



COURSE DESCRIPTION

2016 Winter Session (2016-2017 Academic Year)

ENGL 100-013: The Unruly Self in Literature and Culture - Jeffrey Severs

Reading and Writing about Literature

Term 2

MWF, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Focused on literary texts in their critical and theoretical contexts, ENGL 100 is a course in academic writing that fulfills the first-year component of the Faculty of Arts Writing Requirement.

New York high society and its sometimes vicious marriage market at the turn of the twentieth century in Edith Wharton's *House of Mirth*, a "Brotherhood" of 1940s communist activists in a city filled with racial tensions in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, the absurd talk-show circuit of Don DeLillo's drama *Valparaiso*, homophobic small-town America in Alison Bechdel's graphic memoir *Fun Home* . . . These are some of the settings and social orders the heroes and heroines of this course have to navigate. We will follow these characters as they sometimes rebel against and sometimes acquiesce to the orders and institutions in which they find themselves. Why isn't the self easily tamed by society's demands and norms? We conclude the course with Werner Herzog's astonishing documentary film about a man among the bears, *Grizzly Man*. This course offers students an introduction to the skills and practices of literary criticism. Through a focus on writing assignments across the term, students will learn how to ask rich and provocative questions about literary texts, how to build interpretations around highly-focused work with a text's individual words and images, and how to use literature and film as a lens for understanding historical contexts and social problems. Through invigorating reading and viewing experiences, students will build an arsenal of strong writing techniques for their university futures. Assignments will include two in-class essays, two take-home essays, a final exam, and various informal writing exercises. All details about the course here are subject to revision.