

Glenn Freeman
319-895-4224
gfreeman@cornellcollege.edu

207 South Hall
Hours: MW 11-12
and by appointment

ENG 111-W: Topics in Literature, Film, or Cultural Studies

Bob Dylan and the Language of Protest

Sports Center Classroom
Block 2: 9/30 – 10/22, 2014

If I wasn't Bob Dylan, I'd probably think Bob Dylan has a lot of answers
--Bob Dylan

Who expects what? I mean anybody that expects anything from me is just a borderline case.
Nobody with any kind of reality is going to expect anything from me. I've already given
them enough you know. What do they want from me? You can't keep depending on one
person to give you everything.
--Bob Dylan

Me? I'm just a song and dance man.
--Bob Dylan

Required Texts:

Bob Dylan, *Chronicles: Volume I*.
David R. Williams, *Sin Boldly: Dr. Dave's Guide to Writing the College Paper*
A reading journal

Strongly Recommended:
The Little, Brown Handbook

Course Description:

Bob Dylan was one of the most radical and influential voices of the 20th century. This class will use his words and his music as a lens to explore the idea of social protest. We will be reading and analyzing his work through aesthetic, historical, political, and cultural lenses. We will position him in the different movements from which he emerged: the Beats, the folk scene, the civil rights movement, the psychedelic movement, etc. We will also read him in the context of some of his influences: Woody Guthrie, Arthur Rimbaud, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac.

Dylan is an elusive chameleon, difficult to pin down. In interviews, he contradicts himself, he creates different personas, avoid questions. He says that everything he does is protest music; he denies that his work is protest music at all. Critical reception of him is also quite varied. Some call him a poet. Some say he is a "literary" figure but not a poet. Some called him "the conscience of a generation" (one of the phrases he most adamantly resists), while others suggest he is a self-centered opportunist. This course, then, will be an introduction to the kind of questions involved in literary and cultural studies: how do we come to "understand" the work of Bob Dylan? Can we understand his work on its own terms or do we need to know his biography and/or the cultural environment from which he emerged? If

the latter, how much do we need to know before we can make sense of his work? If we need to know his biography, what version of his biography do we use (his own version is quite cryptic and filled with admitted lies)? If we need the cultural context, what exactly do we need to know? If we do need this context, do we resist the notion of a work as possibly being “universal” or “timeless”?

This course is also an introduction to college writing, a transition that many find frustrating and difficult. The ideas we discuss in class and in an ongoing class blog should lead into several well-supported argument papers. Rather than restating ideas or writing personal narratives, you will be expected to build complex arguments and analyses, written to different kinds of audiences. Writing is a skill that takes practice and persistence. It also takes a willingness to take risks. You will need to let go of that notion of writing a “perfect” paper—especially in early drafts—and push yourself to think and write in new ways. I would always prefer to see you working through a challenging concept that you don’t yet know how to articulate than simply writing the easy but polished paper.

Format:

We will meet twice a day, from 9:00-11 and from 1:00-3. When you prepare for class, you should use your journal to jot down observations, places in the reading that confuse you or interest you, ideas that tie into earlier discussions etc. In other words, come to class with notes prepared to start a discussion. This should not only help you to be prepared for discussion but it will also help you to develop ideas for your papers. You will also use the class blog to help prepare for these discussions and your papers. The blog will give us a running start so that we are already involved in conversations when we come to class.

Overview:

There will be several types of assignments during this course:

Essays: You will write four essays during the block. For each essay you will turn in a rough draft that will be critiqued by me and/or your peers to point toward possible revision strategies. You will then be expected to turn in a final, revised version. Though the rough draft is not “graded” per se, it must be turned in—on time and in a fairly complete form—or it will affect the final grade. A one page outline, for example, will not count.

