

# Intro to Literary Study

Reading Bodies & Disability | ENGL 100-03 | Spring 2021

## Class Details

MWF 2:15 – 3:05 PM

Class will meet via Zoom. Mondays and Fridays will be full-class discussion. Many (though not every) Wednesday will be working in groups and/or asynchronously.

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## Instructor

Dr. Hayley Stefan (she/her/hers)  
[hstefan@holycross.edu](mailto:hstefan@holycross.edu)

Feel free to refer to me Dr. Stefan or Professor Stefan.

I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours. If you don't hear back from me after 48 hours, please feel free to send me a nudge/follow-up email.

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## Office Hours

Office hours held via Zoom on Mondays & Wednesdays 3:30 – 5:00 PM; Tuesdays 10 – 11 AM; and by appointment. If my standing hours don't work for you, please email me if you'd like to meet & we can find a time that works for you.

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Although we tend to think of it as a mental experience, reading always draws us back to our bodies. Whether we turn the pages of a hardcover, move our fingers across Braille cells, scroll through text on our phones, or listen to audio books, the act of reading reminds us of our physical selves. In this section of Intro to Literary Study, we will examine how writers use literature to challenge the assumptions we make about bodies and how they work. We will ask how our values of diversity and justice depend on assumptions about what a “normal” body is and can do. Reading through this theme, we will focus on metaphor, narrative structure, and perspective as writers critique disability discrimination (or, “ableism”) and imagine alternatives to our world. Our texts will vary from exciting and funny to sometimes deeply unsettling, but each will encourage us to embrace disability and celebrate the rights and joy of disabled people. We will practice literary analysis using comics, creative nonfiction, novels, short stories, and television/film.

## LEARNING GOALS

In this course, I hope that you will

- Think seriously about the role of literature in developing ideas about truth and empathy,
- Build an awareness of disability activism and ableism,
- Practice academic writing through different projects,
- Develop information literacy,
- Engage in multiple conversations about meaning and language, and
- Strengthen your critical reading and text analysis skills.

## TECHNOLOGY

Our classes will be held via Zoom. You can participate in class using your microphone, video, or the chat function. You are not required to use your camera (though I will ask you to create a short “intro” video out of class during our first week). Class announcements and major communications from me will be sent via your Holy Cross email and, when appropriate, posted on Canvas.

Homework will be listed & submitted on Canvas. To prepare for class or to review a class you miss, check the Weekly Modules available on our Canvas class shell. Each week will have an overview of the activities for each class and will list any homework due or upcoming.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Keah Brown, *The Pretty One: On Life, Pop Culture, Disability, and Other Reasons to Fall in Love with Me*.
2. Wendy Xu and Suzanne Walker, *Mooncakes*.



You can use any publisher or edition of these texts. You're also welcome to engage with our texts in whatever format works best for you (e.g., audiobook, paperback, eBook, etc.), so long as you actively question as you read and are prepared to discuss how its format influences the way you read it.

If you are unable to afford course materials, please [reach out to Financial Aid](#) or request books via [the Holy Cross Lending Library](#), where they may be able to help. Books can be purchased through the [Holy Cross Bookstore](#) or other retailers. Pro tip: You can search for books on [bookfinder.com](#) to see the varied prices and places you can buy copies. You can also borrow books through your local library via [the OverDrive app](#).

## MUTUAL RESPECT

This class is founded on the basis of mutual respect & shared humanity. In line with respecting others, we will use the names and pronouns that members of this class ask us to use. [If these change across the semester, please also share with me and/or the class (as you feel comfortable) the name & pronouns you would like for us to use for you.]

Over the semester, we will read texts that introduce complex, multiply diverse, and occasionally controversial subjects. I want this class to be a space in which we all feel safe sharing our thoughts, ideas, and opinions—even when these conversations are uncomfortable. We will practice thinking about what it means to sit with this discomfort as we engage ideas that stretch our experience or knowledge.

### Meeting Your Basic Needs

We will be learning a lot this semester, but your wellbeing remains the most important. If you are having difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or if you lack a safe and stable place to live, please talk with me (if you are comfortable doing so), so that I can put you in touch with resources to help you.

