

Fall 2025

ENGLISH 4716/5716: Science Fiction/Fantasy

Thematic Title: Frank Herbert's Dune

MWF 12:00 PM-12:50 PM

Johnston Hall 107

Professor: Gerry Canavan

Marquette Hall 115A

gerry.canavan@marquette.edu

Drop-In Office Hours: MWF 11:00 AM-11:50 AM or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Fereshteh Majdi

Marquette Hall 008U

fereshteh.majdi@marquette.edu

Drop-In Office Hours: MW 1:00-1:50 PM

Course Description: Frank Herbert's innovative, hyper-influential, and devilishly fun novel *Dune* was published 60 years ago this year—and, with the recent Denis Villeneuve adaptations, the series may be at its all-time peak of popularity and cultural influence. This year's Science Fiction/Fantasy course is devoted entirely to the series, with special focus on the first two books, *Dune* and *Dune Messiah*, and a closing unit excerpting the third and fourth books in the series, *Children of Dune* and *God Emperor of Dune*, as well as considering the Brian-Herbert-led *Dune* mega-franchise of expanded universe novels, television series, and games. *Dune*, alongside its sequels, remains a tentpole work in the history of science fiction, marking a major pivot point for the genre: in addition to being one of the first works of classic science fiction to truly take the environment, and environmental constraint, seriously, it is also a work that troubles the typical imperial and galactic-cosmopolitan leanings of writers like Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, and Gene Roddenberry by siding instead with the colonized subjects of the Galactic Empire. (It is noteworthy that the key word in the final half of *Dune* is "jihad"—and that the text is on the side of the jihadis.) In *Dune Messiah* (the basis for the upcoming Villeneuve movie, expected in 2026), this approach to revolutionary violence is then itself critiqued, leaving the main character despairing, and deconstructing the "chosen one" narrative common in genre fiction in ways that were decades ahead of its time.

We will supplement our study of *Dune* with key works of postcolonial theory, ecological critique, adaptation studies, franchise studies, religion and secularity studies, and artificial intelligence theory to better understand *Dune* not only in its context but in ours. Partially funded by a grant from the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, we will also attend to how *Dune* speaks to the ways societies manage conflict, internally and externally, especially around resource management and cultural difference; among the many things *Dune* is about, it is centrally about the singular importance of oil to industrial capitalism, and about how the "resource curse" of oil has dominated global politics for a century, leading to conflicts we

continue to try to untangle even as the oil age is, itself, slowly starting to come to its end. *Dune* is a gripping story, but it is also a powerful allegory, one that has helped critics and fans better understand the world situation since its first publication sixty years ago and remains intensely relevant (in good ways and bad!) today. Along the way, we will also study *Dune*'s many adaptations, from Lynch in 1984 to the Syfy Channel in 2000 to Villeneuve and HBO Max in the 2020s, as well as consider some of the many other works it has inspired, perhaps chief among them George Lucas's *Star Wars: Episode Four—A New Hope*.

Note: Absolutely no prior knowledge of Dune is required for this course.

LEARNING GOALS

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the cultural, historical, political, and philosophical contexts in which Frank Herbert wrote;
- Identify and understand various formal characteristics both of the *Dune* storyworld and of science fiction more generally;
- Apply techniques of critical analysis as appropriate to diverse literary forms, genres, and media;
- Participate and intervene in contemporary debates over *Dune* and its literary/cultural legacy;
- Use literary and cultural study to develop skills for careful reading and clear writing;
- Read and discuss a variety of literary and nonliterary texts on the levels of both form and content.

MARQUETTE CORE CURRICULUM: EXPANDING OUR HORIZONS THEME

The guiding questions for the Expanding Our Horizons theme are:

1. How do we know what we claim to know? How do we identify what we do not know?
2. Given this fundamental task of recognizing the boundaries of our knowledge, how do we pose questions that expand approaches to key problems and their disciplinary frames of reference?

