Intro to Literary Study: Reading Bodies Syllabus

ENGL 100 Spring 2022

# Class Details

Class will meet via Zoom at first and in Stein 134, once it is safe.

# Instructor

Dr. Hayley Stefan (she/her/hers). Feel free to refer to me Dr. Stefan or Professor Stefan.

My email is [hstefan@holycross.edu](mailto:hstefan@holycross.edu). 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 or follow-up email.

# Office Hours

Monday & Wednesday 1:30-2:30 PM in Fenwick 220; Thursday 10–11 AM via Zoom, and other times by appointment.

Office hours are designated weekly times for you to come chat about class, your work, or any questions you might have. 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.

# 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

Throughout the end of this course, I hope that you will

* Think seriously about the role of literature in developing ideas about truth, justice, and empathy,
* Practice critical and creative writing and revision,
* Strengthen critical close reading skills,
* Refine visual literacy and analysis,
* Develop information literacy,
* Engage in multiple conversations about meaning and language, and
* Build an awareness of disability activism and ableism.

# 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. We are still in the middle of a pandemic, so let’s extend care to one another when we can.

# Required Texts

1. Keah Brown, *The Pretty One: On Life, Pop Culture, Disability, and Other Reasons to Fall in Love with Me*.
2. Craig Gillespie, director, *Lars and the Real Girl*.
3. Spike Jonze, director, *Her*.
4. Jim Lebrecht & Nicole Newnham, directors, *Crip Camp*.

I will provide additional texts for you online via Canvas.

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.

Regardless of how you approach class content, your thoughts and ideas as developing 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 said, dehumanizing others stops us all from 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.

# Technology

* Email: Major announcements from me will be sent via your Holy Cross email. I recommend checking your email in the morning before class, just in case there are any changes or cancellations.
* Hypothesis: We will use the browser extension Hypothesis to analyze & annotate texts together. It works best with Google Chrome, but there are options for other browsers.
* Zoom: Our classes will be held via Zoom in the beginning of the semester. You can use the microphone or chat to participate, but you will never be required to have your camera on.
* Canvas: Homework will be listed & submitted on Canvas. To prepare for class or to review a class, check the Weekly Modules available on our Canvas class shell. Each week will have an overview of the activities for each class & will list any homework due or upcoming. If homework is scheduled to be submitted on a day when we have class, please submit it on Canvas by class time. If homework is scheduled to be submitted on a day when we do not have class, please submit it on Canvas by the "end of the day," which Canvas considers 11:59 PM.

# Submitting Work

If you need to hand in something after its planned due date, that is okay. I do not give penalties or deduct "points" for late work. Each assignment is designed for you to practice or learn new ideas, not to measure how busy you are or how to "manage time." If you’re planning to submit your work one day or so beyond the due date, please consider your extension already granted. If you need an extended due date beyond two days after the due date, please email me. I'll have us meet to set up a plan of action and coordinate a new date for you to submit the assignment. I want to make sure that we both have a copy of these plans of action so that you have a clear sense of what you need to accomplish and so I know best how I can help you and when to expect the work.

# Policies and Resources

## 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 9th edition guidelines. Please review Holy Cross’s Academic Integrity Policy here: <https://catalog.holycross.edu/requirements-policies/academic-policies/#academicintegritytext>. You can also view the Holy Cross English Department’s statement on “Academic Honesty” here: <https://www.holycross.edu/academics/programs/english/academic-honesty>.

## Attendance and Absences

Our class will largely run synchronously via Zoom and in person when it’s safe. 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: <https://catalog.holycross.edu/requirements-policies/academic-policies/#coursepoliciestext>.

## 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 here: <https://www.holycross.edu/support-and-resources/academic-services-and-learning-resources/academic-skills>. 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. Their website is here: <https://www.holycross.edu/academics/support-and-resources/center-for-writing/writers-workshop>.

There are also multiple spaces here at Holy Cross where you can find support for all of life that intersects with our learning. These include the many clubs and organizations at Holy Cross, specific support for first-generation students here (<https://www.holycross.edu/first-generation-students>), the LGBTQIA+ communities here (<https://www.holycross.edu/lgbtqia-community>), and international students here (<https://www.holycross.edu/office-international-students>), among others. At any point, you can find support from the Counseling Center (<https://www.holycross.edu/health-wellness-and-access/counseling-center>), which also offers guidance on how to practice self-care and learn new ways to manage life. The Office of Student Wellness Education (<https://www.holycross.edu/health-wellness-and-access/student-wellness-education>) and Chaplains' Office (<https://www.holycross.edu/faith-service/office-college-chaplains/about>) can also offer resources for your health. And if there's ever anything I can do to help, I'm more than happy to listen.

