

# HON 293C: Literary Scandals and Controversies

<http://blogs.lib.ncsu.edu/page/hon293c>

Spring 2007 TR 4:30pm - 5:45pm Tompkins G118

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Tompkins 287 Office hours TR 3:00pm - 4:15pm

**This course is restricted to students in the University Honors Program.**

## Course Description

James Frey went on *Oprah* and admitted that he had simply invented some of the incidents in his "autobiography" about recovery from substance abuse, *A Million Little Pieces*. The estate of Margaret Mitchell sued to try to prevent the publication of *The Wind Done Gone*, a parody of *Gone with the Wind*. Both *Ulysses* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* were banned for obscenity. Shakespeare, say many scholars, was a plagiarist--if, that is, he even *was* the author of "Shakespeare's" plays. And Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* caused riots and murders. What counts as originality? Authorship? Ownership? Truth? Fiction? Literature? Why do readers keep accusing authors of unforgivable crimes? In this course, we will discuss the idea of "literature" as a social construct with real social consequences.

## Textbooks

Coetzee, J. M. *Giving Offense: Essays on Censorship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. \$15.00

Mallon, Thomas. *Stolen Words*. 1st Harvest ed. San Diego: Harcourt, 2001. \$14.25

McCrea, Scott. *The Case for Shakespeare: The End of the Authorship Question*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005. \$42.95

Pipes, Daniel. *The Rushdie Affair: The Novel, the Ayatollah, and the West*. 2nd ed. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003. \$24.95

Ruthven, K. K. *Faking Literature*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. \$29.99

Saint-Amour, Paul K. *The Copyrights: Intellectual Property and the Literary Imagination*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003. \$36.95

Shakespeare, William and Stephen Booth. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. New Haven, CT; London: Yale UP, 2000. (optional) \$19.95

Wells, Stanley W. *Looking for Sex in Shakespeare*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. \$18.99

## General Education Requirements

This course falls into the GER category "Humanities and Social Sciences" and the subcategory "Literature." The rationale and objectives for courses in this category (available at <http://www.ncsu.edu/uap/academic-standards/ger/hss/rat.htm>) are as follows:

Rationale: The humanities and the social sciences comprise the subjects and disciplines that use various modes of rational inquiry to understand human nature and experience, organization and change in human societies, the nature of the world, and rational inquiry itself. An education in the humanities and social

sciences requires reading significant works, gaining an exposure to a variety of methodologies, and learning to apply these in written exposition. An education in the basic humanistic disciplines is a necessary part of being truly educated -- of becoming a citizen with a broad knowledge of human cultures and with well-considered moral, philosophical, aesthetic, and intellectual convictions.

Each course in the general humanities category of the General Education Requirements will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. understand and engage in the human experience through the interpretation of human culture and artifacts (this objective must be the central focus of each humanities course); and
2. become aware of the act of interpretation itself as a critical form of knowing in the humanities; and
3. make academic arguments about the human experience using reasons and evidence for supporting those reasons that are appropriate to the humanities.

In addition, each course appearing on one of the specific humanities lists meets the objectives for the specific category as detailed below:

Objectives for courses in the category of Literature:

Each course within the literature category of the General Education Requirements in the Humanities will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. understand and engage in the human experience through the interpretation of literature (this objective must be the central focus of each literature course); and
2. become aware of the act of interpretation itself as a critical form of knowing in the study of literature; and
3. make scholarly arguments about literature using reasons and ways of supporting those reasons that are appropriate to the field of study.

### **Outcomes and Assessment**

Objective: Understand and engage in the human experience through the interpretation of literature.

Learning Outcome: By the end of the course, students will be able to express in writing their judgment about why certain readers have reacted strongly to certain texts.

Assessment: The midterm essay exam will require students to explain what is at stake for both sides in particular literary controversies, as for instance in the quarrel over whether Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare's plays.

Objective: Become aware of the act of interpretation itself as a critical form of knowing in the study of literature.

Learning Outcome: By the end of the course, students will know how to judge the validity of a literary interpretation by examining cited sources and by comparing their own interpretations with the interpretation we have read.

Assessment: Weekly questions and answers will require students to evaluate the literary interpretations we are reading as a class through looking at the primary work of literature and at competing interpretations. Students will judge, for instance, whether Western authors who judge that Rushdie wrote nothing offensive in *The Satanic Verses* are correct.

Objective: Make scholarly arguments about literature using reasons and ways of supporting those reasons that are appropriate to the field of study.

Learning Outcome: By the end of the course, students will be able to write an essay that makes a cogent scholarly argument about literary controversies in general through reference to several sources.

