

# Lost in a Good Book

Spring 2019 | FYS 100/47 | MW 9-10:15 | Ryland Hall 204 | Prof. Elisabeth Gruner  
[egruner@richmond.edu](mailto:egruner@richmond.edu) | Office Hours: T 3-4:30, W 10:30-12, and by appt. | Ryland 303-C

**Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice, 'without pictures or conversations?' (*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 19).**

This course invites students to think about how fiction works. What goes on in the mind of the reader engaged in a book? How do stories—words on paper—come to seem so real that we literally feel “lost” in them? Students will read a variety of metafictional texts from across the centuries as they grapple with these questions. They will also read varieties of literary and literacy theories that engage with these issues, taking up cognitive criticism, “theory of mind,” and the concept of the literacy narrative, among other topics.

## Required texts

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

Nina LaCour, *We Are Okay*

Jasper Fforde, *The Eyre Affair*

Philip Pullman, *I Was a Rat!*

J.K. Rowling, *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*

Terry Pratchett, *Wee Free Men*

Gene Luen Yang, *American Born Chinese*

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and  
*Through the Looking-Glass*

Neil Gaiman, *Coraline*

China Miéville, *UnLunDun*

Kiese Laymon, *Long Division*



# How are you evaluated?

## Assignment Details

There are two kinds of assignments for this class—frequent, informal, ungraded ones, and several more formal graded ones. We will determine the relative weighting of assignments together, in class. I'll provide more specific details for each assignment, including a grading rubric, in plenty of time before it's due; below, you'll find the general outlines.

### Informal Journal

Weekly, ungraded

I expect all students to keep a journal with informal responses to all course readings, discussions, presentations, and field trips. Although the journals will not be graded, they will serve as a resource for in-class discussion, discussion leadership, and writing, as well as for out-of-class assignments, so I expect them to be of great value to us all.

### In-class discussion

Daily, ungraded

Because this is a small, community-oriented class, I encourage you to participate freely in class even if you are not accustomed to doing so. Daily in-class writing will form the basis of much of our discussion. Our classroom will be a space of free intellectual inquiry where it is safe to ask questions and try out ideas. If you have a question, another student may share it, or may have an answer for you—in either case, you'll be contributing to our common good by posing it, as well as by offering your thoughts on readings and other course materials.

### Formal Papers

Students will demonstrate their analytical and writing skills in three 3-4 page essays. These may develop out of journal entries (see above) and/or course materials. They should be focused on a passage or concept from at least one novel from our class, and develop an argument that relates that passage to the novel as a whole and/or another text for the class. Details to follow.

### Final project

Due on or before April 29, 2019

Students will demonstrate their ability to synthesize course material in a final research project that builds on earlier work in the course. This may be either a formal research paper or a creative project. All students will present their work in progress for public comment and feedback during the last week of class, and will have the opportunity to revise and refine their work after the in-class presentation. Details to follow.

“We may never fly in a hot-air balloon, win a race with a hare, or dance with a prince until the stroke of midnight but through stories in books we can learn what it feels like. . . . Reading changes our lives, and our lives change our reading.” (Maryanne Wolf, *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*, 86, 158).

# Course Calendar

1	<b>MON</b> 1/14	<b>Where do we start?</b> Course introduction, community norms	Email questionnaire to me Begin <i>Jane Eyre</i> in class
	<b>WED</b> 1/16	<b>Who's telling this story? <i>Jane Eyre</i> and the fictionalized autobiography</b>	<i>Jane Eyre</i> volume I

2	<b>MON</b> 1/21	<b>MLK, Jr Day</b>	No class; continue reading <i>Jane Eyre</i>
	<b>WED</b> 1/23	Continued.....	<i>Jane Eyre</i> volume II

3	<b>MON</b> 1/28	Continued...	<i>Jane Eyre</i> volume III
	<b>WED</b> 1/30	Continued...	Finish <i>Jane Eyre</i> <b>Paper #1 due</b>

4	<b>MON</b> 2/4	<b>Rethinking Brontë</b>	Nina LaCour, <i>We Are Okay</i>
	<b>WED</b> 2/6	Continued...	Finish the novel

5	<b>MON</b> 2/11	<b>Entering the text</b>	Jasper Fforde, <i>The Eyre Affair</i>
	<b>WED</b> 2/13	Continued...	Finish the novel

6	MON 2/18	The fairy tale tradition	<a href="#">Cinderella</a> and Philip Pullman, <i>I Was a Rat!</i> (Cinderella link also available in course documents)
	WED 2/20	Continued...	<del>Writing Workshop</del> (this is a change) SNOW DAY

7	MON 2/25	Continued...	WRITING WORKSHOP (This is a change)
	WED 2/27	Continued...	Begin <i>Wee Free Men</i> (This is a change)

8	MON 3/4	Ranging further afield...	Finish <i>Wee Free Men</i> , Begin Gene Luen Yang, <i>American Born Chinese</i> <b>Paper #2 Due</b> (This is a change)
	WED 3/6	Continued...	Finish <i>American Born Chinese</i> Discuss final projects (change)

