

English 480.1  
Junior Seminar  
Fall 2023  
T 2-3:15p.m.  
Marcus H 213

Prof. Larry Hanley  
English Dept.  
HUM 553  
Office Hours: T/Th 10 - 11 a.m.  
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### Junior Seminar

The Junior Seminar is a required class for all English majors at SFSU. It is also an opportunity for a smaller class and intellectual community to explore important topics, debates, and practices within the discipline of English. For this iteration of Junior Seminar, we'll be investigating the textual, literary, and cultural construction of "character," "setting," and "plot." How do writers, readers, and other cultural producers and consumers construct "people" out of words and other signs? What role does setting play in narrative? What makes a plot work? Of course, this investigation will lead us into all kinds of questions about narrative, reading, interpretation, and meaning.

The course will look closely at a variety of critical approaches to literary texts. These include: new criticism, structuralism, semiotics, and cultural studies. We will look at a variety of literary and media genres - from poetry, to short story, movies, and the novel.

By the end of this class, you should be able to recognize and explain many textual techniques for constructing literary and cultural meaning. You will also understand and practice a variety of critical approaches to literary and other texts. You will become more proficient with informal and formal writing. Finally, you will understand some of the complicated but intellectually fascinating relations between social and cultural contexts and literary form.

This course is officially being conducted in the "hybrid" mode. What this means: we'll meet in our classroom (Marcus Hall 213) every Tuesday from 2 to 3:15 p.m.; our other class session will be online and asynchronous. I.e. I'll give you an assignment that you will complete - usually Thursdays - online and to deadline.

#### Required Texts:

James Joyce, [Dubliners](#)

Martha Wells, [All Systems Red: The Murderbot Diaries](#) [available at [Powell's Books](#), Amazon, etc.]

[Saturday Night Fever](#)

#### Course Requirements

You must complete all reading and writing assignments. Your success in this course depends on steady, authentic engagement with the texts we read. You can expect to write something for or in each class.

Our class motherblog is located [here](https://teaching.lfhanley.net/english480fa23/) (https://teaching.lfhanley.net/english480fa23/). I'll post announcements, updates, comments, and all kinds of tips on our motherblog. Check it often. You will be spending a good deal of time on our class [wiki](#) - where we'll keep our class notes. You should receive an invitation to join the class wiki before our second class. If you don't, let me know.

You will get lots of practice with lots of different kinds of writing in this class. In general, you will have a piece of writing to complete before each class. You will also probably do some writing in class. And, there will plenty of out-of-class writing in the form of wiki entries, out-of-class assignments, and more traditional typed essays.

You can't learn if you don't attend class. After two absences, your grade will be in jeopardy. If you know in advance that you'll be absent, discuss this absence with me beforehand. I don't accept late assignments.

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC (<http://www.sfsu.edu/~dprc>) is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email ([dprc@sfsu.edu](mailto:dprc@sfsu.edu)).

SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact: The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; [http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe\\_plc/](http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/), or Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; <http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/>.

## Grading

The bulk of your final grade will depend on your in-class and out-of-class writing, with a final recipe that looks something like this:

In-class writing: 30%  
Out-of-class writing: 60 %  
Participation: 10%

Your in-class and more informal work will be graded using the patented check/check plus/check minus system. Your more formal work will be graded using the conventional A/B/C/D/F rubric. At the end of the course, you will submit an electronic portfolio of work, including a longer reflective essay. You will be rewarded for consistent engagement.

## Syllabus

### August

22	T	Intro
24	Th	Signs, codes and signifying Saussure, from " <a href="#">Course in General Linguistics</a> " Robert Frost, " <a href="#">The Road not Taken</a> " <a href="#">[Class notes (wiki)]</a>
29	T	Daniel Chandler, " <a href="#">Semiotics for Beginners</a> " Whitman, " <a href="#">Song of Myself</a> "
31	Th	Muriel Rukeyser, " <a href="#">City of Monuments</a> " Adrienne Rich, " <a href="#">Diving into the Wreck</a> " Sylvia Plath, " <a href="#">Blackberrying</a> "

### September

5	T	Mystery text
7	Th	<a href="#">Characterization/new criticism</a>
12	T	James Joyce, "Two Gallants"
14	Th	<a href="#">John Fiske, from Television Culture</a>
19	T	Joyce, "An Encounter" <b>Mystery text assignment #1 due</b>
21	Th	James Joyce, "A Little Cloud"
26	T	Setting Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown"
28	Th	John Fiske, "Reading the Beach," from <a href="#">Reading the Popular</a>

**October**

3	T	Joyce, "Araby"
5	Th	Plot Aristotle on " <a href="#">Tragedy</a> ", from <a href="#">Poetics</a>
10	T	Hemingway, " <a href="#">A Very Short Story</a> "
12	Th	Seymour Chatman, from <a href="#">Story and Discourse</a>
17	T	<a href="#">Will Wright. from Sixguns and Society</a>
19	Th	<u>Saturday Night Fever</u> (1977)
24	T	<u>Saturday Night Fever</u> (1977) Vladimir Propp, from <a href="#">Morphology of the Folktale</a>
26	Th	Genre stories
31	T	Genre stories

**November**

2	Th	Genre stories <b>Super-reading</b>
7	T	Genre Stories
9	Th	Genre stories
14	T	Genre stories
16	Th	Martha Wells, <a href="#">All Systems Red</a>
21	T	Fall Recess
23	Th	Fall Recess
28	T	Wells, <a href="#">All Systems Red</a>
30	Th	Wells, <a href="#">All Systems Red</a>

**December**

5	T	In-class presentations/temporary autonomous learning zone
7	Th	In-class presentations/temporary autonomous learning zone Last day of class <b><u>Murderbot</u> assignment due</b>