A defining characteristic of human beings is our desire to ask questions and to explore the unknown. We spend our lives seeking to understand our origins, probing the boundaries of the universe and uncharted frontiers, and investigating unsolved mysteries. Yet each new discovery reveals additional limitations that must be explored if knowledge and understanding are to proceed. Our impulse to expand our horizons can be seen in several traits: our innate, human creativity; our pursuit of new technologies that better respond to our challenges and provide greater insight into the unknown; and our use of imagination and inventiveness to examine our relationship to the world in which we live. Courses in this theme will focus on how the process of discovery--through art, scientific research, and other modes of seeking answers to fundamental questions--expands our understanding of the value of life and enriches our interaction with our communities, the planet, and the universe. Additionally, courses in this theme may engage the ways in which human activity and advancing technology must be weighed against immediate and long-term consequences, like climate change and pollution, in order to create sustainable solutions for the future.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 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.

THIS COURSE AND LIFE AFTER MARQUETTE

Marquette identifies seven key career preparation skills that its courses teach across disciplines, which it calls the Professional Formation Competencies:

- **Problem Solve with Curiosity:** You solve problems with conscience and curiosity, using critical thinking.
- **Develop Career Management Skills:** You approach career management with attention to self-awareness, intentional effort to grow knowledge related to profession, quiet reflection, and action toward fulfilling your unique purpose.
- **Collaborate for Solidarity:** You collaborate for solidarity, prioritizing working for the good of the group and acting as a person for and with others.
- **Communicate Responsibly and Ethically:** You approach ethical communication with the intent of identifying reliable sources, taking responsibility for what and how you communicate, and reaching shared understanding.
- **Lead for the Common Good:** You demonstrate leadership through self-initiative and the empowerment of others to advance solutions for the greater good of all.
- **Commit to Justice, Equity, and Belonging:** You understand biases and advocate for an environment that fosters belonging of diverse people, appreciation of differing perspectives, and action toward justice, equity, and belonging.
- **Adapt in Discipline and Technology:** You adapt in your discipline and relevant technologies, knowing the tools available to you and participating in advancements in your profession.

Our collective study of *Dune*, including our discussions of its meanings and messages and your self-guided development of a major semester-long research project of your choosing, will intersect with many of these professional formation competencies, and could even ultimately form one example of the sorts of skills and values you developed during your time in college at a future job interview.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND PERSONAL EMERGENCIES

Everyone at Marquette recognizes that this continues to be an extremely difficult time which may be filled with many different sorts of uncertainty as we move forward with the academic

year. Your safety, health, and well-being are our primary concern and we want to be able to support you in any way that we can.

The university also understands that you may be facing personal obstacles that may make it difficult to meet your typical academic goals. Please refer to the Student Resources page on the Marquette COVID-19 Response webpage for information and resources on basic needs such as housing, food, financial aid, and medical and mental health; the webpage also offers information on official University communications, access to technology, and student services. Faculty and staff are also here for you.

If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your situation outside of class, please don't hesitate to talk with me. I want to be a resource for you. You are not alone.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the BookMarq on 16th Street)

Dune (1965)

Dune Messiah (1969)

Note: Any published edition of these texts will do, including electronic copies.

Copies of *Children of Dune* (1976) and *God-Emperor of Dune* (1981) are also available and recommended (but are not required).

Additional readings and course materials will be made available via D2L.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance, Participation, Possible Quizzes	25%
D2L Forums	25%
Final Paper/Project (10-12 pages expected)	
• Prospectus/Workshop	10%
• Progress Report	5%
• Abstract	5%
• Final Paper/Project	30%

Additional details on these assignments can be found as an appendix at the end of this document, as well as under CONTENT on D2L.

Graduate students will have different expectations; for learning outcomes and assignments please consult the ENGLISH 5716 supplement.

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.

* **A-, B+, B-, C+ (and so on) grades** fall in the gaps between the above categories.

UNGRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Your sandbox posts will be graded on an extra-credit / pass / low-pass / fail basis:

- Fulfilling all the requirements of the assignment will earn you full credit;
- Failing to do so will earn you half-credit (at best) or no credit (at worst);
- Going beyond the terms of the assignment in an especially ambitious or creative way can earn you extra credit.

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 final paper 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* in it, for example, atriesdes-finalpaper.docx. Please give your final paper an original title, and include your name, assignment, and due date in a header on the first page.

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

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

PAPER SUBMISSION

The final paper should be submitted via D2L's Dropbox by class time on the due date, Thursday, December 11, at 12:30 PM. There is no in-person final exam.

Your other written work (which will primarily take the form of forum posts) will be posted on the D2L forums in the designated "sandbox" forums.