Assessment: The final essay exam will require students to cite textual excerpts from the course reading in support of a nuanced argument about larger issues in the controversies we have studied. Students might make an argument, for instance, about whether "copyleft" activists who argue that "information wants to be free" are ready countenancing plagiarism and forgery.

### **Assignments**

- Twice-weekly questions and answers-- 25%
- Midterm essay exam -- 25%
- Final essay exam -- 50%

### **Attendance and Late Work Policies**

- 1) Excuses for anticipated absences must be sent to and approved by Amanda French via email at least one day before the absence.
- 2) Excuses for unanticipated absences due to an emergency must be sent to and approved by Amanda French via email within one week after the absence.
- 3) Three unexcused absences will lower a student's course grade by one-third, i.e., from a B to a B-. Every additional unexcused absence will lower the student's grade an additional one-third.
- 4) Requests for extensions must be sent to and approved by Amanda French via email at least one day before the assignment due date.
- 5) Excuses for late work due to an emergency must be sent to and approved by Amanda French via email within one week after the assignment due date.
- 6) Unexcused late work will lower a student's assignment grade by one-third for each day the assignment is late, i.e., from a B to a B-.

For more information, see NCSU's Attendance Regulation (REG02.20.3) at

[http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic\\_affairs/courses\\_undergrad/REG02.20.3.php](http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses_undergrad/REG02.20.3.php).

**Grading Scale**

A+	98-100
A	94-97
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82

C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

**Academic Integrity**

It is the understanding of the instructors of this course that the student's typed or signed name on any assignment indicates that the student adheres to the Honor pledge ("I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment"). The instructor supports academic integrity as defined by NCSU's Code of Student Conduct Policy (POL11.35.1):

[http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student\\_services/student\\_discipline/POL11.35.1.php](http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php).

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. For more information on NCSU's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG02.20.1):

[http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic\\_affairs/pols\\_regs/REG205.00.28.php](http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/pols_regs/REG205.00.28.php).

**Additional Notes**

This course requires no laboratory work, field trips, extra expenses, or extra transportation.

**SCHEDULE**

Students must post questions and answers to the blog every Tuesday and Thursday before class.	
<b>Thu 1/11</b>	Introduction
	<b>Immorality</b>
<b>Tue 1/16</b>	Wells Introduction and Chapter 1
<b>Thu 1/18</b>	Wells Chapters 2-3
	<b>Charade</b>
<b>Tue 1/23</b>	McCrea Chapters 1-4
<b>Thu 1/25</b>	McCrea Chapters 5-8
<b>Tue 1/30</b>	McCrea Chapters 9-12
<b>Thu 2/1</b>	McCrea Chapters 13-15

	<b>Forgery</b>
<b>Tue 2/6</b>	Ruthven Chapters 1-3
<b>Thu 2/8</b>	Ruthven Chapters 4-6
<b>Tue 2/13</b>	Ruthven Chapter 7 and Epilogue
<b>Thu 2/15</b>	Midterm Exam
	<b>Plagiarism</b>
<b>Tue 2/20</b>	Mallon Preface and Chapters 1-2
<b>Thu 2/22</b>	Mallon Chapter 3
<b>Tue 2/27</b>	Mallon Chapter 4
<b>Thu 3/1</b>	Mallon Chapter 5
	Spring Break 3/5 - 3/9
	<b>Theft</b>
<b>Tue 3/13</b>	Saint-Amour Introduction and Chapters 1-2
<b>Thu 3/15</b>	Saint-Amour Chapter 3
<b>Tue 3/20</b>	Saint-Amour Chapter 4
<b>Thu 3/22</b>	Saint-Amour Chapter 5 and Conclusion
	<b>Deception</b>
<b>Tue 3/27</b>	<i>Shattered Glass</i>
<b>Thu 3/29</b>	<i>Shattered Glass</i>
	<b>Treason</b>
<b>Tue 4/3</b>	Coetzee Preface and Chapters 1-3
<b>Thu 4/5</b>	Coetzee Chapters 4-6
<b>Tue 4/10</b>	Coetzee Chapters 7-9
<b>Thu 4/12</b>	Coetzee Chapters 10-12
	<b>Blasphemy</b>
<b>Tue 4/17</b>	Pipes Introduction and Chapters 1-4
<b>Thu 4/19</b>	Pipes Chapters 5-8
<b>Tue 4/24</b>	Pipes Chapters 9-13
<b>Thu 4/26</b>	Course Evaluation and Summary
<b>Tue 5/8</b>	Final exam 1pm - 4pm