consider its opposite, sadness? What is the relationship between “sadness” and an awareness of the profound uncertainties of life, or what many of our forebears would call melancholy? In this course, we will read texts drawn from the major periods and genres of British literature throughout the past two millennia. In addition to paying attention to style and historical context, we will explore the similarities and differences in how these works define, explain, and respond to melancholy as an important component of the human experience. We will also hone our skills as readers and interpreters of literature by focusing on the relationship between form and content within poetry, narrative, drama, and film.

Fair warning: many of the texts we will read deal with the anxieties of the writers in question, which can sometimes be difficult to read about. If you need to take a break while reading, that is perfectly okay, as is talking to someone—me, a UWG counselor, or trusted friend—about why you find a particular topic especially difficult to process. Please see the “UWG Cares” section below for more information about the services available to you as a member of the UWG community.

Be advised that this is a reading heavy course, which is reflective of its status as a Core C.2 course and as a requirement for all English majors. If you cannot commit to the reading schedule outlined

below for whatever reason, you might want to consider taking this course another semester. A minimum grade of “C” in ENGL 1102 is a required pre-requisite for this course.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

For 2120

Students will be able to:

- Identify and assess the traditions, conventions, and contexts associated with the study of the English language and world literatures, including how relevant social, historical, and aesthetic contexts shape texts and authors.
- Apply critical thinking skills to the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information and ideas from diverse oral, written, and or visual sources.
- Conduct research, develop organizational strategies, and compose professional documents using the academic conventions of English Studies as a discipline.

For English

English majors will be able to:

- Understand and assess the traditions, conventions, and contexts associated with the study of the English language and its literatures.
- Apply critical thinking skills to the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information and ideas from diverse oral, written, and/or visual sources.
- Conduct research, develop organizational strategies, and compose professional documents using the academic conventions of English Studies as a discipline.

Required Texts and Instructional Resources

Equiano, Olaudah. *The Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African*. Dover Thrift Edition, 1999. ISBN 978-0-486-40661-9.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. Vintage International, 2005. ISBN 978-1-4000-7877-6.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. Folger Shakespeare Library. Simon and Schuster, 2012. 978-1-4516-6941-1. [The play is available online at: <https://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/?chapter=5&play=Ham&loc=p7>]

Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. Harcourt, 1990. ISBN 9780156628709.

All books are available in the UWG bookstore. If you opt to use online or other editions of these materials, it is your responsibility to make sure you know what sections of your text correspond to the reading assignments listed below.

Supplementary readings due will be available via CourseDen or online

You will also need to view the following movie, which is on reserve in the library and can be rented from the English Department as well (for a three day period of time):

Inside Out. Dir. Pete Docter. Perf. Amy Poehler and Bill Hader. Pixar, 2015.

[Streaming at YouTube, iTunes, Google Play, and Vudu from 2.99]

Assignments

Fuller descriptions of all of your formal assignments and study guides for your exams will be posted to CourseDen.

- *Daily Participation* (15%): You are expected to not only do the assigned readings, but also to come to class prepared to discuss said readings. This does not mean that you have to have everything “figured out” ahead of time; questions and clarifications are perfectly reasonable ways to contribute to class discussions, though you need to make an effort to share your opinions and insights too if you want higher than a “C” in this component of your grade. Challenge yourself to talk at least once a week if not once a class. To that end, you should take notes while reading, bring those notes to class, and come prepared to take notes during class discussions. If I get the sense that you are not reading, I will incorporate reading quizzes into this component of your grade. I will post your participation grade twice: around midterm and at the end of the semester.
- *Discussion Kickstarters* (10%): working with a group of your peers, you will lead class discussion during one of the sessions indicated by the course schedule below. While your group will receive the same grade for the kickstarter proper, you will evaluate each other as group members for part of this grade.
- *Reading Journal Assignments* (25%): at multiple points during the semester, you’ll work on honing your close reading and critical thinking skills. Some of these assignments will be done in class and turned in, while others will be done outside of class and submitted to CourseDen. You will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of your work in these short assignments, but not on the basis of polish or style specifically.
- *Exams* (30%, or two at 15% each): at two points during the semester you’ll be tested on the texts, literary concepts, and discussions of the covered up to that point in class.
- *Problem Paper* (20%): drawing on your skills developed throughout the semester as a whole, you will produce a polished, 3.5 to 4 page paper that uses your close reading skills to offer an argument for a possible interpretation of a central problem in one of the texts we read for class.

