

POPULAR

**ENGL
144.00**

Instructor: Liz Shand
Tuesday / Thursday 9:30–10:45
Stone Center Room 209
Office: Greenlaw 530
Office Hours: M 2–3 (Zoom); Th 11:30–12:30
(Greenlaw); or by appointment (Zoom or in-
person)
Contact: elshand@live.unc.edu |
<https://unc.zoom.us/j/6315263267>

Course Description

ENGL 144 introduces the conventions, history, and reception, of popular genres—also known as genre fiction. In academic study, popular genres have been negatively counterpoised with “literary fiction”: while literary fiction is presumed to deal with elevated questions of ethics, philosophy, morality, and subjectivity, popular genres are thought to prioritize entertainment and commercial appeal. In our class, we will interrogate the history of popular genres from the nineteenth century through the present day, and identify what makes fiction “popular” versus “literary.” We will read, watch, and discuss works from several genres of popular fiction: science fiction, children’s literature, romance literature, Westerns, and horror fiction.

Throughout, we will consider how popular fiction has, historically, been defined, disrupted, or reinforced. Among other questions, we will ask (1) why do popular genres follow identifiable conventions, and when do they break them; (2) is popular fiction reflective of its historical, social, and cultural contexts, or is it “timeless”; (3) does popular fiction reinforced certain raced, gendered, and classed representations?; and (4) how and why is popular fiction distinguished against literary fiction? In addition to reading and watching popular genres, you will make your own broadside ballad, a centuries-old popular genre.

Course Goals

- Identify the conventions of science fiction, horror fiction, romance, Westerns, and children’s literature;
- Closely read and interrogate texts using annotation, reading responses, and in-class discussion;
- Understand popular genres as an historical product, a cultural reflection, and as a media object;

- Develop an argument based in textual evidence;
- Research a self-directed topic

Course Pre-requisites

- None

Required Texts

You will need to acquire the texts below. They are available at the UNC Student Stores, online retailers (aside from Amazon, I sometimes use thriftbooks.com but their shipping takes longer), and local stores (check out Epilogue and Flyleaf Books). You may also check out the books from the library, if available. The editions below are recommended, but any editions access is okay.

- **Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)**
Edition: Broadview Press. Edited by Robert P. Irvine. ISBN 978-1554814893.
- **H.G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896)**
Edition: Penguin Classics. Edited by Patrick Parrinder. ISBN 9780141441023.
- **J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (1937)**
Edition: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (75th Anniversary edition). ISBN 9780547928227.
- **Louis L'Amour, *The Quick and the Dead* (1973)**
Edition: Penguin Random House. ISBN 9780553280845.
- **Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (1979)**
Edition: Penguin Random House. ISBN 9780807083697.

Course Policies

Attendance: If you are sick, **do not come to class!** Your health and safety is my priority. Illnesses that may be related to COVID-19 are excused. If you are required to quarantine at any point during the semester, let me know so that we can arrange remote work and attendance instructions. Unless you alert me prior to class, I expect you to be in attendance every session. Class attendance factors into your participation grade, and points will be deducted after two unexcused absences.

Mask Use: This semester, while we are in the midst of a global pandemic, all enrolled students (regardless of vaccination status) are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community — your classmates and me – as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the [Office of Student Conduct](#). If you forget your mask, I will allow you to

leave class to retrieve one with no penalty. At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception. For additional information, see [Carolina Together](#).

Class Participation: I structure class so that there a variety of ways to participate, absorb information, and build knowledge. Because much of what we learn will take place through in-class discussions and activities, I expect every student to be ready to actively contribute daily. Your reading responses and annotations will be used to structure some class discussions, as well. In addition to your active participation in class, your participation grade depends on:

- Behaving responsibly and respectfully toward your instructor and your peers. While we may have debates and discussions of our opposing viewpoints, I will not condone hateful, dismissive, violent, or oppressive language or actions.
- Avoiding distractions and pay attention. Unwarranted use of cell phones and laptops, and completing unrelated class work will impact your participation grade.
- Completing and submit all work on time.
- Arriving on time to class. Let me know if there is a reason why you'll need to be frequently late.