- Essay 1 will argue for or against Dylan’s relevance, importance, or quality of work. In other words, this essay will be a kind of review of his work. How valuable or not is his work as we move headlong into the 21st century? Is it good? Does it carry any important messages? Does it pertain to our lives now?
- Essay 2 will look at the cultural context from which Dylan emerged. For this paper we will have read two of his important influences: Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. We will then analyze and respond to the world view that these “Beat” writers construct. Do the Beats offer us anything of value? Is it a reasonable worldview or is it troubling?
- Essay 3 will be a review of the movie *I’m Not There*. This movie, rather than a traditional biopic, portrays Dylan through 6 disparate characters (none of

whom are named Bob Dylan) in a nonlinear, often surreal fashion. The movie was both praised and panned by critics. We will try to assess the movie's "accuracy" and value—not whether or not it portrays some factual version of Dylan but rather whether we think it accurately captures the essence of this enigmatic performer.

- Essay 4 will be a reflection on a research question you develop. You will be looking at some particular question and find at least 6 sources. The paper then will be an annotated bibliography and a short summary of your findings.
- **Short Assignments:** There will be several shorter assignments assigned throughout the class. Some will be writing assignments we do in class, others will be done outside of class. For instance, you will be assigned to summarize an academic essay about Dylan. All of these assignments will be factored together into one grade.
- **Participation:** This is a discussion-based class. I expect you to read the assigned work and to come to class prepared for discussion (and if you've written responses in your journal, you should already have something ready to offer for discussion without thinking). You should always have a question and/or comment about any assigned reading that you would use to start a discussion if I call on you. Participation will be factored in to your final grade. Your comments on your peers' writing will also be a major factor in your participation grade.
- **Quizzes:** I will be giving quizzes intermittently to assess the level of comprehension of the assigned readings. All quizzes will be factored together into one grade.
- **Blog:** We will be creating a course blog with wordpress. Each of you will need to set up your own wordpress account. I will set up a wordpress blog and serve as administrator and will then allow your account to serve as a contributor to the blog. Each of you will be expected to post at least 1 time a week and to respond to at least 2 other postings a week—this is a *minimum* expectation, though. An A for the blog will require more postings than this. The blog is a way to examine our writing as a form of conversation. The blog is also a place where many ideas for our essays will emerge. You will develop ideas as you post to the blog, but you can also make use of your peers' ideas that they put on the blog. Make good use of the blog and contribute when ideas and questions arise about the reading, our conversations, or when you have any relevant insights about our pursuits. (please see the assignment sheet on moodle that will give more detailed explanations of how to set up the wordpress account. Set this up ASAP so that the blog can get underway quickly).

Grading:

The course will be graded on a 1000 point system, according to the following percentages:

Essay 1: Dylan "review"	10%
Essay 2: Beat Analysis	15%
Essay 3: "I'm Not There" review	20%
Essay 4: Research/Annotated Bibliography	20%

Assignments	10%
Participation	10%
Blog	15%

I will still use letter grades on assignments, but they will translate into the following numbers: A+ 100; A 95; A- 92; B+ 88; B 85; B- 82; C+ 78; C 75 C- 72; D+ 68; D 65; D- 62; F = 50
So, as an example, a B+ on essay one would equal 88 points. Multiply by 2 (or 20% of 1000 points) and you would get 176 points toward your final point total.

Policies and Procedures:

Attendance:

An essential aspect of this course is class discussion. Your input is critical for everyone else in the class. Because of this, you are expected to attend all class sessions, to come prepared, and to participate fully in all activities. Please arrive **on time** for class; late arrivals are disturbing to class and may be considered an absence from class. After two unexcused absences, each absence will affect your final grade. If you must miss class, you are still responsible for any information, assignments and deadlines.

E-mail: I use e-mail extensively to communicate with you. Please make sure to check your Cornell e-mail at least once a day (twice is actually a good idea, in the morning and in the evening).

Paper Policies:

Students are required to submit all assignments on the due date. **Late work will be penalized.** All papers should use a standard 12-point font, double-spaced with one inch margins. All other MLA guidelines should be followed, especially citation rules for in-text citations and works cited pages. The final draft should be submitted in exactly the same format as you would submit a hard copy but as a **Word or RTF** file uploaded to moodle. If you need help, must miss class, or have trouble with a deadline, contact me ASAP!
Please note: there is no extra credit in this class.

