

Fall 2016
ENGLISH 2010-103: LITERATURE AND GENRE

Thematic Title: *Alternate History*

MWF 1:00-1:50 PM

Cudahy Hall 108

Professor Gerry Canavan

Marquette Hall 244

gerry.canavan@marquette.edu

Office Phone: 414-288-6860

Office Hours: MWF 11:30 AM-12:30 PM or by appointment

What if Hitler had never taken power? What if the United States had never dropped the atomic bomb on Japan? What if the 9/11 terror attacks had been foiled? What if Gore had beat Bush? What if slaves in the American South had successfully revolted, or China had discovered the New World, or the Black Plague had killed 99% of Europeans instead of only 25%? What if cloning had been invented and perfected in the 1970s? What if Superman's rocket ship had landed in the Ukraine instead of Kansas? Is history made by Great Men, or by social movements, or by technological progress, or by random chance? Does history follow some set of laws or rules, or is it all just a bunch of stuff that happens? This course will explore all these topics and more through dedicated exploration of the literary genre typically called "alternate history": stories of worlds that are exactly like ours, until some historical event, big or small, goes another way...

WHAT IS ENGLISH 2010?

Students in English 2010 learn to analyze literature and its genre conventions in a deliberate, logical, and rigorous manner, organized around a particular literary form, concept, historical moment, or theme. This semester our organizing principle will be *alternate history*, a subgenre of narrative fiction which we will encounter in a variety of short stories, novels, television programs, films, musical theater, and video games. On occasion you will also be invited to use your imaginations to craft alternate histories yourself.

Please note that both English 2000 and English 2010 are **repeatable courses**, provided the content is significantly different for each section of the course taken. Please contact me if you have any questions about repeating English 2000 or 2010.

LEARNING GOALS

Upon completing English core studies in literature, Marquette University students will be able to:

- Produce oral and written assessments of literary and cultural texts and / or performances using the language and concepts of one of these two knowledge area disciplines.
- Articulate how literary and cultural texts and/or performances can transform one's understanding of self, others, and communities.
- Apply the methodologies of literary criticism to representative works of literature.

Additionally, the English department further names these goals for English 2000 and 2010:

- Articulate how the imaginative constructs of poetry, drama, and prose (fiction and nonfiction) illuminate fundamental questions of human experience.
- Define critical theories/methods of reading.
- Identify rhetorical tactics within texts.
- Analyze the function of rhetorical tactics within texts.
- Argue for interpretations and evaluations of texts.
- Reflect on the validity of personal bases for evaluating texts in light of textual, historical, and cultural evidence.
- Construct well-written texts in a variety of genres and/or media.
- Deliver effective multi-media presentations.
- Demonstrate effective strategies for collaboration with peers.

Finally, upon completion of this particular version of English 2010, students will be able to:

- Identify and understand various formal characteristics of the alternate history genre;
- Demonstrate understanding of the cultural, historical, and political contexts in which various texts have been produced;
- Apply techniques of critical analysis as appropriate to diverse literary forms, genres, and media;
- Use literary study to develop skills for careful reading and clear writing;
- Read and discuss science fiction on the levels of both form and content.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All texts are available at the BookMarq bookshop on 16th Street, though you are not required to purchase them there. Any edition of the books will do.

Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Lucky Strike*

Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*

Terry Bisson, *Fire on the Mountain*

Abdourahman A. Waberi, *In the United States of Africa*

Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*

Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Lathe of Heaven*

Please note: Originally, this syllabus also included Mark Millar's graphic novel *Superman: Red Son*, but that book is no longer required.

Additional readings and course materials will be made available via D2L, or during class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Class Participation: 20%

Six D2L Posts: 18%

Creative Micro-Assignments: 12%

First Paper: 15%

Second Paper: 15%

Final Project: 20%

Additional details on all assignments will be distributed in class well in advance of the due date.

GRADING

Grades will follow the following rubric:

- * To earn a **C**, you must clearly restate the meaning or project of a text in your own terms. A C essay may volunteer an original argument, but will likely lack evidence or analysis of its sources. C essays are clearly written, though they might display some grammatical weakness.
- * To earn a **B**, you must begin to raise important questions about the text under consideration and to use those questions to drive your own interpretive agenda. A B essay typically advances an original argument and provides solid analysis of the text(s) under consideration. B essays are clear, concise, and free of grammatical errors.
- * To earn an **A**, you must construct an essay that does more than simply comment on the work of others; you must forward, counter, or transform what they have to say. An A essay advances an original argument that builds toward a climax and makes a persuasive case for its own significance. A essays are clearly written, and often eloquent.
- * A **D** means that you have not written in clear prose or that you seem to have deeply misunderstood the text. An **F** means that you did not fully or seriously engage the assignment.
- * **AB, BC, and CD** grades fall squarely in the gaps between the above categories.

CREATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

On several days in the course I will ask you to do some small creative writing or other form of artistic creation in the alternate history genre of your own and post the results on D2L. I want you to feel liberated in these responses, so please know that you won't be judged on what you produce so long as you participate in the assignment in good faith—but if what you produce is especially interesting, beautiful, or cool you can certainly earn extra credit that way.

QUIZZES

I do not like to give reading quizzes; I think they infantilize the college-level scholar. However, this is by necessity a very reading-intensive class; if it seems to me that people are not keeping up with the reading, pop quizzes may become necessary despite my philosophical objections. You have been warned.

FORMAT OF WRITTEN WORK

Your written work should be typed in twelve-point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins, saved in a format Microsoft Word can open. Your filename should contain *your name and the assignment* in it, for example, yourlastname-firstpaper.docx.

I expect you to *edit and proofread* all written work. Drafts that contain excessive typos or grammar mistakes may be returned to the author for correction before I offer comments.

Please give each piece of writing an original title, and include your name, assignment, and due date in a header on the first page. Insert page numbers if your work spans more than one page.

All sources relied upon for the writing of your paper, including the primary text, must be appropriately cited.

PAPER SUBMISSION

Your papers should be submitted via D2L's Dropbox by class time on the due date. **Late papers will be penalized a full grade for each day that it is late; due to university policy late final papers cannot be accepted at all.** Except in very unusual circumstances, work will not be accepted by email.

Your other written work (which will primarily take the form of discussion forum posts) will be posted on the D2L forums. These mini-papers will have **flexible due dates** driven by your own interests and responses. **It is thus your responsibility to make sure you are properly keeping up with this portion of the course.**

EXTENSIONS

Although the papers in this course have a sufficiently long timetable to allow you to plan and complete all assignments in a timely manner, I nonetheless recognize that each of you has a unique schedule and that some of the due dates I have selected could occasionally prove problematic for individual students in the course. **If you find that you will need an extension on a particular assignment due to this kind of conflict, please contact me as soon as possible to arrange an alternative due date.** Extensions will *not* be granted retroactively.

TECHNOLOGY IS TERRIBLE: PLAN AHEAD!

The Internet goes down. Files become corrupted. Computers crash. These are predictable facts of twenty-first century life, not emergencies. For this course, for all your courses, for the rest of your career and your life in this world you need to develop work habits and strategies that take into account the basic, inescapable unreliability of computers. Start your assignments well in advance of the due date; save them often; save backup copies of essential documents, including copies off-site using a service like Carbonite, Dropbox, or Google Drive.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class discussion is an essential component of this seminar; class discussion, not lecture, will be the primary means by which we will investigate these texts together. It is therefore crucial that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it. **Consequently, attendance in this class is absolutely mandatory.** You should plan on attending every class. Please talk to me (in advance if possible) if you ever find you will need to miss a class meeting.

The course adheres to Marquette University's attendance policy, which can be found on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#attendance>. You are allowed **four absences** over the course of the summer semester. **After that, your class participation will drop by a letter grade for each additional absence.** Upon the seventh absence, you will receive a WA (Withdrawn—Excessive Absences) for the semester.

Merely being present is insufficient to earn an "A" for class participation. Each student is expected to *participate in* and *contribute to* our discussions. Just being in the room is not enough.

DISCUSSION INAUGURATOR

Each member of the class will have one day in which they are expected to inaugurate our discussion by articulating a brief (but detailed) five-minute response to the day's reading. The requirements for this are necessarily very loose, as each day of the course will have a very different type of text to be discussed; in general, however, the discussion inaugurator will be asked to (1) articulate a thoughtful and critical response to some aspect of the material and (2) direct our collective attention to one or two problems in, questions about, or particularly important moments from the reading for that day.

A signup sheet for this role will be distributed in class after drop/add ends.

D2L FORUMS

This course will make extensive use of the D2L forums at <http://d2l.mu.edu/>. In addition to being a place where you can find electronic copies of the syllabus and other course handouts, D2L also features an online forum where you can express your response to the material before class begins and where we can continue our discussions after class is over.

