English 201: Introduction to Fiction: Apocalyptic Literature
(General Education/Humanities)

Session: Spring 2019
Instructor: Dr. Marjorie Allison
Mailbox: 122 Simpkins Hall
Main Office Phone 298:1103
Office: 115/16 Simpkins Hall
Office Hours: TTh 9:45-10:45, Th 1-2, W 10:30-11:30 and by appt.
E-mail: MC-Allison@wiu.edu

Required Texts:
Atwood, Margaret. *Handmaid’s Tale.*
Bacigalupi, Paolo. *Pump Six and Other Stories.*
Elison, Meg. *The Book of the Unnamed Midwife*
McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road.*
St. John Mandel, Emily. *Station Eleven.*
Vaughan, Brian. *Y: The Last Man, Book One*

Students will also read short stories which will be posted on WesternOnline. Other course materials and links will be posted at WesternOnline as well.

Course Description:
Why is our culture so interested in the end of the world? This course will explore that question by introducing students to contemporary and classic literature that looks at how doomsday may arrive. Students will learn several arch-typical narrative forms and conventions used in the genre. We will also study how different writers adopt these conventions of catastrophe literature to serve their own narrative purposes.

Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction often includes a critique of social, historical, and economic norms and conditions. In addition, these narratives also provide authors and readers a way of understanding, intervening in, and transforming these same social norms and conditions. In other words, creativity, hope, transformation, and re-birth are often the subtexts for apocalyptic stories about war, disease, famine, and world-smashing asteroids: if not in the literature then in the lives of the authors and readers.

The course is also designed to increase the students’ ability to analyze fiction, to examine what fiction is and what might prompt writers to write, and to critically read, write and think about literary texts.

Requirements and Grading:
Participation: In this course students are expected to participate fully in class discussion. This is not a lecture course and each student must come to class each
day ready and willing to raise questions and make comments about the text at hand. Students will be asked to bring in outside materials at times. The success and quality of the course is in the hands of the students--only full participation and commitment will make the course “work” to its fullest potential. Each student will be asked to help lead class discussion at least once this semester. (Class Participation is worth about 15% of the final grade, or 150 points). Informal in-class writing will be counted as part of class participation. If needed, I will implement reading quizzes.

Participation will be evaluated using the following general criteria:

A: Student contributes *daily* and *significantly* and always actively focuses on class discussion.
B: Student contributes *regularly* and always actively focuses on class discussion.
C: Student contributes *sporadically* and/or always actively focuses on class discussion.
D: Student contributes *rarely* and/or frequently does not stay actively focused on the discussion.
F: Student does not contribute and does not stay actively focused on the discussion.

I do not expect nor require students to have the “right” answer or to provide groundbreaking analysis but merely to engage in the process of discussing and analyzing the literature. Remember that quality is better than quantity but quantity is better than no quantity.

In order to participate at the level required, you will need to read the assignments carefully and critically. Here are some helpful guidelines for reading critically:

- Read the work of literature or article in advance (not right before class),
- Reread the work or sections of the work that are tricky or dense,
- Take reading notes – both summative and critical,
- Identify and question subtextual ideas and concepts

**Reading Responses:** Most weeks you will turn in a page (or more if you so choose) typed response to one or more of the readings for that week. In your response you can pose questions; explore how various texts are interrelated; consider the role of politics in the text; record your response to characters, plot, setting; consider the text’s place in the course or in literature in general; or other topics that seem of interest. I am not interested in a restatement of class discussion—I was there; I don’t need to hear it repeated. However, at times you
may want to consider comments that others made in class to highlight YOUR OWN VIEWS. I will not accept late responses. Better grades will go to those students who demonstrate an honest attempt to engage with the texts on a meaningful level. (Responses collectively will be worth about 15% of the final grade, or 150 points).

**Formal Papers:** You will write two formal papers. Each paper should be about 4 pages in length. In the papers you will respond to one or two of the texts and explore a question of interest to you. We will discuss possible topics in class. (The first paper is worth about 15%, the second is worth about 20%, of the final grade).

**Exams:** You will take a midterm and a final exam which will be comprised of short answer and essay questions. The midterm exam will be worth about 15% of the final grade, and the final exam will be worth about 20% of the final grade.

**General Information**

**Participation, Attendance and Punctuality:** Because this course is based upon class discussion, attendance and participation are crucial to the success of the course and the success of individual students in the course. In order to participate you must not only attend class but also arrive on time. If you are absent, it is up to you to find out from classmates what material you have missed and to find out what you need to do for the next class session. Any student who falls into a pattern of absenteeism will find his or her final grade adversely effected; persistent lateness will have a similar effect. Each student is allowed four absences for the semester--no questions asked. For each absence beyond four, I will deduct one half grade from your final grade for Class Participation. A pattern of chronic absences will result in the final, overall grade being lowered.

