

Inside-Out Prison Exchange ENGL 3450.003 Short Story

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30-2:30

Course Description, Structure, and Objectives

The Inside-Out Exchange Course is an opportunity for a group of students from University of North Texas and a group of residents of the Bridgeport Correctional Center to exchange ideas and perceptions about literature and its surrounding contexts.

In ENGL 3450, students in the Inside/Out program will learn to critically engage with a range of texts in their social, historical, and political contexts. In small, seminar style discussions, students will interrogate the narrative complexities of short stories “on the margins” and develop analyses of texts grounded in textual and contextual evidence. They will learn that literary analysis is not right or wrong, or good or bad. Instead, they will learn that literary analysis is better or worse depending on the quality of evidence presented. Students will evaluate how texts contain competing and contradictory interpretations. By focusing on textual complexity, students will engage meaningfully with how narratives—including their own—are shaped by nuances that can be read and understood in multiple ways.

This course will be held face-to-face, off-campus at the Bridgeport Correctional Center. Students must complete the required application, interview, and be an approved volunteer through the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) prior to participating.

Course Objectives:

1. To create an environment that will facilitate the honest exchange of ideas in a constructive dialogue.
2. To create a dialogue between those on the outside and those on the inside.
3. To analyze literary texts in their historical, social, and political contexts.
4. To discuss the complex interpretive possibilities of literary texts.
5. To revise and strengthen literary analyses, treating writing as a process.
6. To write reflective analyses of contrasting interpretations from class discussion.
7. To collaborate in a final group literary analysis project.

Pre-requisites: ENGL 1310/1311 or equivalent

Required/Recommended Materials

Required Materials:

1. Sherman Alexie, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*.
2. Oscar Cásares, *Brownsville*.
3. James McBride, *Five-Carat Soul*.
4. Otessa Moshfegh, *Homesick for Another World*.
5. Various other readings/handouts, see course packet.

How to Succeed in this Course

Connect with me through email and/or by attending office hours.

ADA Policy:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](http://www.unt.edu/oda) website (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Students can connect with the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) to begin the registering process (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>).

Supporting Your Success and Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together.

Assessing Your Work

This course is made up of a series of assignments to assist you in achieving the course learning objectives. There is a total of 550 points that can be earned in this class. The grading policy along with the assignment details are presented below:

A = 585-650
B = 520-584
C = 455-519
D = 390-454
F = 389 or less

Assignment	Points Possible
Participation	<i>150 points</i>
Reflection Papers	<i>350 points</i>
Group Project	<i>150 points</i>
Total Points Possible	<i>650 points</i>

Course Requirements/Schedule

Participation (150 points)

The course is specifically designed to make the most of the time we spend together as a class. Active participation is key to this process. As a group, we (those inside and outside) will be discussing complex ideas through literature, history and culture. We are all challenged to say what we think, even if it is not a popular point of view. For this experience to be a real educational opportunity that it is meant to be, we each must take responsibility for the direction and depth of the discussion. As such, students are expected to attend **every class**. Attendance and participation will be worth 150 points of your final grade. The professor will only make accommodations for missed assignments for students under **exceptional circumstances**.

Written Assignments (350 points)

1. **Reflection Papers:** Throughout the course of the semester, you will be asked to write 9 reflection papers, but your 2 lowest scores will be dropped, for a total of 7 required papers. Each reflection paper is worth 50 points, for a total of 350 points. These reflection papers will be based on the readings, and course discussions, and will be due as listed on the syllabus. Reflection papers should thoroughly address the topic and be approximately 3 pages in length. Detailed requirements for Reflection Papers and the grading rubric will be distributed Week 2.

Group Project (150 points)

All students will participate in a group project that will be presented in the third to last combined class this semester. The group project will be worth 150 points towards your final grade. Groups will be given three class days for project preparation and will present their final projects to the class on **4/21**. Topics and instructions for the group projects will be given later in the semester. The project will offer creative ways to extend the work you do in class discussion and reflection papers.

Closing Ceremony

The class will culminate in a closing ceremony. We will invite outside guests to the closing ceremony. We will discuss the details of the closing ceremony later in the semester.

Course Policies

Inside-Out Rules

- This course is not an opportunity for human subject research. We are creating a learning community of inside and outside students.
- This course is not about advocacy or volunteering. This course is about creating a learning community.
- All students must abide by the rules of Bridgeport Correctional Center.
- All students must abide by the rules of the Inside-Out program.
- This class operates on a first name basis. Students are not permitted to contact one another outside of class or contact each other after the class has ended. Students may not share e-mails, cell phone numbers, social media contacts, etc. If you have questions about the rule, ask me.

Attendance and Participation

Because we only meet once a week at the prison, every class meeting is essential to your success. To be respectful of the facility staff, students must be punctual and show up prior to class time. You should attend

every class unless you have a university excused absence such as active military service, a religious holy day, or an official university function as stated in the [Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy \(PDF\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039>). If you cannot attend a class due to an emergency, please let me know. Your safety and well-being are important to me.