Grading and Revision Policies

Grades are based on student performance on each assignment. Simply turning in every assignment does not guarantee that you will receive the grade you want on those assignments, nor does earning a “good” grade on one assignment guarantee that you will earn a similar grade on the next assignment. The grading scale and standards I use are detailed in the “Grading Scale and Guidelines for Formal Assignments” document on CourseDen. Generally speaking, however, they follow a two point scale in which a 98 is an A+, a 96 an A+/A, a 94 an A, a 92 an A/A-, a 90 an A-, and so on.

I do not offer extra credit for this class. I do accept revisions of reading journal assignments ***if you meet with me*** to discuss your plans for revision ***within a week*** of me handing the graded paper back to you. You should come to this meeting with your ***revision plan/goals typed up or written out***. We will settle on a due date for your revision during our meeting. Revised papers do not necessarily earn higher grades, but I do guarantee that your grade will not drop in any way should you decide to attempt a revision. If you are revising a paper that was penalized for plagiarism, your old grade and your new grade will be averaged to determine the final grade that you will receive. You are welcome to revise late work, but the late penalties associated with the first assignment are also applicable to your revision.

Schedule of Homework and Assignments

The work listed below is due on the date on which it is listed. This schedule is a general plan for the course and might be modified as the semester progresses to meet course objectives or address the

needs of the class. Most (if not all) of the changes made will be in consultation with the class as a whole. I will announce any changes made in class before sending out a revised syllabus. It is your responsibility to check CourseDen and your email regularly to ensure you are up to date on all class announcements, etc. All readings labeled “e-reserve” can be found in the “Readings” folder of our CourseDen site.

Week One: Introductions

Aug. 15	Historical overview and course expectations.
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Week Two: Giving Sadness Its Due

Aug. 20	Why are we so afraid to be not happy? <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Inside Out</i> ; read: Stover, “The Case for Melancholy” (https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/08/style/the-case-for-melancholy.html)
Aug. 22	The early Middle Ages: Anglo-Saxon longing and exile <i>Homework due:</i> “Exeter Book Elegies” (e-reserve); Bauer, “Introduction” (e-reserve) <i>Email me your top three choices for kickstarter dates or topics by noon tomorrow (8/23)</i>

Week Three: Grief Embodied

Aug. 27	The later Middle Ages: Middle English bereavement <i>Homework due:</i> Marie de France, “Chevrefoil” (e-reserve); <i>Pearl</i> , sections 1-10 or stanzas 1-50 (e-reserve).
Aug. 29	<i>Homework due:</i> finish <i>Pearl</i> (e-reserve). <i>Reading journal entry due to CourseDen by midnight tonight.</i>

Week Four: Dreaming of Death and Change

Sep. 3	No class: Labor Day
Sep. 5	Dreams as transformative? <i>Homework due:</i> Chaucer, “Book of the Duchess” (e-reserve) <i>Reading journal entry due to CourseDen by midnight tonight.</i>

Week Five: Performing Melancholy

Sep. 10	Early modern theater <i>Homework due:</i> Shakespeare, <i>Hamlet</i> , Acts 1-3.
Sep. 12	<i>Homework due:</i> finish <i>Hamlet</i> . <i>Kickstarter #1</i>