Classroom Structure: Our class will be a mix of short lectures, groupwork, individual work, and discussion. Note that the class is fairly large for a discussion-based class (37 students!)—but I aim to curate a classroom space that is dynamic and interactive.

Assignment Formatting: All of your papers must adhere to MLA citation style. Unless otherwise noted, assignments are expected to maintain 1" margins, use 12-point font, double space lines, and contain appropriate identifying information (name, date). I prefer electronic copies submitted to Sakai. When turning in an electronic copy, the file name must include your last name. **All papers must be submitted in .doc or .docx files. Please do not send PDFs.** Please doublecheck that the file has uploaded correctly before the deadline.

Due dates and late submissions: Readings and annotations, and the final paper, are due on the days indicated. In order to accommodate your diverse schedules, the two reading response papers have a flexible due dates: the first response paper is due during week 7 and the second is due during week 13 (any day of the week). I will grade papers as they come in. If you know that you cannot meet a deadline, communicate with me at least 24 hours before the deadline to discuss options. Otherwise, I will deduct 5 points per day late for late submissions.

Technology: We will use Sakai to submit work, receive feedback, and occasionally to access texts not otherwise linked on the syllabus. In class, we will also use multimedia tools including videos and power points. If you require alternate access, or require certain seating in the classroom to improve accessibility, please let me know. If you have any technological difficulties throughout the semester, please let me know. I will not accept late assignments because of “technological difficulties”; if you have problems submitting on Sakai, submit with assignment via email instead and let me know why.

Assignments

- **Short “Trust your Gut” Papers: 2(15%) = 30%**
Paper 1 (respond to weeks 1–6) due date: Week 7
Paper 2 (respond to weeks 7–12) due date: Week 13
A 1-2 page (single-spaced) paper that closely analyzes a scene/s or passage/s from one or a combination of texts from the designated weeks. I encourage you to work with a scene or quote that intrigues you, and analyze why you find it so intriguing in relation to your understanding of the narrative.
- **Final Paper: 20%**
Due Date: Wednesday, December 1
A 5-6 page (double-spaced) argumentative paper that develops a topic or theme from a text or selection of texts. The paper should employ primary source close-reading and secondary source research to develop an original argument. Topics will be developed in consultation with me during office hours. I encourage you to use your diverse interests as leads into your paper topics, or to expand on one of your short papers.
- **Final Exam: 15%**
Date: Tuesday, December 7 at 8:00 am
A cumulative final exam will consist of multiple choice questions, short answers, and short essays.
- **Active Reading: 15%**
To ensure that everyone has read and can participate in class discussion, we will habitually use a digital annotation tool called Hypothesis. Everyone should add “substantive annotations” to 10 texts. See the assignment description for further information.
- **Broadsides: 10%**
Due Date: Tuesday, October 19

Using materials provided, you will play the part of a significant person in popular literature: the broadside printer. You will combine text and image to create an entertaining and interactive broadside (to be discussed in class and viewed in Special Collections) that circulates a popular ballad of your choosing in a cheap, interactive, and entertaining form. Materials will be provided in class.

- **Participation: 10%**

See your participation rubric for reference. Your participation depends on more than your role in class discussions. It depends on a combination of preparation, respect toward your classmates and instructor, attendance, and more.

Final letter grades are determined based on the following scale:

A (94-100)	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 (below 60)

University Policies

The Honor Code

The honor code applies to everything that you and I do at this university, including our use of outside sources in our research and writing. Our work in this class will conform to the principles and procedures defined in the *Instrument of Student Judicial Governance* (<http://instrument.unc.edu/>). The research that we do this semester, whether primary or secondary, print or online, formal or informal, will require careful documentation on your part. We will review citation guidelines early and often throughout the semester. The need to cite your sources applies to all your work, including drafts as well as final versions of your feeders and projects. When in doubt: CITE.