There is absolutely no make-up for assignments turned in late unless authorized because of university related absence or through prior consultation and approval by me. Make-up assignments because of authorized absences must be turned in **within 3 days of returning from the authorized absence.** To be excused, any authorized absence must take place over the **entire** submission window. That is, if a student has an authorized absence for 1 day of a 3-day submission window for an exam or any other assignment, then they will not be excused and will not be able to take a make-up. I strongly recommend *not* waiting until the last day to complete an assessment in case this occurs.

Syllabus Change Policy

I reserve the right and have the discretion to change this syllabus. While every effort will be made to follow this syllabus as closely as possible, it is sometimes the case that it must be modified. In the case that it needs to be adjusted, I will announce such adjustments to the class. I will make every effort to ensure that any changes to the syllabus benefit the class. It is the student's responsibility to check announcements/email so that all changes are documented. Failure to obtain syllabus changes because of failure to check and read announcements/email does not constitute a defense against a missed Reading, test date, or other applicable changes.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to [UNT Policy 06.003](#), Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Your writerly voice is an expression of you. Writing is a form of power. Assignments for this course have been designed to help you develop as a critical thinker and writer. You will generate ideas, read, revise, and write on your own and in discussion with peers. You are the author of your work for the course and authorship means you take responsibility for your words and claims. As a result, use of generative AI technologies is not in the spirit of the intellectual work of this course and will be considered an academic integrity violation:

<https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003%20Student%20Academic%20Integrity.pdf>

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). Students will be notified by [Eagle Alert](#) if there is a campus closing that will impact a class and the course calendar.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Academic Support & Student Services

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling)

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- [UNT Records](#)
- [UNT ID Card](#)
- [UNT Email Address](#)
- [Legal Name](#)

**UNT eUIDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.*

Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns.

You can [add your pronouns to your Canvas account](#) so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- [What are pronouns and why are they important?](#)
- [How do I use pronouns?](#)
- [How do I share my pronouns?](#)
- [How do I ask for another person's pronouns?](#)
- [How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?](#)

Additional Student Support Services

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
- [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry)

Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (https://success.unt.edu/asc)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (https://library.unt.edu/)
- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (http://writingcenter.unt.edu/)

Course Schedule, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK/DATE	TOPIC, READING ASSIGNMENTS, AND DUE DATES**subject to change**
1: 1/6 INSIDE 1/13 OUTSIDE	<p>Topic: Student Orientation</p> <p><i>Homework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tyrone Werts: “Reflections on the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program” CP
2: 1/20	<p>Topic: Introductions/Overview</p> <p><i>Homework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues” CP • Tim O’ Brien “The Things They Carried” CP • <i>Thoughts and Feelings Handout</i> • Reflection Paper #1
3: 1/27	<p>Topic: Wounds (discussion of Baldwin and O’ Brien)</p> <p><i>Homework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oscar Casares, from <i>Brownsville</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Chango” ○ “Domingo” ○ “Mrs. Perez” • Reflection Paper #2
4: 2/3	<p>Topic: Divisions (discussion of Casares)</p> <p><i>Homework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zora Neale Hurston “Sweat” CP • Tillie Olsen, “I Stand Here Ironing” CP • Reflection Paper #3
5: 2/10	<p>Topic: Labor (discussion of Hurston and Olsen)</p> <p><i>Homework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Otessa Moshfegh, <i>Homesick for Another World</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Bettering Myself” ○ “No Place for Good People” ○ “Slumming” ○ “A Better Place” • Reflection Paper #4

6: 2/17	<p>Topic: Stagnation</p> <p><i>Homework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manuel Munoz, “The Faith Healer of Olive Avenue” CP • Gabriel García Márquez, “The Very Old Man With Enormous Wings,” CP • Shirley Jackson “The Lottery” CP • Reflection Paper #5
7: 2/24	<p>Topic: Transformations (discussion of Munoz, Marquez, Jackson)</p> <p><i>Homework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sherman Alexie, <i>The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven</i>, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Every Little Hurricane” ○ “This Is What It Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona” ○ “The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven” • Reflection Paper #6
8: 3/3	<p>Topic: Dreams (discussion of Alexie)</p> <p><i>Homework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toni Morrison “Recitatif” CP • Alice Walker, “Everyday Use” CP • Reflection Paper #7
3/9-3/15	Break
9: 3/17	<p>Topic: Divisions</p> <p><i>Homework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James McBride, <i>Five Carat Soul</i>, • The Five Carat Soul Bottom Bone Band <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Buck Boy ○ Ray-Ray’s Picture Box ○ Blub ○ Goat • Reflection Paper #8

10: 3/24	Topic: Understanding <i>Homework:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Paper #9
11: 3/31	GROUP PROJECT PREP <i>Reflection Paper #6 Due</i>
12: 4/7	GROUP PROJECT PREP
13: 4/14	GROUP PROJECT PREP
14: 4/21	<i>Final Report to be uploaded by 10:00 AM</i> GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS Closing Ceremony Prep
15: 4/28	CLOSING CEREMONY
16: 5/5	Class Debrief (Separate Sessions)