

(LIT290S-1) Special Topics in International Literature and Culture: Cold War, Hot Books

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Propaganda has been a theory of influencing minds as far back as 500^{BCE} and as recently as accusations of “fake news,” but propaganda was institutionalized as a primary concern of states during the Cold War. In “Cold War, Hot Books,” students will engage with foundational texts of propaganda, covert warfare, and “hot” literature—literary texts that were meant to challenge large scale ideological commitments between and within superpowers. This course will span the 20th-21st centuries in an exploration of how literature was and is used by governmental, political, and artistic actors in service of larger geopolitical confrontations, sometimes in disregard for the artistic intentions of an object’s creator or curator. Alternatively, we will ask how literature’s material, cultural, and political circulations can defy the objectives of the actors putting it to use and, instead, reveal the internal fragmentations of seemingly opposed sides of the Iron Curtain. When does literature do the work of cold warring, and when does it refuse to? We will focus primarily on controversial novels responding to the geopolitical drama between the US and USSR, but will often travel into other geographic locations that were at the heart of Cold War conflict, such as the Eastern bloc, Britain, Germany, Cuba, and Vietnam. Course materials will include novels, political and cultural treatises, and declassified documentation from intelligence operations. This course will familiarize students with strategies of close reading, comparative and transcultural analysis, and concepts of globality, locality, and governmentality as sites of cultural production. Course is in English with options to read in other languages.

Readings include *We, Brave New World, The City and the Pillar, Invisible Man, Doctor Zhivago, We Have Always Lived in the Castle, Hallucinations, Rubyfruit Jungle, Paradise of the Blind, Watchmen, and My Year of Rest and Relaxation*. Assignments include weekly short reflection posts, leading a brief discussion, peer-review collaboration, a close reading, a midterm paper, and a final project.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- engage with the concepts of *propaganda, ideology, cold war, culture*, and the genre of the *novel* on the levels of text and politics;
- develop analytical and critical reading skills of novels in distinct yet related historical and geopolitical contexts;
- apply close reading techniques to literary and political texts across global, local, and governmental sites of production;
- produce written analysis with a persuasive thesis across texts, historical moments, and cultural sites;
- collaborate with others to both provide and receive feedback on written assignments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Texts

In the interest of accessibility, all course texts will be made available under the “Resources” tab of our Sakai page or reserved at the library. Please contact me immediately if you have any difficulty acquiring course texts. When applicable, you can find specific page numbers for each part of our reading online under “Resources: Reading Assignments.”

Participation (100/1000 points)

Students are required to arrive to class on time and having read course materials for that day. Attendance is monitored and required for passing the course. This is a seminar class, so the success of our course will be based on your participation. With the understanding that some folks do not feel comfortable participating in larger or smaller group discussions, there will be a variety of discussion formats used (e.g. small group discussions, peer-review, discussion leaders, office hours). Each student will be in charge of leading a discussion at the beginning of one class with a close-reading of an interesting passage and two discussion questions. Students are always welcome to introduce supplementary materials directly related to course materials and discussion. I encourage you to actively help shape the direction of course questions and topics.

Reflection posts (100/1000 points of final grade)

Students will submit weekly 250-300 word freely written responses on class materials over the semester. Posts below 250 or above 300 words will be penalized. Each post will cover one or two texts at most. Reflections must be posted to Sakai by no later than 8:00AM the day of class and must reflect on course materials discussed or activities done in class. This is an informal writing assignment that gives you the opportunity to voice opinions, questions, interests, and reactions to the material covered. Additionally, this is an opportunity to help shape the direction of our discussions and reflect on texts in a more private manner. Submission windows will be open 24 hours before close each day of class (i.e. from 8:00AM-8:00AM).