If I suspect you of plagiarizing all or part of a paper, even if you did it unintentionally, I am required to report the offense to the Honor Court. If you think you are running into trouble with a paper, PLEASE come and speak with me. *It is much, much better use your late pass on an assignment than to risk Honor Court proceedings and the 0 that all plagiarized assignments receive.*

Access and Accessibility for Everyone

I am committed to helping all students succeed in this course. Please let me know whether you have any learning needs or circumstances that I can

accommodate. We will work together to identify strategies to help you learn best in this course.

Parents and Caregivers

If you are a parent or caregiver, I am committed to supporting you. If you are a caregiver of any kind and anticipate this being an issue, please let me know and we discuss options that work for you. I recommend the Women's Center at UNC (regardless of gender) for more resources (<https://womenscenter.unc.edu/resources/parenting/>).

Students with Disabilities

You do not need to disclose specific medical information, diagnoses, or personal details. I am happy to work with you to address your learning style and needs, documented or not. Now, the boilerplate: UNC-Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations for students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health struggles, chronic medical conditions, temporary disability, or pregnancy complications. See the ARS website for contact and registration information: <https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/contact-us>. You may also seek out student support services at the Department of Disability Services (DDS) (<http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/>) and through the Learning Center (<http://learningcenter.unc.edu/>).

Diversity

I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students, and I encourage you to do the same. Please contact me if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Title IX

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison - Adrienne.allison@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

CAPS

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to

their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Writing Center

Want help with a paper you are writing in this course? Check out the Writing Center! Writing Center coaches can assist with any writing project, at any stage of the writing process. You don't even have to have a draft to come visit. To schedule a 45-minute appointment in SASB North or Greenlaw, read tip sheets, request written feedback online, or ask a quick question via live chat, visit: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu>.

Want to get the most out of this course? Consider making use of The Learning Center's offerings. Their free, popular programs will help you optimize your academic performance:

- Academic coaching
- Peer tutoring in over 40 courses
- Reading and study skills workshops
- ADHD/LD support
- Coaching and study groups
- Test prep programming - Princeton Review courses/Free Study Groups
- Learning labs
- Online tools

The Learning Center staff is friendly, knowledgeable and ready to help! Drop by or make an appointment at: <http://learningcenter.unc.edu>.

Course Schedule

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including due dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible. I may assign additional homework not listed here.

Reading Schedule	Assignments Due
Week 1 Thursday, August 19 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course Introduction	
Week 2: Intro continued/Science Fiction Tuesday, August 24 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Andrew Lang, "Realism and Romance," <i>The Contemporary Review</i> (November 1887)• Jonathan Franzen, "Perchance to Dream: In an Age of Images, a Reason to Write Novels," <i>Harper's</i>	8/24: Read and comment on course syllabus; submit Student

<p>Magazine (1996)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Note: I've linked to the full articles, but have indicated the sections to pay closest attention to on each. You are only responsible for reading the indicated portions.</i> <p>Thursday, August 26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.G. Wells, <i>The Island of Dr Moreau</i> (1896), chps. 1-12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o I've linked a digital text to annotate; feel free to read the print book, but add any thoughts to the digital text. 	<p>Questionnaire to Liz</p>
<p>Week 3: Science Fiction</p> <p>Tuesday, August 31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Island of Dr Moreau, continued, chps. 13-22. <p>Thursday, September 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ted Chiang, "Exhalation" (2019) 	
<p>Week 4: Sci-fi and Popular Culture</p> <p>Tuesday, September 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philip K. Dick, "The Minority Report" (1956) <p>Thursday, September 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Twilight Zone</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *<i>Note: we will watch 1-2 episodes in class then discuss. To familiarize yourself with the show and its main questions, read the short article linked below. Since reading is light for the end of the week, I suggest getting started on Octavia Butler's Kindred.</i> o Phelim O'Neill, "Another Dimension," <i>The Guardian</i>, May 2011. o "Time Enough at Last" (1959) o "Eye of the Beholder" (1959) o "The Monsters are Due on Maple Street" (1960) 	
<p>Week 5: Re-envisioning Sci-Fi</p> <p>Tuesday, September 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ursula K. LeGuin, "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction" (1986) • Octavia Butler, <i>Kindred</i> (1979), pp. 9-107 (Prologue, The River, The Fire, The Fall) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o **CW: This novel depicts the emotional and physical violence experienced by enslaved people and contains racist language, scenes of rape and sexual violence, and scenes of self- 	