The D2L discussion forums are an excellent place for people who may feel inhibited by in-class discussion to share their opinions with the class. I will be reading the discussion forum regularly and I recommend you do the same. I encourage you to think of your D2L posts as “seeds” for the longer papers; feel free to begin to develop your thoughts there. You may choose either to begin a discussion thread on a new topic or to respond to a post composed by one of your classmates.

Before class on Wednesday, every student is required to take the following actions:

- * **upload a picture of their face to their D2L profile**
- * **write a short response to one of the “What If…” prompts at the end of this syllabus**

After that, students must write **six short posts** responding to **any six texts** across the remainder of the course. These posts should be completed either by midnight before one of the class discussions devoted to that text, or by the midnight before the following class. At least half of the posts should be completed before Fall Break.

Up to two additional posts beyond the required six will count towards extra credit on your final grade. Additional posts beyond that number, and posts that respond substantively to other students' arguments, will be looked upon very favorably when I calculate your final grade.

EMAIL

Students in this class are required to check their official Marquette email account—whatever account D2L sends its emails to—at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

I endeavor to respond to all emails within 24 hours, usually much less—but please do not send me urgent emails regarding your assignments on the night before they are due and expect an immediate reply.

LAPTOP POLICY

In-class use of laptops, Kindles, iPads, etc. is permitted for access to electronic versions of our texts and for notetaking. However, students *must* refrain from non-class-related computer use, including email, instant messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and the like. I reserve the right to ban individual technological devices if this becomes a problem. No use of cell phones will be permitted during class time, except in highly unusual circumstances cleared with me in advance; please turn off your ringers and put them out of sight.

WORKSHOPS

Two days on the syllabus have been designated in-class “workshops.” On these days you will bring in four copies of your progress towards your next major paper to share with a small group of your peers. **At a minimum this should entail an introductory paragraph; a clear and direct thesis statement with which it would be possible to disagree; and an outline of the major pieces of evidence you plan to discuss in the body of the paper.**

Attendance is mandatory on workshop days as it is on any other day in which class is in session.

CONFERENCES

In lieu of our scheduled class on November 4, **all students are required to meet with me in a short one-on-one conference at my office at least once during the semester** to discuss the course and your work within it. Please know I am very happy to meet with you individually to discuss either graded work or work-in-progress in excess of this requirement as many times as you like. Simply come to my weekly office hours, or see or email me to set up an appointment.

MOVIE NIGHT!

Before our discussion of *Inglourious Basterds*, I will have an evening screening of the film on campus, at a time and place to be announced. If you can't make the screening, please arrange to see the film on your own.

WRITING CENTER

Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Center, located in Raynor Library Room 240, at any stage of the writing process. Please visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.marquette.edu/english/writingcenter> to find out how to schedule an appointment and to access the studio's online resources.

FLEXIBILITY

If it will benefit the class, changes may be made to the above.

ACCOMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who believe they may require accommodations in this course should contact me early in the semester so your learning needs can be appropriately met.

I am of course more than happy to work with you to make sure you are successful in this course and to make this course most accessible for you. However, without documentation, I am limited in what I am able to do. Therefore, in order for me to help you most effectively, I need you to be

proactive in contacting Marquette University's Office of Disability Services (located on the fifth floor of the 707 Building).

ODS can be reached by phone at (414) 288-1645 or by email at ods@marquette.edu.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to abide by the academic honesty policy outlined in your undergraduate bulletin. I urge you all to examine this material and consult me with any questions you may have about plagiarism or academic integrity *before* it becomes an issue.

Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. **Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course.** No exceptions or special dispensations will be made.

Marquette students now sign an Honor Pledge, which states:

- *I recognize the importance of personal integrity in all aspects of life and work.*
- *I commit myself to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, by which I earn the respect of others.*
- *I support the development of good character, and commit myself to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity as an important aspect of personal integrity.*
- *My commitment obliges me to conduct myself according to the Marquette University Honor Code.*

Full details of Marquette's academic integrity policy are available on the Internet at <http://www.marquette.edu/provost/academic-integrity.php>.

On a personal level, I (like everyone) hate being lied to. Please, do not feel you need to concoct elaborate stories. Simply be honest with me about whatever is going on and we will work it out.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

We all enter this classroom with preexisting political, ethical, philosophical, and intellectual commitments. You are all required to engage the material—but you are absolutely *not* required to agree either with any of the writers we will discuss, or with me, in whole or in part.

RESPECT

This classroom is a community. It is crucial that we treat each other with the appropriate level of courtesy and respect. No one should be made to feel unwelcome here.

Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will **severely** negatively impact your class participation grade.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class as they become necessary.

Students should come to class prepared to discuss the listed texts or chapters.