Close Reading (150/1000 points of final grade)

Students will submit one close reading. The close reading is a one-page single-spaced analysis of a small portion (e.g. sentence, image, scene, dialogue) from a single text. The goal is to identify the particular stylistic, generic, and formal characteristics in order to break down what we can tell from textual material about the narrative. You are meant to understand, not critique, the text, and practice close-reading skills; this means you will not formulate a thesis but focus instead on understanding the object. Students have the option of annotating and revising close readings for a higher grade.

Midterm essay (250/1000 points of final grade)

The midterm paper will build on the skills you have learned in the close reading assignment. Students will choose one novel from the beginning half of class and develop a more comprehensive close reading and a strongly argued thesis supported by clearly cited text on the topics of course concepts. Students will engage in deep and dynamic analysis in order to give voice to topics that have interested them but that we have not spent time on in class. Midterm papers will be 4-5 pages double-spaced. Students will conduct peer-review workshops in class using guidelines provided. Students have the option of annotating and revising midterm essays for a higher grade.

Final project abstract (50 points of final grade)

Students will submit a 250-300 word abstract of their final paper topic. The abstract describes the question, purpose, scope, argument, and materials of the final paper. The goal is to convince your reader that your paper is worth reading in its entirety. Abstracts are not excerpts from the paper and should function as standalone pieces.

Final project (350/1000 points of final grade)

The final project will ask and answer a question or explore a concept you have found most interesting in the course of our class. Students will put two novels from the syllabus in conversation with an optional source taken from outside of the course. The final paper will incorporate skills learned from previous writing assignments. Students are encouraged to experiment with including personal narration or alternative forms in their final papers as long as it serves their argument. Traditional final papers will be 7-10 pages, and parameters of other forms will be negotiated with me at least one week prior to final submission. Students experimenting with other forms must submit a single-spaced 2-3 page reflection on your creation explaining all of the rhetorical, design, and argumentative choices you've made in your project (i.e. you cannot choose to draw your comic in green just because you like the color green; every choice must be explained). Final projects must be submitted by the deadline of the university's exam schedule.

Students are encouraged to visit the Writing Studio for any and all writing assignments (even reflection posts!). You can make an appointment at any stage of your writing development—from brainstorming to final revisions. Be sure to have your consultant send me a meeting report. Find resources and make an appointment here:

<https://twp.duke.edu/twp-writing-studio/appointments/appointment>.

Course grade composition

Participation: 100 points

Reflection posts: 100 points

Close reading: 150 points

Midterm essay: 250 points

Final project abstract: 50 points

Final project: 350 points

Total: 1000 points

POLICIES

Grading

I use the Sakai automatic grade calculator to issue a final grade average based on grade point equivalents. This means that final grades are calculated based on numerical grades issued throughout the term for every submitted assignment with consideration to their respective grade weight. Therefore, it is neither possible nor fair to other students to alter the final grade once all course assignments have been graded and submitted. Throughout the course, students have an opportunity to receive feedback, meet to discuss their projects, thoughts, and goals, and to develop writing and analytical skills, as well as visit the Writing Studio. If you have a concern about your performance in the course, please do not hesitate to reach out to discuss your progress as soon as possible.

A 94-100 %	A- 90-93 %	B+ 87-89 %	B 84-86 %	B- 80-83 %	C+ 77-79 %
C 74-76 %	C- 70-73 %	D+ 67-69 %	D 64-66 %	D- 60-63 %	

If, at the end of the semester, your grade is within 1% of the next highest grade, I will bump your final grade up given the following conditions: you do not have any zeros, are in good standing with attendance, and you have used the Writing Studio at least once.

