

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

207 South Hall  
Hours: MW11-12  
and by appointment

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

**Bob Dylan and the Language of Protest**

South Hall, Room 302  
Block 3: 10/31 – 11/23, 2016

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 think of myself more as a song and dance man, y'know.  
--Bob Dylan

**Required Texts:**

Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*.  
David R. Williams, *Sin Boldly: Dr. Dave's Guide to Writing the College Paper*.  
A reading and writing journal

**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—and recently, Dylan was named 2016 Nobel Laureate for literature (to the consternation of many across the globe). 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 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.

### **Educational Objectives:**

This course supports the Cornell College educational priorities and objectives with emphasis on the following:

**Knowledge:** Students will gain skills in academic writing and learn about different audiences and conventions for writing. Students will also gain an understanding of social change in America in the 1950s and 60s.

**Inquiry:** Students will examine the questions of aesthetics, ethics, and social responsibility to better understand their own belief systems.

**Communication:** Students will learn to express, in both written and oral form, their questions, ideas, and values.

**Ethical behavior and citizenship:** Students will examine and develop their own sense of social responsibility.

### **Format:**

We will meet twice a day, from 9:30-11 and from 1:00-3 (12:30 to 3 on the last Monday). When you prepare for class, you should use your journal to jot down observations, places in the reading (or music) 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.

### **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 as a draft.

- Essay 1 will examine the cultural context from which Dylan emerged, specifically looking at one of Dylan’s main influences: Jack Kerouac and the “Beats.” The essay will evaluate their lifestyle and their argument for personal freedom. Do you think the Beats were engaged in a revolution against social conformity as they claimed, or were they simply self-involved as others argue? What is the nature of freedom and healthy rebellion? Do the Beats offer us anything of value in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
- The second essay will be a review of a particular Dylan song. Each of you will be assigned one song that you will become the “expert” on, researching the lyrics and context and writing a review for your peers. The review will argue for or against the song’s relevance to our lives now. You will also be responsible for presenting the song to the class.
- Essay 3 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 21<sup>st</sup> century? Is it good? Does it carry any important messages? Does it pertain to our lives now?
- Essay 4 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.
- Short assignments. You will write several short 1-2 page assignments over the block. These will be grouped into one grade at the end of the block.
- **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 is not graded per se; it is simply expected. Very good participation or a lack of participation can affect a final grade, though. will be factored in to your final grade.
- **Workshop:** One element of participation will be graded, however. We will be helping our peers revise drafts. In order to do this, you will be expected to write responses to their drafts and to engage in discussions about the work. You will be graded on the level of engagement in workshops.

- **Quizzes:** I will be giving quizzes intermittently to assess the level of comprehension of the assigned readings. Quizzes are pass/fail. A failed quiz drops points from the final grade. A missed grade cannot be made up.

### **Grading:**

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

Essay 1: Beat Analysis	15%
Essay 2: Song Review	20%
Essay 3: Dylan Review	25%
Essay 4: "I'm Not There" Review	20%
Assignments	10%
Workshop	10%

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. Final point total for the course is 1000 with the same grade breakdowns for the final grade.

### **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. I do not consider absences excused or unexcused. Everyone has one absence that will not affect their grade; after that, each absence affects the final grade.

**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.

#### **Academic Honesty:**

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others,

unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading "Academic Honesty."

### **Accommodations:**

Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>.

### **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: a blank class session on the schedule does NOT mean we will not have class. These dates are still to be determined; I will fill any readings or assignments for those classes as we go.

	WEEK 1
Mon. 10/30	AM: Course Introduction PM: <i>On the Road</i> , pp 1-35; Watch “The Source”
Tue. 9/20	AM: PM: <i>On the Road</i> , pp 35-59; 109-166
Wed. 10/1	AM: <i>Sin Boldly</i> , Intro and Chapters 1 & 2 PM: <i>On the Road</i> , pp 167-178; 191-218
Thur. 10/2	AM: <i>On the Road</i> , pp. 244-248; 268-307 PM: Due: Rough draft of Essay #1, 5 PM
Fri. 10/3	AM: Peer Workshops PM:  DUE: Final Draft of Essay #1, Sun. 5 PM

	WEEK 2
Mon. 10/6	AM: Cott; Gooding; Terkel; Hentoff on Moodle PM: Watch <i>No Direction Home</i>
Tue. 10/7	AM: Robins, Ephron; Hass, KQED on Moodle PM: Watch <i>No Direction Home</i>
Wed. 10/8	AM: Conferences PM: Shelton; Hentoff on moodle
Thur. 10/9	AM: Conferences PM: <i>Sin Boldly</i> , Chapters 3, 4, 5 Due: Rough Draft Essay 2 uploaded to moodle, 5 PM
Fri. 10/10	AM: PM: Peer Critiques Paper 2  DUE: Final Draft Essay #2: Sunday 5 PM

	WEEK 3
Mon. 10/13	AM: Song Presentations PM: Cohen & Traum; Wenner; Weberman on moodle
Tue. 10/14	AM: Song Presentations PM: <i>Sin Boldly</i> , chapters 6, 12, 13
Wed. 10/15	AM: Song Presentations PM:
Thur. 10/16	AM: <i>Sin Boldly</i> , chapters 7, 8 PM: Draft of Essay #3 due by 5 PM
Fri. 10/17	AM: Peer workshops

	DUE: Final Draft Essay #3: Sunday 5 PM
--	--

	WEEK 4
Mon. 10/20	AM: PM (start at 12:30!): Watch <i>I'm Not There</i>
Tue. 10/21	AM: Draft of Essay #4 due by 9 AM PM: Peer Workshops Essay #4
Wed. 10/22	No Class DUE: Final draft of Essay #4, <b>Noon</b> No Late Papers Accepted!