M	Aug. 29	FIRST DAY OF CLASS <i>in-class writing exercise: “What If…”</i>
W	Aug. 31	<i>class discussion: “What If…”</i>
		UNIT ONE: ALTERNATE WORLD WAR IIs
F	Sep. 2	Kim Stanley Robinson, “The Lucky Strike”
M	Sep. 5	LABOR DAY—NO CLASS
W	Sep. 7	Kim Stanley Robinson, “A Sensitive Dependence on Initial Conditions”
F	Sep. 9	FIRST PAPER GUIDELINES DISTRIBUTED <i>Star Trek: “The City on the Edge of Forever”</i> (discussion only; watch it on your own!) <i>criticism: H. Bruce Franklin, “Star Trek in the Vietnam Era”</i> [D2L]
M	Sep. 12	Philip K. Dick, <i>The Man in the High Castle</i> , chapters 1-3
W	Sep. 14	Philip K. Dick, <i>The Man in the High Castle</i> , chapters 4-6
F	Sep. 16	Philip K. Dick, <i>The Man in the High Castle</i> , chapters 7-9
M	Sep. 19	Philip K. Dick, <i>The Man in the High Castle</i> , chapters 10-13
W	Sep. 21	Philip K. Dick, <i>The Man in the High Castle</i> (whole book)
F	Sep. 23	<i>The Man in the High Castle</i> (2015 Amazon pilot) (discussion only; watch it on your own!)
M	Sep. 26	Quentin Tarantino, <i>Inglourious Basterds</i> (discussion only; optional screening date and time TBA)
W	Sep. 28	Quentin Tarantino, <i>Inglourious Basterds</i> (discussion continues) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>review: Ben Waters, “Debating Inglourious Basterds”</i> [Web] • <i>review: Michael Atkinson, “The Anti-Blockbuster”</i> [Web] • <i>review: Lee Siegel, “Tarantino’s Hollow Violence”</i> [Web] • <i>review: Jeffrey Goldberg, “Hollywood’s Jewish Avenger”</i> [Web]
F	Sep. 30	Lauren Davis, “Quentin Tarantino’s Spin Through Alternate History” [io9.com] <i>creative writing: Draft a short flash fiction [500-1000 words] <u>or</u> create an artifact, document, or image set in the 2016 of the world of <i>Inglourious Basterds</i></i> Philip Roth, <i>The Plot Against America</i> (excerpt) [D2L]

		UNIT TWO: OTHER HISTORIES
M	Oct. 3	FIRST PAPER WORKSHOP <i>Bring in at least your introductory paragraphs, main claim, and an outline of your paper.</i>
W	Oct. 5	Sid Meier's <i>Civilization</i> <i>videos:</i> Civilization V timelapse gameplay videos [YouTube] <i>post:</i> Trevor Owens, "Sid Meier's <i>Colonization</i> : Is It Offensive Enough?" [Web] <i>thread:</i> Lycerius, "I've Been Playing the Same Game of <i>Civilization</i> for Almost Ten Years. This Is the Result" [Reddit]
F	Oct. 7	Sid Meier's <i>Civilization</i> <i>criticism:</i> Kacper Pobłocki, "Becoming-State: The Bio-Cultural Imperialism of Sid Meier's <i>Civilization</i> "
M	Oct. 10	FIRST PAPER DUE SECOND PAPER GUIDELINES DISTRIBUTED Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" [D2L]
W	Oct. 12	Karen Joy Fowler, "Game Night at the Fox and Goose" [D2L]
F	Oct. 14	<i>criticism:</i> L. Timmel Duchamp, "Playing with the Big Boys: (Alternate) History in Karen Joy Fowler's 'Game Night at the Fox and Goose'" [Web]
M	Oct. 17	Lin-Manuel Miranda, <i>Hamilton</i>
W	Oct. 19	Lin-Manuel Miranda, <i>Hamilton</i> <i>thinkpiece:</i> Jennifer Schuessler, " <i>Hamilton</i> and History: Are They in Sync?" [Web] <i>interview:</i> Rebecca Onion and Lyra D. Monteiro, "A <i>Hamilton</i> Skeptic on Why the Show Isn't As Revolutionary As It Seems" [Web]
F	Oct. 21	FALL BREAK—NO CLASS
M	Oct. 24	Terry Bisson, <i>Fire on the Mountain</i> , pgs. 1-66
W	Oct. 26	Terry Bisson, <i>Fire on the Mountain</i> , pgs. 67-119
F	Oct. 28	Terry Bisson, <i>Fire on the Mountain</i> (whole book)
M	Oct. 31	Abdourahman A. Waberi, <i>In the United States of Africa</i> (part one)
W	Nov. 2	Abdourahman A. Waberi, <i>In the United States of Africa</i> (whole book) <i>criticism:</i> Justin Izzo, "Historical Reversibility as Ethnographic Afrofuturism: Abdourahman Waberi's Alternative Africa"
F	Nov. 4	CONFERENCES—CLASS CANCELLED
		UNIT THREE: DREAMING OF DIFFERENCE
M	Nov. 7	Kazuo Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> (chapters 1-4)
W	Nov. 9	Kazuo Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> (chapters 5-6)
F	Nov. 11	Kazuo Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> (chapters 7-9)