Week Six: Confronting Mortality

Sep. 17	Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Poets <i>Homework due:</i> Donne, “A Valediction: Of Weeping,” “Hymn to God my God,” and “A Hymn to God the Father” (e-reserve); Jonson, “On My First Daughter,” “On My First Son,” and “Epitaph on S.P.” (e-reserve); Herbert, “Affliction (I),” “Affliction (IV),” and “The Collar” (e-reserve)
Sep. 19	<i>Homework due:</i> Wroth, “Sonnet XIX” and “Sonnet VI” (e-reserve); Cavendish, “A Discourse on Melancholy” (MA); Philips “On the Death of My First and Dearest Child, Hector Philips” (e-reserve); Milton; “L’Allegro” and “Il Peneroso” (e-reserve) <i>Kickstarter # 2</i> <i>Reading journal entry due to CourseDen by midnight tonight.</i>

Week Seven: Examing

Sep. 24	Exam review
Sep. 26	Exam #1

Week Eight: Longing for Freedom

Oct. 1	Eighteenth century Slave Narrative <i>Homework due:</i> Equiano, <i>The Life of</i> , preface through 65.
Oct. 3	<i>Homework due:</i> Equiano, <i>The Life of</i> , pp. 66-107. Reading journal entry due to CourseDen by midnight tonight.

Week Nine: Longing for Freedom Cont'd

Oct. 8	<i>Homework due:</i> finish, <i>The Life of</i> . Kickstarter #3 Drop period with "W" ends at 4 p.m.
Oct. 10	Calls for Abolition <i>Homework due:</i> Bicknell and Day, "The Dying Negro, A Poem" (e-reserve, pp. 1-6 of "Transatlantic Currents"); Cugano excerpts from <i>Thoughts and Sentiments</i> (e-reserve, p.3 of "Abolition"); Falconbridge excerpts from <i>Account of the Slave Trade</i> (e-reserve, pp. 3-5 of "Abolition"); Wilberforce, "Speech to the House of Commons" (e-reserve, pp. 6-7 of "Abolition"); Robinson, "The African" and "Negro Girl" (e-reserve, pp.14-16 of "Abolition"); and Clarkson excerpts from <i>The History of the Rise</i> (e-reserve, pp.17-18 of "Abolition").

Week Ten: Doubt

Oct. 15	Romanticizing loss. <i>Homework due:</i> Coleridge, "The Suicide's Argument," "Pains of Sleep," and "Dejection: An Ode" (e-reserve); Shelley, "Stanzas Written in Dejection Near Naples" (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45140/stanzas-written-in-dejection-near-naples) and "Mutability" (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/54563/mutability-we-are-as-clouds-that-veil-the-midnight-moon); Keats, excerpt from "Sleep and Poetry," "On Seeing the Elgin Marble," and "Ode to Melancholy" (e-reserve); Wordsworth, "Ode: intimations of Immortality" and "Elegiac Stanzas" (e-reserve)
Oct. 17	Victorian Angst. <i>Homework due:</i> Tennyson, "Lady of Shallott" (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45359/the-lady-of-shalott-1832); E. Browning, "Grief" (e-reserve); R. Browning "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" (e-reserve). Rosetti, "After Death," "Dead Before Death," and "In an Artist's Studio" (e-reserve); Hopkins, "No worst, there is none" and "I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day" (e-reserve). Kickstarter # 4 Reading journal entry due to CourseDen by midnight tonight.

Week Eleven: Ghosts

Oct. 22	Twentieth century trauma. <i>Homework due:</i> Yeats, "The Stolen Child" (https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/stolen-child) and "When You Are Old" (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43283/when-you-are-old) Sassoon, "Repression of War Experience" and "Haunted" (e-reserve); Owen, "Mental Cases" (e-reserve); J. Pope, "The Beau Ideal," "Sea Sorrow," and "The Seaport Road" (e-reserve); Rosenberg, "Dead Man's Dump" and "Returning, We Hear the Larks" (e-reserve).
Oct. 24	<i>Homework due:</i> Woolf, <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> to p. 56.