Except in very unusual circumstances, work will not be accepted by email.

EXTENSIONS

Although the work 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, especially in the context of the pandemic. **If you find that you will need an extension on a particular assignment due to this kind of conflict, please contact me to arrange an alternative due date.** There is no need to concoct an elaborate story to justify this, or to lie to me; simply tell me the truth about what's going on and we can work out an alternative that works for you.

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 crucial that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it.

Consequently, attendance in this class is 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 **three unexcused absences** over the course of the fall semester. **After that, your class participation will drop by half a letter grade for each additional unexcused absence.** Upon the seventh unexcused absence, you may receive a WA (Withdrawn—Excessive Absences) for the semester.

Merely being present in class is insufficient for an “A” in class participation. Each student is expected to *participate in* and *contribute to* our discussions. Just being in the room is not enough. Because we have such a large group this year, there will be multiple avenues for you to make your voice heard, including small-group discussions and D2L posts.

COVID PROTOCOLS

Everyone in this class will be expected to follow the current COVID-19 policies in effect on campus, including current guidance on quarantines and on masks.

SPECIAL DISCUSSION STRUCTURE: HOUSES

In order to facilitate wider and more in-depth discussion, given the size of the class, we will be using a small-group discussion model in which every undergraduate student will be assigned to one of three “Houses” that meet separately to discuss critical and philosophical material around a topics of special interest to *Dune*. A survey of possible topics and themes will be taken in class.

On the five Friday class sessions when you are not meeting in your small group, you will complete one of your virtual sandbox posts commenting on some aspect of *Dune* as we have studied it thus far (see below). In-person attendance is only required on the day your assigned House meets.

D2L DISCUSSION FORUMS AND SANDBOX POSTS

This course will make extensive use of the forums on D2L, where you can express your response to the material before class begins and where we can continue our discussions after class is over.

The 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 it before every meeting of the course and I ask you do the same. 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 Friday, September 5, every student is required to:

- (1) upload a picture of their face or some other symbolic image to their profile;
- (2) post an “About the Author” about themselves in the designated forum;
- (3) respond to at least one of the required readings we have discussed thus far.

After that, students must make **four short sandbox posts (approximately 150-250 words that move beyond plot summary into analysis)** responding to any portion of what we have read thus far of the course. These four posts will be due on each of the five Fridays in which your “House” does not meet; you can therefore feel free to skip one. This does not have to be a formal written post, but can also take the form of a podcast, short video, a work of art or music, a short story or fan fiction, a comic, or more; any response of any sort is fine, provided it is thoughtful and substantial. These can even be done collaboratively. The idea is to respond collectively to the material we are studying together in a way that is not stifling, anxious, or overstructured by academic expectations that cannot really apply to this odd and altered educational context; my hope is to strip away grading strictures that can only be dysfunctional in the current moment and foster instead more multifaceted, more generous, and hopefully richer intellectual encounters, driven by your interests. I encourage you to think of your sandbox posts as possible “seeds” for the final project; feel free to begin to develop your thoughts there.

The forums will also be used as a place for us to workshop your final project prospectuses, as well as to post a paragraph-long abstract for your final project once it is completed. These comments do not count as part of the four total sandbox posts, but are graded separately.

Additional posts and comments, and comments that substantively engage other students’ arguments, will be looked upon very favorably when I calculate your final grade.

CONFERENCES

All students are invited to meet with me in a short one-on-one conferences at my office during the semester to discuss the course and your work within it. Simply come to my weekly drop-in office hours, or see or email me to set up an appointment. A signup sheet for office hours will be available on D2L; virtual meetings are also possible, but please make sure I know you'd prefer to meet in that format.

OUT-OF-CLASS SCREENINGS

Regrettably we do not have time to watch any films during our scheduled class hours; I will instead arrange for evening viewings of the relevant films on campus at times and locations to be determined. Students who are not able to attend the screenings are advised to watch the films on their own.

FLEXIBILITY

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

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 to find out how to schedule an appointment and to access the studio's online resources.

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.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS (“AI”)

You are expected to produce your own text for all coursework for this class. Unmarked use of LLMs (like ChatGPT) for any assignment violates academic integrity. Incorporating any part of an AI-generated response in your work for this course without permission falls under the definition of plagiarism and will be treated accordingly. Never forget why humanity waged the Butlerian Jihad.