M	Nov. 14	SECOND PAPER DUE FINAL PROJECT GUIDELINES DISTRIBUTED Kazuo Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> (chapters 10-13)
W	Nov. 16	Kazuo Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> (chapters 14-16)
F	Nov. 18	Kazuo Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> (chapters 17-19)
M	Nov. 21	Kazuo Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> (whole book) Martin Puchner, “When We Were Clones” [D2L]
W	Nov. 23	THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS
F	Nov. 25	THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS
M	Nov. 28	Ursula K. Le Guin, <i>The Lathe of Heaven</i> (chapters 1-4)
W	Nov. 30	Ursula K. Le Guin, <i>The Lathe of Heaven</i> (chapters 5-8)
F	Dec. 2	Ursula K. Le Guin, <i>The Lathe of Heaven</i> (whole book)
M	Dec. 5	Octavia E. Butler, “The Book of Martha” <i>creative writing</i> : Imagine God comes to you with the same offer he/she/it brings to Martha. What one change would you make to the world, and why?
W	Dec. 7	Octavia E. Butler, “The Book of Martha” (discussion continues) <i>creative writing</i> : Draft a flash fiction [500-1000 words] <u>or</u> create an artifact, document, or image set in the world that exists sometime after the end of “The Book of Martha.” Octavia E. Butler, “Afterword to ‘The Book of Martha’” Gerry Canavan, <i>Octavia E. Butler</i> (excerpt) [D2L]
F	Dec. 9	FINAL PROJECT WORKSHOP LAST DAY OF CLASS
F	Dec. 16	FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE BY 12:30 PM

FOLLOW FAME: FRIENDS AND ALUMNI/AE OF MARQUETTE ENGLISH

On Facebook (page): www.facebook.com/marquettefame

On Facebook (group): www.facebook.com/groups/496438583889194

(search for “Undergraduate English at Marquette”)

On Twitter: @MarquetteFAME

Mark your calendars! On Tuesday, November 1 at 5 PM in Marquette Hall 105, FAME will host a “Creative Careers” Panel, featuring Marquette alumni, with a reception to follow. This is a great opportunity for our students to learn more about how to get/create that break to get started in various creative careers.

I will also be inviting you to events in the pop culture and pizza series I run periodically during the semester. I hope you can attend!

WHAT IF...

...9/11 had never happened?

...Martin Luther King hadn't been assassinated?

...men got pregnant instead of women?

...Columbus never left Italy?

...the colonists lost the Revolution?

...the North lost the Civil War?

...the Internet had never been invented?

...Christianity hadn't become the dominant religion in Europe?

...Adolf Hitler had never been born?

...(or name your own scenario)

For Wednesday, choose **one** of these prompts and compose a short description (five to ten sentences or so) of what you think the world would be like in 2016 as a result of this change. Please post your answer in the appropriate thread on D2L.

ENTRANCE SURVEY

NAME

YEAR

MAJOR

HOMETOWN

MY FAVORITE BOOK, SHOW, FILM, GAME, COMIC, OR OTHER SORT OF MEDIA TEXT IS:

THE PERIOD OF HISTORY THAT MOST INTERESTS ME IS:

I WOULD SAY I KNOW A LOT ABOUT HISTORY:

Y N

I WOULD SAY I KNOW MORE ABOUT HISTORY THAN MOST PEOPLE:

Y N

MY HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASSES WERE:

THE BEST OKAY I GUESS THE WORST

MY HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY CLASSES WERE:

THE BEST OKAY I GUESS THE WORST

I HAVE PLAYED THE COMPUTER GAME *CIVILIZATION*, OR AM AT LEAST FAMILIAR WITH IT AS A BASIC CONCEPT:

Y N

I HAVE LISTENED TO THE *HAMILTON* SOUNDTRACK:

Y N

I KNOW WHAT *HAMILTON* IS:

Y N