Week Twelve: Ghosts Cont'd

Oct. 29	<i>Homework due:</i> Woolf, <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> , to p. 126.
Oct. 31	<i>Homework due:</i> finish <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> . <i>Kickstarter #5</i>

Week Thirteen: Post human?

Nov. 5	Twenty-first century terror. <i>Homework due:</i> Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> , pp. 1-76.
Nov. 7	<i>Homework due:</i> Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> , pp. 77-137.

Week Fourteen: Post human? Cont'd

Nov. 12	Introduce Problem Paper. <i>Homework due:</i> Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> , pp. 138-217.
Nov. 14	<i>Homework due:</i> finish, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> ; start thinking about your papers over break! <i>Kickstarter #6</i> <i>Reading journal entry due to CourseDen by midnight tonight.</i>

Week Fifteen: Break

Nov. 19	No class: Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 21	No class: Thanksgiving Break

Week Sixteen: Examing Part Two

Nov. 26	Exam review
Nov. 28	Exam #2

Week Seventeen: Paper Workshops

Dec. 3	Course evaluations. Paper brainstorming session
Dec. 5	UWC workshop. <i>Final papers due by noon on Monday, 12/10.</i>

Course Policies and Expectations of Students**Attendance**

You are expected to attend class daily and be on time. I take roll by asking the class a specific “attendance question”; if you show up after I am done with roll you will be considered late. You may miss three classes with no questions asked. For each additional absence beyond the first three your final grade will drop by two percentage points (so a final grade of 86 would become an 82 after five absences, etc.). Three late arrivals count as one absence. Leaving class early without permission also counts as an absence, as does showing up more than twenty-five minutes late. If you are asked to leave class for any reason, that too will count as an absence. Should you miss a class at any point in the semester, it is your responsibility to talk to your peers to figure out what you missed. In-class work cannot be made up except for cases of documented emergency and missing multiple in-class discussions will negatively impact your participation grade. If something outside of your control is impacting your ability to attend class regularly, please come and talk to me *before* your grade suffers due to attendance alone.

Deadlines and Submitting Assignments

All of your work is due on the days and times indicated by the schedule below. You will submit your work electronically via CourseDen (or email if there happens to be server trouble). Your grade will drop by two grade scales (four points) for every day that it is late, including weekends, and I will not accept work that is over a week late. If you are going to be absent the day that something is due, it remains your responsibility to make sure that your work is turned in on time. Failure to do so will result in your grade dropping. If you are having trouble with an assignment, come and talk to me *well ahead* of that assignment's due date; I do not grant last minute extensions for assignments nor can I be of much help the night before an assignment is due. I am, however, happy to do everything in my power to help you produce work that you are proud of, including granting extensions that are requested in a reasonable timeframe ahead of that assignment's due date.

It is your responsibility to regularly back up your work and to ensure that the submitted product is formatted correctly. "My computer ate my file" and "I thought I submitted that file" are not accepted excuses for late work, so I strongly suggest you save your work to a USB drive regularly, back your work up on Google Drive or Dropbox, and double check that *all* of your submissions to CourseDen go through as planned. If you have questions or concerns about CourseDen, you should contact the Distance Learning office at <http://uwgonline.westga.edu/>.

Academic Honesty

The act of plagiarism—claiming someone else's ideas, language, images, or other original materials as your own without giving full credit to your source—is a serious offense. As members of an academic community, it is important that we engage in responsible and honest communication with one another. Plagiarism, whether accidental or intentional, will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question and will, as a result, negatively impact your overall grade. Repeat offenders will fail the course and might be subjected to additional action by the University.

If you are unclear about how to cite a source, ask me *before* you turn your work in. Sources you should consult before talking to me include:

- The English department's website:
<http://www.westga.edu/%7Eengdept/Plagiarism/index.html>
- The Writing Center's site: <https://www.westga.edu/academics/coah/writing>
- The research and citation section of Purdue's online writing lab:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

Submitting someone else's work as your own, resubmitting your own work done for another class, or collaborating with peers on individual assignments are also forms of academic dishonesty that will result in failing grades the assignment.