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.

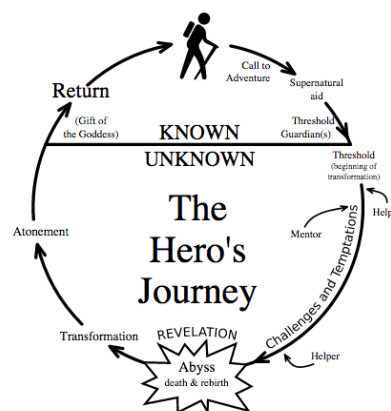
RESPECT

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.

ON PRESCIENCE, OR, A BRIEF NOTE ON SUSPENSE

As noted at the top of the syllabus, absolutely no prior knowledge of or familiarity with *Dune* is required for this class. That said, in this class we will be discussing a set of texts that, taken together, constitute one of the most famous prose narratives of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, one some of you know quite intimately (and some certainly better than I do). It is also a narrative that intersects in interesting and surprising ways with mythological, religious, and political forms from across the wide swath of human history, patterns we all know intimately.



My vision is that **we will endeavor to stick to the material assigned to a given day** with an understanding that, as scholars and critics, **it may occasionally behoove us to jump ahead in**

the story and *very briefly* consider how our understanding of what we are reading might be challenged or transformed by later events we haven't seen yet.

If you are someone who is encountering this material for the first time or for the first time in a long while and this idea makes you nervous or uncomfortable—or if you ever begin to feel lost in our discussions—please feel free to let me know, up to and including interrupting me during class.

I MEAN THAT

I want this class to be a meaningful and valuable experience for you. If you have any concerns about the way things are going, my door is always open.

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.

WEEK 1: The Consensus Future and How to Read Science Fiction

WEEKS 2-4: *Dune*, Book 1

WEEKS 5-7: *Dune*, Book 2 and *Dune* (2021)

WEEKS 8-10: *Dune*, Book 3 and other *Dune* adaptations

WEEKS 11-14: *Dune Messiah*

WEEK 15: *Dune* as Franchise

M	8/25	WELCOME TO THE CLASS
W	8/27	Isaac Asimov, “The Psychohistorians” (1951) [D2L] The Consensus Future
F	8/29	<i>Dune</i> , Book 1, chapter 1 How to Read Science Fiction
M	9/1	<i>LABOR DAY—NO CLASS</i>
W	9/3	<i>Dune</i> , Book 1, chapters 2-5
F	9/5	<i>Dune</i> , Book 1, chapters 6-8
M	9/8	<i>Dune</i> , Book 1, chapters 9-12
W	9/10	<i>Dune</i> , Book 1, chapters 13-15
F	9/12	BENE GESSERIT GROUP MEETING #1 <i>all other students work virtually</i>
M	9/15	<i>Dune</i> , Book 1, chapters 16-19
W	9/17	<i>Dune</i> , Book 1, chapters 20-22
F	9/19	HOUSE ATREIDES GROUP MEETING #1 <i>all other students work virtually</i>
M	9/22	<i>Dune</i> , Book 2, chapters 23-25 possible visitor from TMJ4