Plagiarism:

Academic honesty requires that all work presented in this class be the student's own work. Evidence of plagiarism (use of another's ideas, data, and statements without acknowledgement and/or extensive use of another's ideas, data and statements with only minimal acknowledgement) will result in serious penalties.

Classroom Dynamics:

One of the major benefits of higher education and membership in the university community is greater knowledge of, and respect for, other groups. Indeed, genuine appreciation for individual differences and cultural diversity is essential to an environment of learning. This class necessitates all students feeling comfortable expressing their opinions. Therefore, you will be expected to demonstrate respect for gender, racial, class and ethnic differences among your colleagues and instructor. Any attitudes or actions that are intimidating, harassing, coercive or abusive, or that invade the right to privacy of the individual, are not acceptable.

General Comments:

Please feel free to talk with me at any time if you have questions about the course, feedback you are receiving, or how you are doing in general. If you find you are having difficulties of any kind, please come to see me as soon as possible so that we can begin to solve any problems before they become insurmountable. The same is true with deadlines: if you have any kind of challenge, be sure to talk with me. I will always try to help, but I need to know the situation before I can do anything.

Course Schedule:

After our initial 9 AM meeting, class will meet every day, Monday through Friday, from 9:30-11 and from 1:00-3:00. The following is a guideline but will be **subject to change**. If you miss class, you will still be responsible for any assignments and information; be sure to check with me or one of your peers to find out what you missed. Readings are to be done **before** class for the date listed. Many readings will be on moodle. Please print out any moodle readings (please print double-sided to save paper) and have them in class.

Please note: if a class session is left blank, we will still have class. I will fill any readings or assignments for those classes as we go.

	WEEK 1
Mon. 9/29	AM: Introductions and Course Overview PM: Paul Williams "Introduction" and Jonathan Cott "Introduction" <i>Moodle</i>
Tue. 9/20	AM: Watch "No Direction Home" PM: Gooding, Terkel, Hentoff on moodle; <i>SB</i> Intro, Chapter 1, and pp. 117-120
Wed. 10/1	AM: Watch "No Direction Home" PM: <i>Chronicles</i> , Chapter 1 Robins, Ephron, Hass, on Moodle <i>SB</i> , Chapter 2
Thur. 10/2	AM: <i>Chronicles</i> Chapter 2 PM: KQED on moodle <i>SB</i> , Chapter 3 Due: Rough Drafts Paper 1 uploaded to moodle, 5 PM
Fri. 10/3	AM: PM: Peer Critiques Paper 1

	WEEK 2
Mon. 10/6	AM: <i>On the Road</i> selections, moodle PM: <i>Howl</i> , "America" moodle Watch <i>The Source</i> DUE: Final Draft of Paper 1 by 5 PM

Tue. 10/7	AM: PM: <i>SB</i> , chapters 4 and 5 “Beat” selections on moodle
Wed. 10/8	AM: Conferences PM: <i>Chronicles</i> , chapter 5
Thur. 10/9	AM: Conferences PM: Due: Rough Draft Paper 2 uploaded to moodle, 5 PM
Fri. 10/10	AM: PM: Peer Critiques Paper 2

	WEEK 3
Mon. 10/13	AM: PM: <i>SB</i> chapters 6, 12, 13 Due: Final Draft Paper #2, 5 PM
Tue. 10/14	AM: PM: Shelton, Hentoff ('66) on moodle
Wed. 10/15	AM: <i>SB</i> , chapters 7, 8 PM: Cohen & Traum, Wenner on moodle DUE: Draft of historical research question and annotated sources
Thur. 10/16	AM: Workshop annotated bibliographies PM: Weberman on moodle
Fri. 10/17	PM: Watch “I’m Not There” Draft of Review due by Sun 5 PM

	WEEK 4
Mon. 10/20	AM: Workshop “I’m Not There” reviews PM:
Tue. 10/21	AM: Presentations on Research PM: Presentations on Research
Wed. 10/22	No Class DUE: Final draft papers 3 and 4, Noon No Late Papers Accepted!