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Spring 2017

LIT 499: Melville and Disability

Required Books:

Delbanco, *Melville: His World and Work*, (Knopf) 978-0375702976
Melville, *Moby-Dick*, (Norton) 978-0393972832
Melville, *The Confidence Man: His Masquerade*, (Penguin) 978-0140445473
Melville, *Billy Budd, Bartleby, and Other Stories*, (Penguin) 978-0143107606

Readings on Canvas (subject to change and substitution):

Berger, "Trauma Without Disability, Disability Without Trauma: A Disciplinary Divide"
Berger, "Uncommon Schools: Institutionalizing Deafness in Early 19th-Century America"
Davis, "Constructing Normalcy"
Foucault, selections from *The Foucault Reader* and *Discipline and Punish*
Furi, "Secret Emotions": Disability in Public and Melville's *The Confidence-Man*
Mitchell and Snyder, "The Language of Prosthesis in *Moby-Dick*"
Nielsen, "The Deviant and the Dependent: Creating Citizens, 1776-1865"
Savarese, "Nervous Wrecks and Ginger-nuts: Bartleby at a Standstill"
Savarese, "Organic Hesitancies: Stuttering in *Billy Budd*"
Tremain, "Foucault, Governmentality, and Critical Disability Theory"

Course Introduction and Learning Goals:

A sea captain with a whalebone for a leg, a law clerk afraid to go outside, a beggar who neither speaks nor hears, a handsome sailor who stutters when he is nervous, these are some of Herman Melville's most memorable characters. Scholars have recently begun to recognize that they all have some kind of disability and that, throughout his career, Melville displayed a keen interest in the stigma of physical and psychological difference. This seminar will explore the writings of Herman Melville from the perspective of disability studies, paying close attention to how his artistry and theology intersect with his sense of the disabled.

The objectives for this course are relatively straightforward. You should develop a sophisticated understanding of disability theory and apply it to some of Melville's most important works. Through response papers and class discussion, you will work to develop your own critical voice by positioning it in relation to an array of historical, theoretical, and literary resources. Meeting these objectives will be necessary to achieve the third major goal in this course: to produce an excellent piece of writing for your final seminar paper, an essay that will showcase your abilities as both thinkers and writers.

*Please see pg. 7 for a more formal statement of the learning goals and outcomes for this course.

Schedule of Assignments:

- 23 January: Introduction: Adams et al, "Disability" (Canvas)
- 26 January: Ishmael's Hypos: *Moby-Dick*, "Etymology," "Extracts," chapters 1-9; Tremain, "Foucault, Governmentality, and Critical Disability Theory," pg.1-6 (Canvas)
- 30 January: Queequeg, the Savage: *Moby-Dick*, chapters 10-23
Response Paper 1A
- 2 February: Ahab: *Moby-Dick*, chapters 24-34
Anderson, "Accident," Ott, "Prosthetics" (Canvas)
Response Paper 1B
- 6 February: Ahab and the Whale: *Moby-Dick*, chapters 35-47
Mitchell and Snyder, "The Language of Prosthesis in *Moby-Dick*" (Canvas)
Mitchell, "Narrative" (Canvas)
Response Paper 2A
- 9 February: The Crew: *Moby-Dick*, chapters 48-54 (The Masthead and Whiteness)
Response Paper 2B
- 13 February: Of Whales and Whaling: *Moby-Dick*, chapters 55-75
Cetology Presentations and Discussion
- 16 February: Of Whales and Whaling: *Moby-Dick*, chapters 76-92
Cetology Presentations and Discussion
- 20 February: Castaways: *Moby-Dick*, chapters 93-105
Berger, "Trauma Without Disability, Disability Without Trauma" (Canvas)
See also Berger, "Trauma" (Canvas)
Response Paper 3A
- 23 February: The Carpenter: *Moby-Dick*, chapters 106-122
Davis, "Constructing Normalcy" (Canvas)
Response Paper 3B
- 27 February: Fate's Lieutenant: *Moby-Dick*, chapters 122-135, Epilogue
Graded Class Discussion
- 2 March: Melville and Hawthorne's Mosses: *Moby-Dick*, pg. 517-548
Hawthorne, "The Birthmark" (Canvas)
- 6 March: "Bartleby the Scrivener"
Midterm Paper Due
- 9 March: "Bartleby the Scrivener"
Stuart, selection from *Representing Autism* (Canvas)