Classroom Etiquette

Since everyone is expected to participate in class, it is important that you all feel comfortable doing so. Some of the content we will be discussing involves topics or perspectives with which you might not agree or feel wholly comfortable, and that is okay. Differing viewpoints are welcome in class discussions; however, disrespectful comments against specific individuals or groups will not be tolerated under any circumstances. In the event that such a statement is made, the speaker will be asked to leave class immediately and will be marked absent for the day. Disagreeing with someone is one

thing, disrespecting or attacking him or her is another—do not do it. On a related note, it is disrespectful to both me and your fellow classmates to let your cell phones ring during our time together, so please turn off your phones before class. Other portable electronics should, likewise, be turned off during class unless you are given permission to use them for a specific purpose. If I see you text messaging, emailing, checking facebook, or doing work for another class, I will ask you to leave and mark you as absent.

Additional Support

I am happy to meet with you outside of class to discuss readings, your progress on specific assignments, or any other questions/concerns you might have about what is going on in my class or your life in general. I will be in my office during the office hours listed at the top of this syllabus. On the occasion that I need to reschedule office hours, you will be given as much advanced notice about these changes as possible. If you are unable to come to office hours, let me know and we'll figure out another time to meet that is convenient for us both. I am also happy to answer specific questions over email and will do so as quickly as I can. That said, please don't panic if you don't hear from me right away, especially if you send your email at, say, midnight. If, however, I haven't responded in 36 hours, feel free to send a follow up email.

The University Writing Center is another excellent resource that I encourage you to take advantage of as all writing benefits from multiple sets of eyes; indeed, professional writers workshop their pieces all of the time. You may go to the Writing Center at any stage in your writing process for any class. For more information or to make an appointment, call 678-839-6513, visit TLC 1201, or email them at writing@westga.edu. The Center for Academic Success (CAS) provides many programs, including peer tutoring for Core classes, to help all students succeed academically. For more information or to make an appointment, call 678-839-6280, visit UCC 200, or email them at cas@westga.edu.

University Policies

Student Rights/Responsibilities

Please carefully review the following Common Language for all university course syllabi at http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf. It contains important material pertaining to university policies and responsibilities. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, university and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.

Accessibility Services

UWG adheres to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires that accommodations be made to make programs accessible for people with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability, please make sure to register at the Accessibility Services Office and provide me with a copy of your Accommodation Request as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services Office is located at 123 Row Hall. You may call them at 678-839-6428 or visit their website at <http://www.westga.edu/counseling/4486.php>.

UWG Cares

College can sometimes feel stressful. Please know that everyone at UWG is committed to supporting you to the best of our abilities; we've been in your shoes. If at any point during the semester you or

someone you know starts to feel overwhelmed, I'd encourage you to call the Counseling Center (it's free and anything you discuss can remain confidential) at 678-839-6428 or visit them in Row Hall 123 from 8-5, Mon-Fri. If you need to contact a patient's advocate, call 678-839-0641 or 678-839-5338 (also confidential). For basic health concerns, call Health Services at 678-839-6452.

If you need me to help you find a particular support service or walk with you to an office, I am happy to do that; you need to know, however, that ***I am legally obligated to report any incident of sexual assault*** as a violation of Title IX (please see the following site for more information about Title IX and your reporting options: <https://www.westga.edu/hr/title-nine.php>).

If you are worried about someone who does not seem to want to ask for help, visit <http://www.westga.edu/uwgcares/> to file an anonymous report on that person. In case of emergency, call the UWG police at 678-839-6000. Don't be afraid to call national help lines, like the national suicide prevention lifeline at 800-273-8255 or the national sexual assault hotline at 800-656-4673 if need be, either.