Regardless of how you approach class content, please know at all times that your thoughts and ideas as writers and scholars are important and valuable. One of the goals of college is to challenge us to apply pressure about what we know (and all that we don't know). I will never ask you to change your mind, but I will expect it will remain open in this course.

That being said, dehumanizing others is antithetical to learning, and students who make implicitly violent or dehumanizing remarks will be asked to leave immediately & will forego engagement credit for that day's work.

## Accessibility & Accommodations

I know that we each learn through diverse methods, and my goal is to make our course as accessible as possible. This means we will work with methods and documents that prioritize how we process information, following the guidelines of the Universal Design for Learning. I know that our daily life directly affects how we engage in our education. This past year has shown us how true this is. **Please do email or meet with me, as you feel comfortable, to discuss possible adjustments or alternative arrangements, as needed for homework, exams, or class.**

Students may also request formal academic accommodations, housing and dining accommodations, modifications to College policies, procedures, and rules; environmental adjustments, and auxiliary aids and services through Holy Cross. Additional policies and procedures regarding accommodations can be found on the [Office of Accessibility Services webpages](#).

## RESOURCES, POLICIES, & OTHER INFORMATION

### Academic Integrity

Developing your ideas is the basis of our class. Make sure that your work authentically represents your ideas and credits others for theirs. Submitting others' ideas as your own without crediting them is plagiarism, even if it is unintentional. All work in our class should be formatted and cited according to MLA's 8<sup>th</sup> edition guidelines. The Purdue Online Writing Lab has a [guided overview of MLA](#) formatting & citation requirements here. You can view the Holy Cross English Department's [statement on "Academic Honesty" here](#).

### Student Attendance & Excused Absence Policy

Our class will largely run synchronously via Zoom and other platforms, and your presence in class is crucial to learning and engaging with your classmates' ideas. Your classmates and I will depend on you to be in class. If you are unable to

attend a session for any reason, please send me an email to let me know and reach out to your classmates to get a sense of what you missed. [See Holy Cross's policies here](#).

### Resources for Students

Holy Cross offers a variety of resources to help you learn and Students can access academic support, guides, and various learning workshops through [Academic Services & Learning Resources](#).

Any student can meet with writing consultants at the Writer's Workshop for support at any stage of the writing process—whether brainstorming, building ideas, revising, or otherwise. You can [make an appointment with a Writer's Workshop consultant here](#).

Self-care is critical, especially during this global pandemic. Please familiarize yourself with the [support offered by the Counseling Center](#) and know that they are there to support you.

## ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW

### 1. Participation – 20 %

Our course will take place entirely online, so we will be trying new ways to stay engaged and discuss reading and writing together. I will ask you to participate in class and small group discussions via video and chat, annotate texts together, and actively read and question course texts. We will read a lot in this class, so I encourage you to take active notes while reading, preview texts before beginning them, and come to class with ideas and questions. We will practice these skills together, too.

### 2. Reading Quizzes – 10 %

We will have regular brief quizzes that will offer examples of productive questions to ask while you are reading, meant to help you reflect on the texts and challenge your ideas.

### 3. Leading Class Discussion — 10 %

You will each be responsible for coming up with questions or ideas in advance for one class session this semester. You can work with me to create these. We'll hold sign-ups for these at the beginning of the semester so that you can plan ahead with what works best for your schedule.

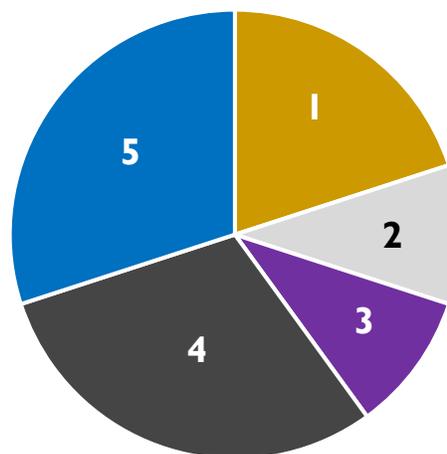
### 4. Personal Pop Culture Museum Exhibit — 30 %

As we work through Keah Brown's *The Pretty One*, you too will work on analyzing how your life has been complemented & influenced by pop culture — including books, movies, television shows, video games, sports, music, trends & more. For this assignment, you will curate a “museum exhibit” that showcases pop culture artifacts that are significant to your life. Each artifact will include a brief description and discussion of its importance to you. You will write an essay analyzing how this collection of artifacts can be read altogether as one “exhibit” and what it tells you about the role pop culture plays in our ideas about ourselves and the world around us.