**** Spring Break ****

- 20 March: Selections from *The Foucault Reader* (Canvas) and *Discipline and Punish*
Response Paper 4A
- 23 March: Selections from *The Foucault Reader* (Canvas) and *Discipline and Punish*
Response Paper 4B
- 27 March: The Cripple and the Mute: *The Confidence Man*, pg. 8-112
Berger, "Uncommon Schools: Institutionalizing Deafness in Early 19th-Century America" (Canvas)
Graded Class Discussion
- 30 March: The Metaphysics of Hatred: *The Confidence Man*, pg. 112-221
Furi, "Secret Emotions": Disability in Public and Melville's *The Confidence-Man* (Canvas)
Response Paper 5A
- 3 April: Cosmopolitanism: *The Confidence Man*, pg. 222-298
Response Paper 5B
- 6 April: *Billy Budd*, parts 1-15
Prospectus Due
- 10 April: *Billy Budd*, parts 16-30
St. Pierre, "The Construction of the Disabled Speaker" (Canvas)
Graded Class Discussion
- 13 April: Research Day (No class)
- 17 April: *Billy Budd*
Savarese, "Organic Hesitancies: Stuttering in *Billy Budd*" (Canvas)
- 20 April: Workshop
- 24 April: Workshop
- 27 April: Workshop
- 1 May: Workshop
- 4 May: Workshop
- TBA Final Papers Due

Course Policies

1) The success of this seminar depends on your keeping-up with the reading and participating in our discussion. A seminar requires a different set of skills and responsibilities than a large class. It demands that you immerse yourself in the material, reading widely and thinking about the topic beyond the confines of the syllabus and the classroom. We will value your independence and initiative. At the same time, a seminar demands that you listen carefully to your classmates, engaging with their ideas and asking serious questions. It demands that you be a good member of our intellectual community.

Your attendance and participation are mandatory. After two absences (regardless of the reason), your participation grade will suffer. If circumstances arise which mandate a prolonged absence, please contact the Office of Student Life (771-2201) and provide me with appropriate documentation. For more information, please see the College's attendance policy: <http://policies.tcnj.edu/policies/digest.php?docId=9134>

2) Written assignments: You will write multiple papers in this course, including:

Mid-Term Paper: You will write a mid-term paper in response to questions I will give to you. These papers will be 5-6 pages and will combine both theoretical and literary analysis.

Response Papers: You will write 5 response papers during the semester. These 1 page (single-spaced) papers should be well-written and carefully put together. The thinking in these papers can be exploratory, but the prose should be polished. In addition, you will write responses to your classmates' workshop papers.

Prospectus: You will write a 2-page prospectus of your project that will carefully describe your preliminary thoughts and research agenda. You should also attach a working bibliography of primary and secondary materials useful to your research.

Workshop Paper: During the final 3 weeks of the semester, we will devote our attention to student work. Each of you will have an early draft of your final paper workshopped by the class. 48 Hours before your paper is scheduled to be discussed, you'll need to distribute your 7-8 page paper to your classmates using Canvas. We will read your paper carefully and discuss it thoroughly. (Everyone should receive about 20 minutes on his or her work.) Our comments will focus on helping you improve and build upon your research, analysis, and argument for the final paper.

Final Paper: The final paper will be a 15-page discussion of a topic of your choosing. This paper should be of exceptionally high quality, something you might publish in TCNJ's *Journal of Student Scholarship*, submit with a graduate school application, or revise for a magazine or web-site. We will spend lots of class time talking about these papers.

3) Like all capstone courses in the English Department, this course has multiple oral proficiency assignments. These assignments include a brief presentation on a chapter from *Moby-Dick*, a turn leading the workshop of one of your classmates' papers, and a series of graded class discussions.

4) All essays must be printed legibly on 8.5 x 11 white paper. They must be turned in during class on the date that they are due and also submitted to Canvas. I will reduce the grade by 10% for each 24-hour period a paper is late. Papers over 72 hours late risk failure, unless you've made prior arrangements with me.

5) The College of New Jersey prohibits students from using the same paper for two different courses *unless the student receives written permission from both instructors*. All work for this course must be done by you. You must do all the work in this course, not someone else. Please avoid plagiarism! If you ever have questions about plagiarism or proper citation methods, please consult me. All cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Academic Integrity Officer and will also result in a zero grade for the paper and/ or a failure in the course.

