

SPRING 2017: INTS 375-002
Social Justice & Literature
Thompson Hall 1018

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

Students in this course will learn how to read, evaluate and analyze depictions and aspects of social justice and injustice in contemporary American literature. Through various genres of literature (children's literature, historical fiction, creative nonfiction, biography and essays), students will develop an informed awareness of the complex perspectives, uses and boundaries of literature and will learn to recognize and analyze how literature depicts stories related to social justice, tolerance, equality and social change. Particular attention will be given to the following social justice issues: gender, sexuality, race, and class. However, there are many more possible lenses from which to view course readings.

Learning Objectives

After you have completed this course, you should be able to:

- Integrate insights and create meaning across texts
- Discuss literary and societal trends and social justice issues represented in contemporary literature

Required Books & Blackboard

This course will use the Blackboard online course management system to minimize paper use. You will need to have access and bring to class the following books:

- Kerman, Piper (2011). *Orange is the New Black*. New York, N.Y.: Spiegel & Grau.
- Skloot, Rebecca (2010). *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. New York, N.Y.: Random House
- Tolley, Robin (2014). *Lies We Tell Ourselves*. Ontario, Canada: Harlequin Enterprises Limited.

Your remaining readings will be electronically available on Blackboard as PDF's or links to the appropriate URL. You are expected to have read assigned pages from books, and articles, before class and to be prepared to discuss the readings in class. **This**

means you will need to bring readings with you to every class - either electronically or printed. If you do not have a printer at home, you can print articles on campus at various Print Centers using Mason Money or a copy card. Protip: Its cheaper to print double-sided (and more environmentally friendly).

Assignments (Total 1,000 points)

You are expected to complete assignments by class time on the day they are due.

Participation: 300 Points

You are expected to be involved in class discussions – to voluntarily respond to questions and to voice your ideas. This means no texting, FB'ing, Tweeting, etc., while in class, unless it's part of our coursework. Participation for each student will be noted for each session. (15 x 20 points each session)

Possible Online discussions as necessary (see below under Campus Closure)

Completion of Blogs: 150 Points

Prompts will be based on readings and class discussions, but may also ask you to draw from your personal experiences. (2 blogs x 75 points each)

Reflective essays: 250 Points

3 - 4 page essays that discuss at length various topics from class. 2 papers x 125 points each.

*Rewrite Opportunity: You have the option to rewrite **ONE** Blog or Reflective essay based on my comments, for the possibility of bringing your paper grade up.

Final Book Analysis & Presentation: 300 Points

Select a partner and shared book to read (must be approved by professor). Write an analysis (200 points) of the book that incorporates skills you have developed over the semester of literary analysis, particularly as it relates to the social justice themes within the book. Create and give 10 minute presentation on major themes (100 points).

Grading Scale:

A+	975-1000 (97.5-100%)	C+	775-794 (77.5-79%)
A	925-974 (92.5-97%)	C	725-774 (72.5-77%)
A-	895-924 (89.5-92%)	C-	695-724 (69.5-72%)
B+	875-894 (87.5-89%)	D	600-694 (60-69%)
B	825-874 (82.5-87%)	F	below 600 (below 60%)
B-	795-824 (79.5-82%)		

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Attendance: You are expected to be present (both body *and* mind) at all classes and actively participate in discussion and other activities. This includes not only speaking, but also listening carefully to others' opinions and experiences with an open mind. You do not need to adopt another's viewpoint, but you do need to extend to them the courtesy of trying to hear what they have to say. The more you can, through your comments and in-class "writing, show that you have carefully read the assigned material, the higher your participation grade will be. Much of the value you will receive from this course will come from your reactions to course readings and your interactions with your colleagues. Therefore, your attendance and participation is extremely important to the class and your learning process. You are expected to read assigned materials on time, to think about readings critically, and to arrive on time to class and prepared to discuss the day's topics. More than one absence is considered excessive. Please budget your time accordingly with the readings and assignments. If you miss class please ask another member of the class about what you missed, any assignments, etc

Campus closure due to inclement weather or other issue: Occasionally Mason will close due to inclement weather or building problems. When this occurs, look for an email announcement from the professor with updates on assignment or other requirements. You may be expected to participate in online discussions or other equivalent classroom activities so as not to lose momentum.

