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ENG 2009G-003: The Stories We Tell Ourselves: Faith, Progress, Survival

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The Stories We Tell Ourselves: Faith, Progress, Survival

Prof. Caldwell
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 Office: Coleman 3050
 Hours: MWF 9-10, 12-1, or by appt.

Course: ENG 2009G/0043
 Class Meetings: Coleman 3609
 MWF 1:00-1:50
 Fall 2010

Required Texts

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*
 Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*
 Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*
 Tim O'Brien, *In the Lake of the Woods*
 George Orwell, *1984*
 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Course Goals

The goal of this course is to help you develop your analytical thinking skills as well as your written and oral communication skills by studying a focused topic—in this case literature that examines the importance of faith, progress, and survival to our sense of identity. Reading literature is a practice that can be useful and rewarding in ways that are not always obvious. It can also be a lot of fun. It is my hope that this class will encourage you to be an active and insightful reader for the rest of your life.

Office Hours and Campus Resources

I am absolutely committed to your success in this course and at EIU more generally. I will hold regularly scheduled office hours every week. Please use them, and when they do not fit into your schedule, please ask me about making an appointment. I'm happy to help you work through difficult texts, develop paper ideas, or discuss any concerns or frustrations you have about the course. I am also happy to answer emails, but do not wait until the last hour (or minute!) before an assignment is due to email me. I also encourage you to use the Writing Center located on the third floor of Coleman Hall. If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Classroom Expectations

The classroom is meant to be a place of active thinking and productive discussion. This is not likely to happen unless you do the reading carefully, come to class ready to participate, and consider the class as your own personal intellectual community. It is expected that you will actively and respectfully listen to the ideas of your peers, that you bring the text to class with you every day (preferably stuffed full with sticky notes marking passages that you are eager to discuss, either because they were difficult or interesting), and that you take notes in class that will help you study for the exams. Please turn cell phones off and refrain from texting the moment you enter the room. If you choose to use a laptop computer for taking notes during class, disable its wireless capability. Distractions are disrespectful to everyone in the room. For that reason, I will take a point off of your final grade every time I see your cell phone being used during class. If you eat or drink in class, please do so discreetly.

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

1. Response papers (20% total, 5% each)

Over the semester, you will have the opportunity to write seven 2-page response papers; however, you are only required to write **four** of the seven. You may choose which ones you want to write, but I urge you to not do them all at the end of the semester. A response paper should be an exercise in exploratory writing and close analysis. For each response paper, you must choose a single sentence—no more, no less—in the text that we have read. You should use your two pages to discuss the significance of that sentence and use it to explore a larger theme (or themes) in the novel. If the sentence uses interesting word choice or imagery, be sure to discuss it. While the paper need not be as polished as a formal term paper, it should demonstrate that you have read and thought about the reading and it should explore one main point using evidence (i.e. do not ramble aimlessly and do use quotations or paraphrases of the text in your discussion). These papers should be typed and double-spaced and obey the basic rules of grammar and mechanics.

2. Term paper (20% total)

You may choose to develop one of your response papers into a longer 6-7 page, polished paper, or you may develop a new topic altogether. You will have a chance to discuss your papers with me in a mandatory conference and have a draft workshop with your peers. I will gladly read early and/or partial drafts of papers provided that you are willing to meet with me in person to discuss your draft.

3. Class Participation and Quizzes (20% total, 10% each)

Showing up to class does not fulfill the requirement for your participation grade. If you have perfect attendance but are not engaged in class, then you are likely to earn a C-level grade or lower for your participation. The class will often work in small groups, so if you are hesitant to speak in front of the class the small groups will give you an opportunity to communicate your ideas to your peers. There will be frequent reading quizzes.

4. Exams (40% total, 20% each)

There will be a midterm and a cumulative final exam on Tuesday, Dec. 14, 12:15 - 2:15.