Formatting and Document Design

It is your responsibility as a scholar to present your work in a clear, transparent, and careful manner. I will ask you to resubmit any piece of writing that seems hurried or carelessly prepared and it will thereafter be subject to late penalties. Aspects of professional-quality academic documents include:

12 pt. Times New Roman	Proofread	Double line spacing	Left-adjusted
One-inch margins	Edited	Titled	
Chicago citation style formatting			

Submission of Assignments

All written assignments will be submitted electronically to Sakai. Please refer to the assignment prompt for detailed instructions. On occasion, you will also be asked to bring hard copies of your work to class. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis. Requests for extensions must be made at least 48 hours before a deadline, except in emergency situations. Unless I have approved a deadline extension *in advance*, all assignments are due according to the deadlines specified, including date and time. I am open to accommodating individual needs as long as you discuss them with me ahead of time. Late work will not be accepted.

Green Course

This is a “green course,” meaning that students are urged to be conscientious of how much material they print. Students are thus allowed to use laptops, e-readers, and other devices in class to refer to course materials and to take notes. All correspondence and submissions will be done via email or Sakai. I reserve the right to reverse this decision if students are found to be using devices in class for reasons other than referring to course materials and taking notes. Translation and recording devices are permitted.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class. Attendance is monitored. The student is responsible for meeting deadlines on posts and other assignments whether or not they are in class that day. Students must follow up their absence, within 24 hours, with an email summary of the readings we covered in class on the day you missed. There are 2 absences allowed for the semester. It is policy for me to reach out to your academic dean after 2 unexcused absences have occurred. Your participation grade will drop a grade point with your 3rd and 4th absences. The 5th absence will result in an automatic failing grade for the course that cannot be reversed.

Honor code

Students are expected to abide by the terms of the student code of academic conduct, available online at <http://integrity.duke.edu/ugrad/>. I urge you all to examine this material and consult with me or a librarian regarding any questions you have about plagiarism or academic integrity *before* it becomes an issue.

Office hours and communication

Please communicate with me! If any questions, concerns, problems, or excitements come up, please email me or attend office hours. To schedule an appointment at a time outside of my office hours, please see me in person after the class session or email me. For all online correspondence, please allow 12-24 hours for a response; I expect the same timeline for response from all students. If you are writing due to an emergency, please indicate that clearly in the subject line.

Equity statement

The classroom is a place where we critically examine and challenge ideas and texts, not people. It is imperative that members of the course ensure that we treat each other with respect at all times. The classroom space may be challenging or even uncomfortable at times when we engage sensitive materials and encounter conflicting arguments. That is part of the learning process, and we will use those moments as opportunities to develop analytical and listening skills, engage in self-reflection, and provide constructive feedback. That said, any individual behavior or conduct that makes other participants feel uncomfortable, threatened, or unwelcome will be neither accepted nor tolerated. Please always feel free to reach out to me, either by e-mail or in person, to address and discuss any concerns you may have. Above all, my classroom is a safe space and I will not tolerate violations of that safety.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Writing Studio

I encourage you to visit the Writing Studio, where you will find a place beyond our classroom to work collaboratively with an attentive, non-evaluative reader. You can visit at any stage in your writing process, including before you have even started writing. Visit <http://twp.duke.edu/twp-writing-studio> to schedule a face-to-face or online appointment and to learn more about Studio resources.

DukeWrites Enrichment Suite for International Students: An online suite of videos and quiz tutorials about US classroom and US English academic writing practices (essay structure, verbs, citation practices, intercultural norms, etc.) designed by TWP experts in intercultural communication. To access and explore the site, go to: <https://dukewritessuite.com/>.

Student Disability Access Office (SDAO).

If there is an accommodation that could improve your experience in my class, please let me know, or contact SDAO at (919) 668-1267 to ensure that your accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. I welcome your input on things I can do to make the course materials, my lessons, and the classroom experience more inclusive.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Each of you will face some level of challenge during your time at Duke. The CAPS staff includes psychologists, clinical social workers, and psychiatrists experienced in working with college-age adults. CAPS also provides workshops on dealing with stress, on meditation, and other strategies that can help you through your first year. Information about their services and workshops is available here: <http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/caps/about-us>