W	9/24	<i>Dune</i> , Book 2, chapters 26-29
F	9/26	HOUSE CORRINO GROUP MEETING #1 <i>all other students work virtually</i>
M	9/29	<i>Dune</i> , Book 2, chapters 30-32
W	10/1	<i>Dune</i> , Book 2, chapters 33-34
F	10/3	HOUSE HARKONNEN GROUP MEETING #1 <i>all other students work virtually</i>
M	10/6	<i>Dune</i> , Book 2, chapters 35-36
W	10/8	<i>Dune</i> (2021) discussion
F	10/10	<i>Dune</i> (2021) discussion continues and final papers/projects discussion
M	10/13	<i>Dune</i> , Book 3, chapters 37-39
W	10/15	<i>Dune</i> , Book 3, chapters 40-42
F	10/17	FALL BREAK—NO CLASS
M	10/20	<i>Dune</i> , Book 3, chapters 43-45
W	10/22	<i>Dune</i> , Book 3, chapter 46-47
F	10/24	<i>Dune</i> , Appendices I-III
M	10/27	<i>Dune</i> (2024) discussion
W	10/29	<i>Dune</i> (2024) discussion continues <i>Jodorowsky's Dune</i> (2013) and <i>Dune</i> (1984) discussion
F	10/31	WORKSHOP – NO CLASS BENE GESSERIT MEETING #2 WILL BE RESCHEDULED final papers/projects workshop this weekend on D2L
M	11/3	“Introduction to <i>Dune Messiah</i> ” by Brian Herbert, “Excerpts from the Death Cell Interview with Bronso of Ix,” and <i>Dune Messiah</i> chapters 1-3
W	11/5	<i>Dune Messiah</i> , chapters 4-6
F	11/7	HOUSE ATREIDES GROUP MEETING #2 <i>all other students work virtually</i>
M	11/10	<i>Dune Messiah</i> , chapters 7-10
W	11/12	<i>Dune Messiah</i> , chapters 11-14
F	11/14	HOUSE CORRINO GROUP MEETING #2 <i>all other students work virtually</i>
M	11/17	<i>Dune Messiah</i> , chapters 15-18
W	11/19	<i>Dune Messiah</i> , chapters 19-21
F	11/21	HOUSE HARKONNEN GROUP MEETING #2 <i>all other students work virtually</i>
M	11/24	<i>Dune Messiah</i> , chapters 22-25 and “Epilogue”

		mandatory final papers/projects progress report due on D2L by 5 PM
W	11/26	<i>THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS</i>
F	11/28	<i>THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS</i>
M	12/1	<i>Children of Dune</i> (excerpts) [D2L]
W	12/3	<i>God-Emperor of Dune</i> (excerpts) [D2L]
F	12/5	<u>House Herbert</u> 23 novels and counting, <i>Dune</i> television, <i>Dune</i> gaming... “Afterword to <i>Dune</i> ” by Brian Herbert [D2L]
Th	12/11	UNDERGRADUATE FINAL PAPERS AND PROJECTS DUE BY 12:30 PM
F	12/12	BENE GESSERIT MEETING #3 TODAY OR SOMETIME THIS WEEK HONORS AND GRADUATE FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 5 PM

FOLLOW FAME: FRIENDS AND ALUMNI/AE OF MARQUETTE ENGLISH

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

On Facebook (group): www.facebook.com/groups/496438583889194
(search for “Undergraduate English at Marquette”)

On Twitter: @MarquetteENGL

On Instagram: @marquette_english

On LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/marquetteengl/

I will also be inviting you to English community events periodically during the fall and spring semesters. I hope you can attend!

FINAL PROJECT GUIDELINES

50% of your grade in this class derives from your final project. In this respect this course is being organized much more like a graduate seminar than a conventional undergraduate class—which necessarily puts the impetus on you to manage your time effectively to produce a successful research paper or other project. To help, I’ve attempted to break up the process into a set of discrete tasks that populate the second half of the semester:

Pitch: When You’re Ready!

Prospectus Due in D2L Forums: Halloween Weekend

Progress Report: Thanksgiving Weekend

Final Project Due to Me and Abstract on D2L: Thursday, December 11, by 12:30 PM

As detailed on the syllabus, you have two general options for your final project:

OPTION #1 A traditional 10-to-12 page scholarly paper (roughly 3000 words) on some aspect of *Dune* or related works.

OPTION #2 A creative or curational project related in some way to Frank Herbert and *Dune*, in a form of your choosing.

- The “pitch” stage of the project can start as small as a one-sentence email; it simply means running your idea by me in whatever form seems most helpful to you (a conference, an email, an after-class discussion, etc.) I ask you to do so when you feel ready; my hope is that everyone have begun to think about what they want to write about by mid-October.
- The **prospectus** is a half-page to full-page anticipation of the major thrust of your argument as you anticipate it taking shape. It has three parts:
 - a paragraph or two laying out the aspect of the *Dune* storyworld you plan to discuss;
 - a paragraph articulating a *central claim* which clearly and succinctly describes your planned intervention into *Dune* studies;
 - a short prose description and/or short bibliography that lays out the archive of evidence on which you will rely to prove your central claim.

For the creative option, the prospectus will be more like a blueprint of what you hope to create.

You should think of your project as a pointed answer to a controversial question about *Dune*, taking a position on some aspect of the text or the larger *Dune* franchise (a) that you think is interesting and important (b) with which it would be possible to disagree.