### 5. Analysis Essays – 30 % (2 x 15 %)

You will write two essays analyzing specific moments in our course texts. We will work on these essays in class, and you will also engage in peer review. The first essay will ask you to use your skills of close reading and comparative analysis to think about how two short stories work in conversation with each other. The second essay will ask you to analyze a visual text and think about how you might add to that story with a mini creative element.

## GRADE BREAKDOWN



A	96
A-	92
B+	89
B	86
B-	82
C+	79
C	76
C-	72
D+	69

## SCHEDULE

Below is a tentative weekly outline of what we will be focusing on in each class. I will notify you in advance of any minor changes. The most accurate daily assignments/reading will be on Canvas.

### Week 1

Mon., Feb. 1: Overview of the semester.

Wed., Feb. 3: Reading & annotating texts.

Fri., Feb. 5: Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas."

### Week 2

Mon., Feb. 8: Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas."

Wed., Feb. 10: Writing workshop.

Fri., Feb. 12: N. K. Jemisin's "The Ones Who Stay and Fight."

### Week 3

Mon., Feb. 15: Jemisin & Le Guin.

Wed., Feb. 17: Writing meetings.

Fri., Feb. 19: Keah Brown's "Introduction" & "Is This Thing On?"; Jemisin & Le Guin.

### Week 4

Mon., Feb. 22: Defining disability. Brown, "You Can't Cure Me, I Promise It's Fine."

Wed., Feb. 24: *The Pretty One*, "Can We Sit for a Sec?"

Fri., Feb. 26: Brown, "Love You, Mean It" & "Freedom of a Ponytail"

### Week 5

Mon., Mar. 1: Disability representation. Brown, "Pop Culture & Me."

Wed., Mar. 3: Writing personal narratives. Brown, "The Human iPod."

Fri., Mar. 5: Building your pop culture exhibit.

### Week 6

Mon., Mar. 8: Brown, "An Ode to the Boys" and "The Pretty One."

Wed., Mar. 10: Working on your pop culture exhibit.

Fri., Mar. 12: Discussing Brown. "Cry, Baby, Cry" and "To See and Be Seen."

### Week 7

Mon., Mar. 15: Self-care & joy. Brown, "I Like Me Now, Too."

Wed., Mar. 17: Reviewing Brown.

Fri., Mar. 19: Reviewing Brown.

## Week 8

Mon., Mar. 22: Analyzing TV & film.

Wed., Mar. 24: Spike Jonze's *Her*.

Fri., Mar. 26: Jonze's *Her*.

## Week 9

Mon., Mar. 29: Jonze's *Her*.

Wed., Mar. 31: Kali Fajardo-Anstine short story.

Fri., Apr. 2: No class. Enjoy!

## Week 10

Mon., Apr. 5: No class. Enjoy!

Wed., Apr. 7: Kali Fajardo-Anstine short story.

Fri., Apr. 9: Kali Fajardo-Anstine short story.

## Week 11

Mon., Apr. 12: Reading graphic narratives. From Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*.

Wed., Apr. 14: McCloud's *Understanding Comics*.

Fri., Apr. 16: Wendy Xu & Suzanne Walker's *Mooncakes*.

## Week 12

Mon., Apr. 19: Xu & Walker's *Mooncakes*.

Wed., Apr. 21: Xu & Walker's *Mooncakes*.

Fri., Apr. 23: Xu & Walker's *Mooncakes*.

## Week 13

Mon., Apr. 26: Xu & Walker's *Mooncakes*.

Wed., Apr. 28: Xu & Walker's *Mooncakes*.

Fri., Apr. 30: Xu & Walker's *Mooncakes*.

## Week 14

Mon., May. 3: Sharing & working on digital projects.

Wed., May. 5: Sharing & working on digital projects.

Fri., May. 7: Review of the semester.



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