9	MON 3/11	Spring break	
	WED 3/13	Spring break	

10	MON 3/18	Research planning	Library instruction day: meet in Boatwright B-26; bring your laptop or check one out at the main desk
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	<b>WED 3/20</b>	<b>Metafictional journeys</b>	Gene Luen Yang, <i>American Born Chinese</i> (change)
<b>11</b>	<b>MON 3/25</b>	Continued...	Lewis Carroll, <i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i> (change)
	<b>WED 3/27</b>	Continued...	<i>Through the Looking-Glass</i> (change)
<b>12</b>	<b>MON 4/1</b>	Continued...	Gaiman, <i>Coraline</i> (change)
	<b>WED 4/3</b>	Continued...	China Miéville, <i>UnLunDun</i> <b>Paper #3 Due Friday (change)</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>MON 4/8</b>	Continued...	Continue <i>UnLunDun</i>
	<b>WED 4/10</b>	Continued...	Finish <i>UnLunDun</i> <b>Final paper proposals due</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>MON 4/15</b>	Continued...	Kiese Laymon, <i>Long Division</i>
	<b>WED 4/17</b>	Continued...	Finish <i>Long Division</i>
<b>15</b>	<b>MON 4/22</b>	<b>Presentations</b>	Group one

	<b>WED 4/24</b>	<b>Presentations</b>	Group two
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<b>16</b>	<b>MON 4/29</b>	<b>Final exam period, 9 am</b>	Final projects due
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# Course Policies

## Student responsibilities:



- Participate
- Ask questions
- Collaborate
- Be flexible/understanding
- Withhold judgement
- Be open to other opinions
- Build on each other's discussion
- Be supportive of one another
- Not control the conversation
- Pay attention and listen actively
- Come prepared
- Listen intentionally
- Take time to reflect
- Get enough sleep
- Keep a reading journal



Use digital devices responsibly and without distracting yourself or other students



**Readings.** The readings form the core of our class discussions, so please come to class prepared. This means taking notes in your reading journal, writing down quotations from the reading, bringing questions, and making connections between the readings.

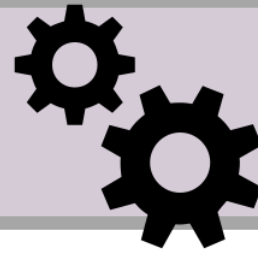
## Instructor responsibilities:

- Demonstrate excitement about subject
- Give clear directions
- Facilitate, don't dominate, discussion
- Provide frequent and supportive feedback
- Remain open to student opinion
- Respond to student questions promptly

“Scholarship on children’s metafiction argues that this sort of literature forces readers out of comfortable narratives. Metafiction provides a pea—or, if that fails, a pumpkin—beneath the mattress that causes the formerly comfortable reader to stir.” (Or does it?) (Joe Sutliff Sanders, “The Critical Reader in Children’s Metafiction,” *The Lion and the Unicorn* 33:3 [Sep. 2009], p. 350).

“In the author’s investigation of the essential narrative situation—the complex and intricate collaboration of narrator, story, and reader (or listener), the work of metafiction explores the nature of human communication in general” (Anita Moss, “Varieties of Children’s Metafiction,” *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 18:2 [1985], p. 88).

# The Technical Stuff...



## FYS Program Goals

This course will:

1. Expand and deepen students' understanding of the world and of themselves
2. Enhance their ability to read and think critically
3. Enhance their ability to communicate effectively, in writing, speech, and other appropriate forms
4. Develop the fundamentals of information literacy and library research
5. Provide the opportunity for students to work closely with a faculty mentor

### Boatwright Library Research Librarians

(<http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask/> or 289-8876): Research librarians assist students with identifying and locating resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also provide research support for students and can respond to questions about evaluating and citing sources. Students can email, text or IM or schedule a personal research appointment to meet with a librarian in his/her office on the first floor Research and Collaborative Study area. Our library liaison is Marcia Whitehead.

**Career Services** (<http://careerservices.richmond.edu/> or 289-8547): Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major or course of study, connecting with internships and jobs, and investigating graduate and professional school options.

## Academic Support

If you experience difficulties in this course, please let me know right away. There are also other resources that can support you in your efforts to meet course requirements.

**Academic Skills Center** (<http://asc.richmond.edu>, 289-8626 or 289-8956): Assists students in assessing their academic strengths and weaknesses; honing their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, and related techniques; working on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encouraging campus and community involvement. Hours at the Center are:

**Sunday through Wednesday 3:00-9:00 p.m. and Thursday 3:00-7:00 p.m. On-call tutors are also available.**

### Academic Integrity.

Plagiarism is using another's words or thoughts without attribution. In an internet age it is particularly difficult to avoid—we all end up cutting and pasting, and losing track of where we found what. It is critically important, however, to give credit where it is due—to acknowledge our influences, our borrowings, our debts. Doing so is a way of honoring our intellectual mentors (even those we've never met) and becoming part of an intellectual tradition. If you are in doubt as to whether you should cite something, ask me, ask a librarian, or just cite it. You'll rarely go wrong that way. If I see something in a paper that should have been cited, or that seems as if it might be borrowed, I'll discuss it with you first. If we can't come to an agreement about the source, or the problem persists, I will involve the Honor Council at that point.

**Counseling and Psychological Services** (<http://wellness.richmond.edu/offices/caps/> or 289-8119):

Assists currently enrolled, full-time, degree-seeking students in improving their mental health and well-being, and in handling challenges that may impede their growth and development. Services include short-term counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.



**Disability Services** (<https://disability.richmond.edu/students/index.html> or 289.8032) The Office of Disability Services works to ensure that qualified students with a disability (whether incoming or current) are provided with reasonable accommodations that enable that student to participate fully in activities, programs, services and benefits provided to all students. Please let me know as soon as possible if you have an accommodation that requires academic coordination and planning.

### **You may also find these resources helpful...**

**Speech Center** (<http://speech.richmond.edu> or 289-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations.

**Writing Center** (<http://writing.richmond.edu> or 289-8263): Assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work.