Academic dishonesty is any attempt by the student to gain academic advantage through dishonest means, to submit, as his or her own, work which has not been done by him/her or to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment. Such dishonesty would include, but is not limited to: submitting as his/her own a project, paper, report, test, or speech copied from, partially copied, or paraphrased from the work of another (whether the source is printed, under copyright, or in manuscript form). Credit must be given for words quoted or paraphrased. The rules apply to any academic dishonesty, whether the work is graded or ungraded, group or individual, written or oral. TCNJ's academic integrity policy is available on the web:

<http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/integrity.html>.

6) The Academic Enhancement Center in Forcina Hall, room 145, is an excellent place to get help on your papers. Call The Writer's Place at 771-2895 or 771-3325 or see the hours at <http://www.tcnj.edu/~tutoring/humanities/writing.html>.

7) Any student who has a documented disability and is in need of academic accommodations should notify the professor of this course and contact the Office of Differing Abilities Services (609-771-2571). Accommodations are individualized and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992. TCNJ's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy is available on the web <http://differingabilities.pages.tcnj.edu/>.

8) In accordance with the College's Final Exam/Evaluation Policy (<http://policies.tcnj.edu/policies/digest.php?docId=9396>), this course has a final paper (or project) due during final exam week; this final paper (or project) is comprehensive and integrative in nature and counts for at least 15% and not more than 50% of your final grade.

9) The breakdown in grading percentages is:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Midterm Paper | 15% |
| Response Papers | 15% |
| Prospectus | 5% |
| Workshop Paper | 15% |
| Final Paper | 30% |
| Oral (presentations, discussions) | 10% |
| Classroom Performance | 10% |
| <hr/> | |
| TOTAL | 100% |

10) The grading scale in this course incorporates the principle of “rounding up,” so further adjustments will not be made:

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|--------------------|--------------------|
| 100 - 93.5 % = A | 79.4 - 76.5 % = C+ |
| 93.4 - 89.5 % = A- | 76.4 - 73.5 % = C |
| 89.4 - 86.5 % = B+ | 73.4 - 69.5 % = C- |
| 86.4 - 83.5 % = B | 69.4 - 64.5 % = D |
| 83.4 - 79.5 % = B- | 64.4-0 % = F |

11) A syllabus is a plan not a contract. While we will make every effort to follow this schedule, I reserve the right to alter the due dates of assignments, to clarify and modify the nature and length of assignments, and to include unannounced assessments in order to meet the educational goals of this course.

12) Whether literature, art, music, or film, cultural expressions gains some of its power from its ability to explore the extremes of human relationships. The writers and thinkers in this course address a wide range of experiences that range from the reflective to the traumatic and from the socially acceptable to the morally grotesque. If you are anxious about your personal response to these works, you should consider whether this course is appropriate for you. My expectation is that every student will complete every one of the assigned readings and be prepared to listen to discussions about them in class.

13) Please feel free to come by my office if you have questions you'd like to ask about the class. The best way to contact me is by e-mail – blake@tcnj.edu. I check my mail regularly and expect you to do the same.

LIT 499/ Seminar in Research and Theory, Spring 2017
Department, School, and College Goals and Policies

1) As the capstone for the English major, LIT 499/ Seminar in Research and Theory provides an opportunity for students to showcase their reading, writing, and critical thinking skills within the discipline. The course will meet the following English Department Learning Goals:

- to introduce reading, writing, and critical thinking within the discipline
- to become conversant with the essential terms of literary analysis;
- to refine close-reading skills
- to investigate current critical theory and methodology

The English Department has identified three Learning Outcomes for LIT 499. Students will:

- be conversant with the terms and methodology of multiple critical approaches.
- produce theoretically informed written analyses of texts.
- integrate material from works of literary criticism into a written analysis.

2) As part of the curriculum of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, LIT 201 meets the following Learning Goals as presented to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education:

- (1) Written Communication
- (2) Oral Communication
- (5) Critical Analysis and Reasoning: Ability to critique the arguments of others in the discipline and the construction of one's own arguments in the discipline, using data/evidence as a focus of instruction and/or the ability to analyze linguistic and cultural patterns
- (6) Information Literacy: Evaluating the validity and/or reliability of a source
- (7) Interpretation of Language and Symbol
- (12) Students will be able to demonstrate familiarity with a range of critical, generic, and literary traditions (including recent theoretical approaches) that shape – and are shaped by – literary discourses and texts of particular periods or movements
- (15) Students will be able to read a literary work and characterize its main aesthetic, structural, and rhetorical strategies in an argumentative, thesis-driven essay or in a writing workshop.
- (16) Students will be able to write a substantial essay of literary scholarship that is theoretically informed and engages with current research and criticism in relevant fields of study, asserting their own critical voice in ongoing dialogues and debates

3) This course meets 160 minutes a week but carries 1 full unit of credit toward the completion of an undergraduate degree. Students enrolled in this course are expected to take substantial responsibility outside the classroom for their own learning experience and to complete assignments at a level of excellence that significantly exceeds what is required at many other colleges and universities, including at the College itself prior to 2006. Because the students in this course are assigned additional learning tasks that make the semester's learning experience more deeply engaged and rigorous, no additional classroom time or space is needed.