The Academic Resource Center

The ARC provides academic support and programming for all Duke undergraduates. Their services include one-on-one consultations and peer tutoring, and they work alongside the Student Disability Access Office to serve students with diagnosed learning disabilities. Their programs include opportunities for students to study together in structured groups ("learning communities"), as well as workshops offered throughout the semester. Further information and resources are available on their website. <http://duke.edu/arc/index.php>

The Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity

This center provides education, advocacy, support, mentoring, academic engagement, and space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex, questioning, queer and allied students, staff, and faculty at Duke. The Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity also serves and supports Duke alumni/ae and the greater LGBTQ community. Further information and resources are available on their website. <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/csgd>

READING SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introductions

Tu 8/25: Introductions, expectations, and course requirements
In-class: Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Soft Power,” excerpts

F 8/28: Eduard Bernays, *Propaganda* (1928), excerpts
Gorky et al, Soviet Writers' Congress (1934), excerpts

Week 2: The Post-Revolution World

Tu 9/1: Yevgenii Zamiatin, *We* (1921), Part 1

F 9/4: Yevgenii Zamiatin, *We* (1921), Part 2
Reflection post due

Week 3: The Post-WWI World

Tu 9/8: Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1931), Part 1

F 9/11: Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1931), Part 2
Reflection post due

Week 4: The Post-WWII World

Tu 9/15: Gore Vidal, *The City and the Pillar* (1948), Part 1

F 9/18: Gore Vidal, *The City and the Pillar* (1948), Part 2
Reflection post due

Week 5: The Post-McCarthy World

Tu 9/22: Gore Vidal, *The City and the Pillar* (1948), Part 3
Close reading due

F 9/25: Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1953), Part 1
Reflection post due

Week 6:

Tu 9/29: Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1953), Part 2

F 10/2: Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1953), Part 3
Reflection post due
Optional close reading revision due

Week 7: The Book That Came in from the Cold

Tu 10/6: *No class—Fall break*

F 10/9: Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago* (1958), Part 1
Reflection post due (topic: writing and peer-review process)

Week 8: Rise of the Dissident

Tu 10/13: Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago* (1958), Part 2

F 10/16: Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago* (1958), Part 3
“CIA Publishes Doctor Zhivago in Russian and Exposes Life in USSR under Communism,”
excerpts
Reflection post due

Week 9: Fright of the Feminine

- Tu 10/20:** In-class writing workshop
- F 10/23:** Shirley Jackson, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962)
Reflection post due (topic: writing/revision process)

Week 10: Prophecies and Peregrinations

- Tu 10/27:** Reinaldo Arenas, *Hallucinations* (1970), Part 1
Midterm paper due
- F 10/30:** Reinaldo Arenas, *Hallucinations* (1970), Part 2
Reflection post due

Week 11: Liberated America?

- Tu 11/3:** Rita Mae Brown, *Rubyfruit Jungle* (1973), Part 1
- F 11/6:** Rita Mae Brown, *Rubyfruit Jungle* (1973), Part 2
Reflection post due

Week 12: Proxy Voices

- Tu 11/10:** Duong Thu Huong, *Paradise of the Blind*, (1988), Part 1
Final project abstract due
- F 11/13:** Duong Thu Huong, *Paradise of the Blind*, (1988), Part 2
Reflection post due

Week 13: The Beginning of the End

- Tu 11/17:** Duong Thu Huong, *Paradise of the Blind*, (1988), Part 3
- F 11/20:** Alan Moore, *Watchmen* (1987-1988), Part 1
Reflection post due

Week 14: The End of the End

- Tu 11/24:** Alan Moore, *Watchmen* (1987-1988), Part 2
- F 11/29:** *No class—Thanksgiving break*

Week 15: What have we Post-ed this time?

- Tu 12/1:** Ottessa Moshfegh, *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018)
- F 12/4:** Final class wrap up discussion
Online forum: post one original comment with your remaining questions and one response to another student's post—250-300 words each

Final projects due according to Duke University exam schedule.