## Accessibility and 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 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 here: <https://www.holycross.edu/health-wellness-and-access/office-accessibility-services>.

# Assignments Overview

## Participation, worth 20%

Our course prioritizes discussion, built around mini lectures, writing, group work, and other interactive analyses. I will ask you to participate in class and small group discussions, 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.

## Collaborative Project, worth 25%

You will work in groups this semester to create a project that analyzes and reviews one of the texts we read in class. Each member of the group will be responsible for a particular portion of the assignment, and we’ll work together in class to sew it all together.

## Compositions, worth 30%

You will write two compositions analyzing specific moments in our course texts and applying the ideas from our class to new texts or media. We will work on these essays in class and practice tools for revision, including opportunities for you to engage in peer review.

## Digital Project, worth 25%

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 personal “pop culture museum” 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.

## Grade Breakdown

An A grade is a 96.

An A- grade is a 92.

A B+ grade is an 89.

A B grade is an 86.

A B- grade is an 82.

A C+ grade is a 79.

A C grade is a 76.

A C- grade is a 72.

A D+ grade is a 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 and reading will be on Canvas.

## Week 1

Wed., Jan. 26: Overview of the semester.  
Fri., Jan. 28: How reading & writing are situated.

## Week 2

Mon., Jan. 31: Greg Hrbek’s “Sagittarius.”

Wed., Feb. 2: Practicing close reading Hrbek’s “Sagittarius.”

Fri., Feb. 4: In-class writing work.

## Week 3

Mon., Feb. 7: Peer review meetings.

Wed., Feb. 9: Peer review meetings.

Fri., Feb. 11: In-class writing workshop.

## Week 4

Mon., Feb. 14: Toni Morrison’s “Recitatif.”

Wed., Feb. 16: Discussing Morrison.

Fri., Feb. 18: Carmen Maria Machado’s “The Husband Stitch.”

Week 5

Mon., Feb. 21: Discussing Machado & Morrison.

Wed., Feb. 23: Analyzing podcasts.

Fri., Feb. 25: In-class work on collaborative project.

## Week 6

Mon., Feb. 28: In-class work on collaborative project.

Wed., Mar. 2: In-class work on collaborative project.

Fri., Mar. 4: In-class work on collaborative project.

## Week 7

Mon., Mar. 7 - Fri., Mar. 11: Spring Break!

Week 8

Mon., Mar. 14: Analyzing visual media & graphic narratives.

Wed., Mar. 16: Analyzing visual media & graphic narratives.

Fri., Mar. 18: Analyzing visual media & graphic narratives.

## Week 9

Mon., Mar. 21: Analyzing TV & film.

Wed., Mar. 23: Spike Jonze’s *Her*.

Fri., Mar. 25: Craig Gillespie’s *Lars and the Real Girl*.

## Week 10

Mon., Mar. 28: Discussing Jonze & Gillespie.

Wed., Mar. 30: In-class writing workshop.

Fri., Apr. 1: In-class writing workshop.

## Week 11

Mon., Apr. 4: James Lebrecht & Nicole Newnham’s *Crip Camp*.

Wed., Apr. 6: Keah Brown’s *The Pretty One*: “Introduction” & “Is This Thing On?”

Fri., Apr. 8: Brown, “Can We Sit for a Sec?” & “You Can’t Cure Me, I Promise It’s Fine.”

## Week 12

Mon., Apr. 11: Brown, “Freedom of a Ponytail” & “I Like Me Now, Too.”

Wed., Apr. 13: Brown, “The Human iPod” & “Pop Culture & Me.”

Fri., Apr. 15: No class!

## Week 13

Mon., Apr. 18: No class!

Wed., Apr. 20: Brown, “An Ode to the Boys” & “The Pretty One.”

Fri., Apr. 22: Brown, “Love You, Mean It”; “Cry, Baby, Cry” & “To See and Be Seen.”

## Week 14

Mon., Apr. 25: Personalizing pop culture; reviewing Brown’s *The Pretty One*.

Wed., Apr. 27: Academic Conference. No class!

Fri., Apr. 29: Personalizing pop culture; reviewing Brown’s *The Pretty One*.

## Week 15

Mon., May 2: In-class work digital projects.

Wed., May 4: In-class work digital projects.

Fri., May 6: In-class work digital projects.

## Week 16

Mon., May 9: Semester wrap-up.