5. Extra Credit

Well-written extra response papers, perfect attendance, or a perfect score on all the quizzes can earn you extra credit in the course.

Absences, Tardiness, and Late Work

You must attend class in order to participate. There is *no such thing* as an excused absence—illness, family emergencies, sorority/fraternity obligations, etc. all count as an absence. For this reason, you are allowed 4 absences without any consequences to your final grade. After your 4th absence, your grade will be lowered 1/3 a letter grade for each additional absence. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to turn in any missed work on time. Arrive to class on time, otherwise I may count you absent when I am taking attendance. Late assignments will rarely be accepted, and then only with prior permission.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism absolutely will not be tolerated. If at any point in the semester you find that you are confused about what constitutes plagiarism, it is your responsibility to come talk to me

before you turn in an assignment. If you plagiarize on any assignment, you will receive a failing grade for the assignment and your actions will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. There will be no negotiating on this point.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Mon. 8/23 Introduction

Part I: Mythologies of Progress, Struggles for Survival

Wed. 8/25 *Frankenstein*, Introduction, preface and letters

Fri. 8/27 *Frankenstein*, volume 1

Mon. 8/30 *Frankenstein*, volume 2

Wed. 9/1 *Frankenstein*, volume 3

Fri. 9/3 *Frankenstein*, modern mythologies, **response 1 due**

Mon. Labor Day—no class

Wed. 9/8 *1984*, section I, chapters 1-5, and “Principles of Newspeak”
(appendix)

Fri. 9/10 *1984*, I, ch. 6-8

Mon. 9/13 *1984*, section II, ch. 1-7

Wed. 9/15 *1984*, II, ch. 8-10; section III, ch. 1

Fri. 9/17 *1984*, section III, ch. 2-end, **response 2 due**

Mon. 9/20 *Never Let Me Go*, 1-76

Wed. 9/22 *Never Let Me Go*, 77-145

Fri. 9/24 *Never Let Me Go*, 146-203

Mon. 9/27 *Never Let Me Go*, 204-end, **response 3 due**

Wed. 9/29 *The Handmaid’s Tale*, chapters 1-4

Fri. 10/1 *The Handmaid’s Tale*, 5-7

Mon. 10/4 *The Handmaid’s Tale*, 8-10

Wed. 10/6 *The Handmaid’s Tale*, 11-12

Fri. 10/8 Fall Break—no class

Mon. 10/11 *The Handmaid’s Tale*, 13-15

Wed. 10/13 Film, **response 4 due**

Fri. 10/15 Film and review

Mon. 10/18 **Midterm Exam**

Part II: Violence and the Individual

Wed. 10/20	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> , chapter 1-8
Fri. 10/22	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> , 9-13
Mon. 10/25	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> , 14-19
Wed. 10/27	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> , 20-end, response 5 due
Fri. 10/29	<i>Purple Hibiscus</i> , 1-51
Mon. 11/1	<i>Purple Hibiscus</i> , 52-109
Wed. 11/3	<i>Purple Hibiscus</i> , 110-161
Fri. 11/5	<i>Purple Hibiscus</i> , 162-216
Mon. 11/8	<i>Purple Hibiscus</i> , 217-307, response 6 due
Wed. 11/10	<i>In the Lake of the Woods</i> , 1-30
Fri. 11/12	<i>In the Lake of the Woods</i> , 31-58
Mon. 11/15	<i>In the Lake of the Woods</i> , 59-145
Wed. 11/17	<i>In the Lake of the Woods</i> , 147-199
Fri. 11/19	<i>In the Lake of the Woods</i> , 217-303, response 7 due
Nov. 22-26 Thanksgiving Break	
Mon. 11/29	Film
Wed. 12/1	Film
Fri. 12/3	Film
Mon. 12/6	In class workshop day for final paper
Wed. 12/8	No class—conferences
Fri. 12/10	Review, final paper due
Tues. 12/14 Final Exam 12:15-2:15	