

**Literacy and Society**  
**English 2897, Fall 2012**  
Tue, Thu 9:30 am - 10:50 am  
Tuttleman Learning Center 405A

Instructor: Beth Seltzer  
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Most English courses ask us to examine how we read writing. Literacy and Society will turn that question inside out and ask, how do we write reading? Our explorations into this question will lead us to consider the shifting influences of technology, the social work of literacy, the gulf between popular and “literary” fiction, the role of the academy, and the strange worlds of literary fandom. It will require us to examine our books, our schools, and our television screens, and to divide our time between the present and Victorian Britain, the most visible germination point of these questions. As the course progresses, you’ll see literacy in action, gaining new insight into how written documents shape lives in your world and your day-to-day life. The course will culminate in a research project of your choice, developed in consultation with your instructor and classmates, that will hone your research, informational literacy and critical thinking skills.

**Required texts** (available in the University bookstore):

None. All readings will be available on Blackboard, saving you a lot of textbook money.

But there’s a catch—you *must print out all readings, mark them up, and bring them in to class*. You can expect to spend \$50-\$75 on printing for this class this semester. (This is still cheaper and more economically friendly than buying several textbooks.)

**Assignments and Grading**

Blackboard Posts.....	5 points each, for a total of 25 points (12.5%)
Experiential Project Paper (3 pages).....	20 points (10%)
Pop Fiction Group Presentation (10 minutes).....	20 points (10%)
Research Proposal/Rough Draft (3 pages).....	25 points (12.5%)
Research Paper (8-10 pages).....	60 points (30%)
Participation, In-Class Writing.....	50 points (25%)
Total.....	<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 200 points (100%)

**Blackboard Posts (100-200 words):** On most weeks, a 100-200 word Blackboard post will be due Sunday by 11:59pm. There are eight chances to post in total. You must post on five of these days of your choice.

**Participation:** Participation entails reading and marking up the material in advance, printing and bringing readings to class, and contributing to the class in the form of class discussion, group work, and in-class writing. Being respectful of your classmates and staying focused on the discussion is essential. No phones, laptops, or other distractions, unless they have been cleared by me or are part of the course work that day. Quietly eating breakfast is fine, as long as it does not distract you or others.

**Attendance and lateness:** You are permitted a total of four absences throughout the semester. *This class does not distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences.* I would urge you to reserve these days for true emergencies. A fifth absence will knock 15 points off of your final grade, and any additional absences will knock 30 points, each, off of your grade.

Students who are not yet in class when I take attendance will be marked as late. Two latenesses equal one absence. Leaving early is equivalent to a lateness or absence, depending on how much class you miss. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for turning in any assignments, catching up with the work from that day by contacting a peer or coming to office hours, and asking me for any papers I might have handed out.

**Late Assignments:** Papers turned in late will be penalized 5 points/day. Presentation rescheduling will not be permitted, except in unusual circumstances. Late Blackboard posts may or may not receive partial credit, at my discretion.

**Policies:** Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215- 204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has a policy on Student and Faculty and Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy #03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link:  
[http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy\\_no=03.70.02](http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02).

**Academic Dishonesty:** Plagiarism and Violating the Rules of an Assignment (Excerpted from the Temple University Statement on Academic Honesty for Students in Undergraduate Courses)

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor: another person's ideas, words, or assistance. In general, all sources must be identified as clearly, accurately, and thoroughly as possible. Academic cheating is, in general terms, the thwarting or breaking of the general rules of academic work and/or the specific rules of individual courses. It includes falsifying data; submitting, without the instructor's approval, work in one course that was done for another; helping others to plagiarize or cheat from one's own or someone else's work; or actually doing the work of another person.

#### Penalties for Academic Dishonesty

The penalty for dishonesty can vary from a reprimand and receiving a failing grade for a particular assignment, to failure for the course, to suspension or expulsion from the University. NOTE: If you plagiarize in my class you will fail the course. This is not negotiable. If you are uncertain about anything, ask BEFORE you hand in the work. It will be too late afterwards. Of course we do not want to discourage you from using other people's ideas or data. *Our aim is exactly the opposite.* But you must always make your sources clear. If you are in any way uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, just consult with me.

## Course Schedule

### **Week One—Introductions**

T 8/28        Introductions

R 8/30        Sylvia Scribner, “Literacy in Three Metaphors”

### **Week Two—Literacy Learning**

BB post due Sunday 11:59pm.

T 9/4         Susan L. Lytle, “Living Literacy: Rethinking Development in Adulthood”

R 9/6         Victoria Purcell-Gates “A World Without Print”

### **Week Three—Modern Technologies of Literacy**

BB post due Sunday 11:59pm.

T 9/11        Dennis Baron “From Pencils to Pixels: The Stages of Literacy Technologies”

R 9/13        Ebooks vs. Print books—selection of blogs on this debate

### **Week Four—The Internet Debate**

BB post due Sunday 11:59pm.

T 9/18        Davida Charney “The Effect of Hypertext on Processes of Reading and Writing”

R 9/20        Josh Keller “Studies Explore Whether the Internet Makes Students Better Writers”

### **Week Five—Experiential Project & Library Day**

No BB post this week.

T 9/25        Experiential Project Paper rough draft due. Peer review & presentation.

R 9/27        Experiential Project Paper due.

Library Day. Librarian visits class to discuss technologies of literacy at Paley, etc.

### **Week Six—Sponsors of Literacy**

BB Post due Sunday 11:59pm.

T 10/2        Deborah Brandt “Sponsors of Literacy”

R 10/4        Elizabeth Flynn, “Composing as a Woman”

**Week Seven—College Literacy**

BB Post due Sunday 11:59pm.

T 10/9 Eli Goldblatt, “Chapter 2: Continuity and Control”

R 10/11 Selections from Joanne Addison and Sharon James McGee, “Writing in High School/Writing in College”

**Week Eight—Popular vs. “Literary”**

BB post due Sunday 11:59pm.

T 10/16 Selections from *Reading At Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*

R 10/18 Jeff Willhelm “Let Them Read Trash” (podcast)

**Week Nine—Popular Fiction Now and Then**

No BB post this week.

T 10/23 Anne Trubek, *A Skeptic’s Guide to Writer’s Houses*, chapter 1

R 10/25 Student groups run Popular Fiction class.

**Week Ten—Sensation Novels**

BB post due Sunday 11:59pm.

T 10/30 Shawn Crawford, “No Time To Be Idle: The Serial Novel and Popular Imagination”

R 11/1 Selected chapters from Victorian serialized novels, on BB (*The Woman in White*, *Hard Cash*)**Week Eleven—Fandom**

BB post due Sunday 11:59pm.

T 11/6 D.A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* 146-66

R 11/8 Sherlock Holmes short stories, selection

**Week Twelve—Media Adaptations**

No BB post for rest of semester.

T 11/13 Final Project Proposals Due (3 pgs)

In class—watch *Sherlock*, “The Reichenbach Fall”R 11/15 Discussion of *Sherlock*

**Week Thirteen**

T 11/20 Conference Day

R 11/22 No class for Thanksgiving

**Week Fourteen**

T 11/27 Final Project Peer Review Day

R 11/29 Final Project Presentations

**Week Fifteen**

T 12/4 Final projects due. Class wrap-up.