<p><i>harm. The content is disturbing and may be traumatic for some. We will prioritize sensitivity and respect when we discuss the content; if you cannot discuss the content in class, get in touch with me to arrange individual discussions.</i></p> <p>Thursday, September 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Octavia Butler, <i>Kindred</i> (1979), pp. 108–188 (The Fight) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o **see CW above. Content contains racist language, and scenes of rape and sexual violence. 	
<p>Week 6: Children’s Literature and Moral Lessons</p> <p>Tuesday, September 21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Octavia Butler, <i>Kindred</i> (1979), pp. 189–264 (The Storm, The Rope, Epilogue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o **see CW above. Content contains scenes of racist language, sexual violence, and self-harm. <p>Thursday, September 23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of Grimm’s Fairy Tales: “Aschenputtel”; “Hansel and Gretel” 	
<p>Week 7: Children’s Literature and the Imagination</p> <p>Tuesday, September 28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Collections <p>Thursday, September 30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewis Carroll, <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> (1865), chps. 1–6 	<p><i>Response Paper #1 Due</i></p>
<p>Week 8: Material Contexts I</p> <p>Tuesday, October 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alice in Wonderland, continued, chps. 7–12 <p>Thursday, October 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C.S. Lewis, “On Juvenile Tastes” • J.R.R. Tolkien, <i>The Hobbit</i> (1937), chps. 1–5 	
<p>Week 9: Fantasy</p> <p>Tuesday, October 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Hobbit</i>, continued, chps. 6–12 <p>Thursday, October 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Hobbit</i>, continued, chps. 13–19 	
<p>Week 10: Material Contexts IIb</p> <p>Tuesday, October 19</p>	<p><i>Broadsides due in class;</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadside Day <p>Thursday, October 21 (no class)</p>	<p><i>reflections due by Friday, 10/22</i></p>
<p>Week 11: Westerns</p> <p>Tuesday, October 26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louis L'Amour, <i>The Quick and the Dead</i> (1973), chps.1-10 <p>Thursday, October 28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Quick and the Dead</i>, chps. 11-20 	
<p>Week 12: Romance</p> <p>Tuesday, November 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Austen, <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> (1813), chps. 1-20 • Selections from Janet Radway, <i>Reading the Romance</i> (1984) <p>Thursday, November 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pride and Prejudice, continued</i>, chps. 21-40 	
<p>Week 13: Historical Romance Today</p> <p>Tuesday, November 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pride and Prejudice, continued</i>, chps. 41-61 • Prod. Shonda Rhimes, <i>Bridgerton</i>, episode 1 • Patricia A. Matthew, "Shondaland's Regency: On 'Bridgerton'" (2020) <p>Thursday, November 11</p> <p>Research workshop</p>	<p><i>Response paper #2 due</i></p>
<p>Week 14: Horror</p> <p>Tuesday, November 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steven King, "Night Surf" <p>Thursday, November 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD 	
<p>Week 15</p> <p>Tuesday, November 23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review final paper drafts <p>Thursday, November 25 (no class)</p>	<p><i>Draft of final paper due 11/23</i></p>
<p>Week 16</p> <p>Tuesday, November 30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Exam Review 	<p><i>Final Paper due 12/1</i></p>

Final exam: Tuesday, December 7 at 8:00 am