4) In accordance with the College's Final Exam/Evaluation Policy, this course has a final paper due during final exam week; this final paper is comprehensive and integrative in nature and counts for 25% of your final grade. (<http://policies.tcnj.edu/policies/digest.php?docId=9396>)

Grading Rubric

Grading papers is not a precise business. I do not give or take off a fixed number of points for particular strengths or weaknesses. Sometimes an overwhelmingly good or bad performance in one area outweighs other factors. The following table, therefore, should be read as a guideline only. It breaks down the course's grading criteria into four categories: argument, evidence, style, and mechanics. These are not, however, entirely discrete categories, and in fact, your performance in one area will often shape your performance in another. For example, readers will not be able to appreciate your argument if they have to struggle to understand the sentences that convey it.

| CRITERIA GRADE | ARGUMENT | EVIDENCE | STYLE | MECHANICS/ GRAMMAR |
|----------------|---|---|--|--|
| A | Argument is focused, clearly stated at the beginning, and developed logically throughout the paper to a conclusion. Paragraphs organized around concepts with strong topic sentences. Argument is bold, fresh, and compelling | Extensive and varied factual evidence supports argument. No significant omissions, irrelevancies, or errors of fact. Quoted and paraphrased material is introduced fluidly, with varying and helpful framing. | Excellent prose style: clear, elegant, persuasive. Language and phrasing are precise and, in some cases, memorable. Writer has an identifiable and coherent voice. | Minimal errors in grammar, spelling, etc. |
| B | Argument relatively clear and focused but may fail to develop to a precise, ambitious conclusion. Topic sentences advance different stages of the argument. Papers in the B-/C+ range generally have a routine, pedestrian argument or one that rehashes class discussion rather than breaking new ground. | Generally good evidence, but some lack of variety of sources, errors of omission, and/ or irrelevant data. Quoted and paraphrased material is framed properly, though at times mechanically. | Clear, serviceable prose that does not obscure understanding. Writer has used varying sentence patterns, although the sentences lack the rhythm and precision of an A paper. Writer's voice is emerging. | A few errors ranging from typos and spelling mistakes to the inappropriate use of the passive voice. |
| C | Argument is vague, general and implied rather than explicitly stated; it does not lead to a well-developed conclusion. When organized, paragraphs and topic sentences emphasize sequence (time, scenes, etc) rather than concepts. Frequent and unnecessary plot summary. These papers often "recognize" an image or thematic pattern and "display" that pattern, but do not advance an argument. | Some evidence, but excessive dependence on a single scene or source, substantial omissions or irrelevancies, and/or minor errors of fact. Quoted and paraphrased materials are simply dropped into the text without attribution or framing. | Understandable writing, but sometimes vague, wooden, or choppy. Sentences are haphazardly constructed, giving the impression that the writer has little control. | Substantial errors which detract from overall effect of paper or suggest a wavering commitment to the assignment.* |

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|---|---|--|---|--|
| D | Argument is barely discernable and/or very poorly developed. | Very little, or largely irrelevant evidence, and/or substantial errors of fact. Problems in quoted and paraphrased material ranging from misquotations to passages that arouse suspicions of plagiarism. | Writing is confusing, vague, and/or hard to understand. | Frequent and serious errors which make paper hard to understand or suggest a profound lack of commitment to the assignment.* |
| F | No discernable argument or paper totally digresses from argument. | Virtually no relevant evidence and/or very serious errors of fact. Problems in quoted and paraphrased material that indicate a case of either intentional or unintentional plagiarism | Writing is nearly unintelligible. | Massive errors which render paper nearly unintelligible.* |

*Note: my response to your paper will not be aimed at correcting your grammar or mechanics, but any paper in which these mistakes are plentiful will not receive a high grade, regardless of the quality of the argument and evidence. Students who clearly do not understand a grammatical or stylistic principle (passive voice, comma-splice, etc) will not be markedly penalized. However, once I have explained the principle (in class, in office hours, or in the paper's annotations), the repetition of these errors in future assignments will dramatically reduce your grade.