

World Literature 2331.001



Murder, Madness, & Morbid Curiosity

Professor Lauren Kalstad

Fall 2025

Tu/Thurs 9:30am - 10:50am
LANG 216

Prof. Lauren Kalstad

Office: LANG 409A or AUD 108 (NTR office)

Office Hours:

- T/R 2pm - 3pm
- ONLINE M/W 10am - 11am
- Sunday nights I try to make myself available as all assignments are due by MIDNIGHT

Required Text: All texts will be provided either digitally, as hard copies, or both. *Dante's Inferno* is the longest text we will read, so I do suggest getting your own copy. I can provide the PDF, but since the text is so long it can be difficult to navigate and a bit slow.

Course Overview: A survey of dark-themed literature spanning from 429 B.C. to modern day where a number of texts (poems, short stories, plays) will be read, analyzed and discussed. Through our examination of dark fiction, we will better comprehend the ugly yet compelling side of human nature, the duality of characters, and the reflection of these traits and lessons in our own realities.

Schedule

Week 1
8.18 - 8.22

Introductions
"Evolutionary Study of Horror Literature"
by Mathias Clasen
DB: Class Intro

Week 2
8.25 - 8.29

Oedipus the King by Sophocles
DB: Oedipus Response

Week 3
9.1 - 9.5

Dante's *Inferno* Cantos I-XII
Dante's *Inferno* Cantos XIII-XIX
DB: Inferno Response

Week 4 9.8 - 9.12	Dante's <i>Inferno</i> Cantos XX-XXVII Dante's <i>Inferno</i> Cantos XXVI-XXXIV WWR: <i>Inferno</i> Response
Week 5 9.15 - 9.19	"Of Cannibals" Michel de Montaigne <i>The Love Suicides of Amijima</i> Monzaemon Act 1
Week 6 9.22 - 9.26	<i>The Love Suicides of Amijima</i> Monzaemon Act 2 <i>The Love Suicides of Amijima</i> Monzaemon Act 3 Assign Essay 1 - Due Sun 10.5
Week 7 9.29 - 10.3	Franz Kafka "The Penal Colony" Lu Xun "Diary of a Madman"
Week 8 10.6 - 10.10	<i>Warm Bodies</i> Film Extra Credit Assignment
Week 9 10.13 - 10.17	Edgar Allan Poe "Berenice" Tobi Ogundiran "The Goatkeeper's Harvest" DB: Monomania/Obsession
Week 10 10.20 - 10.24	Amber Blaeser-Wardzala "Collections" Stephen Graham Jones "Raphael" Assign Essay 2 - Due Sun 11.2
Week 11 10.27 - 10.31	Seamus Heaney "Bog Body" Poems Monster Poem Activity
Week 12 11.3 - 11.7	Emily Dickinson Sylvia Plath DB: Death in Poetry
Week 13 11.10 - 11.14	Baudelaire Assign FINAL ESSAY - Due Sun 12.7
Week 14 11.17 - 11.21	The Twilight Zone
Week 15 11.24 - 11.28	FALL BREAK NO CLASS
Week 16 12.1 - 12.5	"Who Said That" Quiz FINAL ESSAY - Due Sun 12.7

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PARTICIPATION

Each class will allow for plenty of time for discussion, either in small groups or as a unit. I encourage you to not only read the texts but respond in class to questions and prompts. This is a literature class, so we'll be discussing matters of history and human nature. Your POV is important to the diversity of the class! Plus, part of your grade is based on participation. If I see that you're on your phone, or playing games on your laptop, then the participation grade will suffer. Just stay engaged, and we'll all have a great time.

COMMUNICATION

If you are absent, or falling behind on an assignment, please reach out to let me know. I am willing to work with you, but only if you keep me in the loop. Additionally, if at any time you find yourself struggling - don't suffer in silence! I'm here to listen and find resources that might help if you find yourself in a tough spot. EMAIL: Lauren. Kalstad@unt.edu, or Canvas Messenger

DISRUPTIONS

Excessive disruptions of our class time—including posting inappropriate or inflammatory comments or harassing others online—are unacceptable. Please respect the class environment by using your time effectively and helping your classmates do the same. This includes refraining from doing homework for another class on your laptop, texting, having your earbuds in. Speaking of phones - keep them away. I don't want to see them. They will remain away unless I give you a break and specifically say that you can take out your phone. While we're in this room (it's just an hour, people) let's make room for great discussion about the literature. Promise it's worth it.

CIVILITY

We are all members of an academic community where it is our shared responsibility to cultivate a climate where all students/individuals are valued and where both they and their ideas are treated with respect. Therefore, I expect you to conduct yourself in a professional and respectful manner during all online interactions and class-related activities. I expect you to listen to and respect the viewpoints of others, even if you strongly disagree with them. When you do voice disagreement in your writing, do so in a civil manner. Remember that you are accountable for all of your actions in this course, including your submitted work, your grades, and your interactions with me and with other students.

CANVAS

Announcements, discussions, assignments, and grades for this course will all be handled within UNT's CANVAS Learning Management System. You must be able to access CANVAS regularly in order to succeed in this course. All students have access to CANVAS through their UNT accounts. For more information on using CANVAS, see <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>. If you have any questions regarding your use of the Canvas learning management system, please contact the student help desk at: Email: helpdesk@unt.edu, Phone: 940-565- 2324.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

PARTICIPATION.....	10%
ASSIGNMENTS.....	15%
ESSAY 1.....	20%
POETRY PROJECT.....	25%
FINAL ESSAY.....	30%
TOTAL.....	100%

TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS

1) Discussion Boards (DB): A low-stakes assignment in which you will respond to a prompt as well as respond to two classmates. The tone of DB assignments is less formal, and meant to promote classroom engagement. If you fulfill all the objectives of a DB, you will receive a completion grade.

2) Weekly Writing Reflections (WWR): A higher-stakes, short essay assignment in which you will respond to a prompt by submitting either a Word Doc or a Google Doc. You will organize your essay in MLA format with a proper heading and title. When necessary, you will have a Works Cited page. WWRs will be approximately 250 words (one page double-spaced), and are graded in increments of five: 100, 95, 90, 85, etc.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is not tolerated in this class in any way, and that includes using online sources without proper citation, using a friend's paper, having someone write it for you, AI, etc. I run all essays through Turnitin, so best to be safe instead of sorry. Not to mention that most essays written by AI are weird, and sound like you copied a human and then made another copy. Don't do it, because if you do then you risk being reported and that leads to consequences which can lead to suspension which makes me sad, and you sad, and then what are we doing? I want to hear what YOU think - YOUR opinions, your ideas, your amazing interpretation of the texts. So let's save time and heartache and just write our own papers, okay? :)