Format for assignments: All written assignments must be typed, double spaced, and use 12-point standard font, one-inch margins. All papers should include a title and your name. Accurate spelling, clarity, and correct use of grammar and punctuation are expected and their absence can negatively affect your grade. When citing sources, you also must correctly and consistently use APA citation style. A note on grammar by Weird AI.

Late Work: Assignments will be reduced by a letter grade for each day they are late. Late work may be accepted if a written medical excuse is provided.

Honor Code and Citing Sources: When you enrolled in this course you agreed to abide by the university's Honor Code. The Honor Code does not preclude collaborative work, such as informal discussions and studying in communities. Nor does it preclude assigned group work. The Honor Code does require that the work that a student, as an individual, turns in is ultimately the product of his/her own individual synthesis or integration of ideas, and that the work a group turns in is ultimately the product of the group's collective ideas. If you are uncertain of the line between collaboration and cheating, you should see me before turning in an assignment.

You must **always** cite your sources - if you do not, it is plagiarism. Plagiarism means taking someone else's ideas or words and presenting them as your own without proper attribution of the source. You must correctly and consistently use the APA citation style. This includes copying materials directly from the Internet. If you feel uncertain about any aspect of the Honor Code, you should discuss your concerns with me proactively (i.e., before turning in a piece of work).

SIS Commitment to Diversity: School of Integrative Studies, an intentionally inclusive community, promotes and maintains an equitable and just work and learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and disability.

- We value our diverse student body and desire to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.
- We commit to supporting students, faculty and staff who have been the victims of bias and discrimination.
- We promote continuous learning and improvement to create an environment that values diverse points of view and life experiences.
- We believe that faculty, staff and students play a role in creating an environment that engages diverse points of view.
- We believe that by fostering their willingness to hear and learn from a variety of sources and viewpoints, our students will gain competence in communication, critical thinking and global understanding, aware of their biases and how they affect their interactions with others and the world.

Email: In keeping with university policy, I will respond only to your Mason email account. This is a means of protecting your privacy and academic confidentiality.

STUDENT LEARNING RESOURCES

Writing Center: Writing is an important component of this learning community and represents one facet of effective communication. You may wish to use the Writing Center to assist you with an assignment. Tutors at the Writing Center can help you brainstorm, structure, and revise your written work. The Writing Center is located in Robinson A 114; 703-993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>.

Another resource to help you with your writing is the SIS Online Writing Guide, which can be found at <http://classweb.gmu.edu/SISwg>.

Office of Disability Services: The staff members of ODS assist students with learning differences or any other conditions that may impact academic performance. ODS is located in SUB I, Rm.2500; 703-993-2474; <http://ods.gmu.edu/>.

Counseling Services: Professional counselors provide individual and group sessions for personal development and assistance with a range of emotional and relational issues. Counseling Services are located in SUB I, Rm.364; 703-993-2380; <http://caps.gmu.edu/>. In addition, the Learning Services Program (703-993-2999) offers academic skill-building workshops as well as a tutor referral service.

Star-Multimedia Lab: The STAR-Multimedia lab is available to help students with technology needs, such as video, multimedia, desktop publishing, and web skills. The STAR Center is located in Johnson Center, Rm.229; 703-993-8990; http://doit.gmu.edu/staffSection.asp?page=multimedia_lab

Division of Instructional and Technology Support Services (DOIT): If you have any difficulties with accessing the campus network or on-campus computers, please contact the help desk. DoIT is located in Innovation Hall, Rm.416; 703-993-3178; <http://www.doit.gmu.edu>.

Important Semester Dates: To see the academic calendar for the semester and important dates regarding registration and holidays, please see: <http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/>