**Conduct:** I expect my classes operate with great respect for a large diversity of ideas and viewpoints. This atmosphere is essential in any academic setting. I expect all students to respect and listen to other viewpoints—I do not expect all students to agree on issues. Mature, respectful, and thoughtful dialogue is encouraged. Insensitive comments and conduct will not be tolerated, whether aimed at me or at a class member. Please see the Code of Student Conduct: http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php

**Papers:** Papers must be turned in both electronically to WO and in hard copy to me.

**Deadlines for Papers:** Each student can elect to take up to a two day grace paper on one major paper for the course, no questions asked. If, at the end of the grace
paper, the paper is still not done, the student must meet with me in person to go
over a draft or outline of the student’s ideas and to set a schedule for the paper’s
completion. On any other “late” papers, the paper grade will be lowered half of
a grade for each day late unless you have made special arrangements with me
before the due date because something highly unusual is occurring.--I reserve the
right to not write comments on late papers.

Scholastic Dishonesty: Scholastic dishonesty of any kind on any assignment
undermines the quality of education at WIU and will not be tolerated under any
circumstances. Scholastic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, falsification,
multiple submissions, and plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty of any kind will
result in an F in the course and will be reported to CAGAS. It is your
responsibility to understand what constitutes scholastic dishonesty. I will also be
happy to answer any questions you may have. You should also consult the
University policy at http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Students with disabilities: In accordance with
University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request
academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in
barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official
request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability
Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall.
Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is
accessible to you in a timely manner.

Title IX: University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex
discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence,
and stalking. If you, or someone you know, have been the victim of any of these
offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-
1977 or anonymously online at:
http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php. If you
disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the
Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at:

University Writing Center: The UWC is available to assist you with general and
specific questions on any of the writing assignments for this course. Consultants
can add another voice to your writing at any stage in the writing process from
brainstorming to polishing the final product. Please call for an appointment
(298–2815) and be sure to take a copy of your assignment to your session. The
main center is located on the 3rd floor of Malpass Library. Satellite centers can be
found in Simpkins, Bayliss, and Tanner. A visit to the UWC should be a
supplement to (rather than a replacement for) talking about your paper with me.

**Email:** Email correspondence is a quick and easy way to communicate during this semester. I will use it frequently to communicate with the class, and I encourage you to use it to contact me to set up an appointment, ask questions, make comments, etc. I do consider email to be formal communication so I expect emails to be properly addressed, to maintain a professional tone, and to be grammatically correct. If your question or request is too large to be handily resolved over email, I will ask you to set an appointment to discuss it in an individual conference.

**Office Hours:** Students are encouraged to visit during office hours. These are available to use without setting an appointment. Additionally, if I am in my office, feel free to drop in to see if I am available to meet. If you are not able to meet during office hours, please email me, and we can set an appointment.

**Final Notes:**

--Students are urged to keep an extra copy of their papers and of any other important work. If you hand something in late or in to my e-mail account, be sure that you confirm with me that I received the material.

--All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

--The papers must be typed or word-processed. Grades on late papers will be lowered half of a grade for each day late unless you have made special arrangements with me before the due date.--I reserve the right to not write comments on late papers.

--Grading is done in accordance with college guidelines and are earned according to the following standard:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>63-66%</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62%</td>
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--Please turn off your cellphone ringer during class, and please refrain from texting during class.

--Exams can only be rescheduled in advance of the test.

**Reading Schedule**

(This schedule and list is subject to change according to the needs of the class. All changes will be announced in class, and it is up to you to keep informed.
about any changes.)

1/15  Introductions
1/17  WesternOnline: “There Will Come Soft Rains,” “The Star,” and “Darkness”

1/22  Begin Y: The Last Man
1/24  “

1/29  “
1/31  Stories from Pump Six

2/5  Begin The Handmaid’s Tale
2/7  “

2/12  No Class
2/14  The Handmaid’s Tale and draft of Paper One

2/19  “ and Paper One Due
2/21  Stories from Pump Six

2/26  Begin The Road
2/28  “

3/5  “
3/7  Midterm Exam

Spring Break 3/11-3/15

3/19  Stories from Pump Six
3/21  Begin The Book of the Unnamed Midwife

3/26  “
3/28  “

4/2  Stories from Pump Six
4/4  Begin Station Eleven

4/9  “
4/11  “ and draft of Paper Two

4/16  “ and Paper Two Due
4/18   "

4/23  Begin *Far North*
4/25   "

4/30   "
5/2    "

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 7th at 3 pm