For more information on developing a successful central claim, I would recommend consulting this document from the Duke University Writing Studio:

<https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/developing-a-central-claim-shortened-1.original.pdf>

- I am also of course very happy to discuss your projects-in-progress with you at any stage of the writing process, from pitch to finished product.
- We will **workshop** the prospectuses online Halloween weekend. You will share your own prospectus and provide substantive comments on two other students' prospectuses, suggesting places where you think they might refine, expand, or reconsider their argument. (Of course it's also okay to praise them!)
- I am open to any topic that seems interesting to you as a reader of *Dune*, including:
 - close readings of some aspect of the *Dune* storyworld;
 - literary interpretations of the *Dune* narrative in its totality;
 - explorations of Herbert's letters, essays, other fictions, or alternative drafts;
 - comparisons between Herbert and other writers (Isaac Asimov, George Lucas, etc.)
 - interventions against or extensions of existing works of *Dune* criticism by scholars;
 - comparisons between the books and their adaptations;
 - discussion of Brian Hebert's role as caretaker and expander of the *Dune* project;
 - discussions of other creative works related to *Dune* (including video games, board games, roleplaying games, fan scholarship and fan fictions, etc.).

I cannot stress enough how open I am to your personal interests and approaches. I want this project to be something you are excited about and enjoy writing, not a chore.

- Your final **10-to-12-page** paper/project is due to me on **Thursday, December 11, by 12:30 PM**. Alongside this you should also prepare a short, paragraph-length abstract describing your research conclusions and post this in the dedicated thread on the course blog. The Duke University Writing Studio also has a helpful page on how to write an abstract:

<https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/abstract.original.pdf>

- You may work in groups. Group composition and workplans must be approved in advance.

Again, please don't hesitate to contact me for whatever guidance I can provide at any stage of the writing process. I'm really looking forward to reading these.

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. —Kenneth Burke, "The Philosophy of Literary Form"

ENGLISH 4617 ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

D2L “Sandbox” Posts (5 total)

- Intro Posts
- Small Groups 1 Post 1
- Small Groups 1 Post 2
- Small Groups 1 Post 3
- Small Groups 2 Post 1
- Small Groups 2 Post 2
- Extra Credit Posts

These public discussion forum posts are intended to articulate some concrete, critical response to some element of the work under discussion on a given day of the course. They should be approximately 150-250 words long, and may overlap with your contributions to class discussion and/or your final project. Additional posts will count towards extra credit.

Final Project Workshop (due on D2L Forums, Halloween Weekend)

The prospectus is a half-page anticipation of the major thrust of your final project as you anticipate it taking shape. Generally speaking, it should lay out the aspect of *Dune* that you plan to discuss, and articulate a *central claim* which clearly and succinctly describes your planned intervention into *Dune* studies. Your assignment this week will be to post your prospectus and comment on two others in your group.

Final Project Progress Report (due on D2L, Thanksgiving Weekend)

Final Project (due to D2L Dropbox by Thursday, Dec. 11 by 12:30 PM)

OPTION #1 A traditional 10-to-12-page scholarly paper (roughly 3000 words) on some aspect of *Dune* or related works. Possible topics might include:

- close readings of some aspect of the *Dune* storyworld;
- literary interpretations of the *Dune* narrative in its totality;
- explorations of Herbert’s letters, essays, other fictions, or alternative drafts;
- comparisons between Herbert and other writers (Isaac Asimov, George Lucas, etc.)
- interventions against or extensions of existing works of *Dune* criticism by scholars;
- comparisons between the books and their adaptations;
- discussion of Brian Hebert’s role as caretaker and expander of the *Dune* project;
- discussions of other creative works related to *Dune* (including video games, board games, roleplaying games, fan scholarship and fan fictions, etc.).

OPTION #2 A creative or curational project related in some way to Frank Herbert or *Dune*, in a form of your choosing.

Abstract (due in D2L forum by Thursday, December 11 by 12:30 PM)

I cannot stress enough how open I am to your personal interests and approaches; I am genuinely open to any topic, any method, and any form that seems urgent and interesting to you (provided of course that it is the intellectual-labor equivalent of a 10-to-12-page scholarly paper, more or less). I sincerely want this project to be something you are excited about and enjoy writing, *not* an unpleasant chore. I can’t wait to read them.