FIRST-UG 730 First-Year Research Seminar: Adventure Narratives

Instr. Tara Gellene
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TR 8:00a.m.-9:15a.m.
Room: 501 1 Washington Place
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Office Hours: Thursday 9:30-11:00 (by appointment)

Course Description

The First-Year Research Seminar is designed to build on the writing skills and strategies you learned in your First-Year Writing Seminar. Like your FYWS, this course will emphasize the writing process—brainstorming, drafting, incorporating feedback, and peer review. Your engagement with that process will be crucial to your success in this class and as a writer in general.

So how is the First-Year Research Seminar different from the First-Year Writing Seminar? In addition to further developing your writing skills, this class will develop your research skills. Research, like writing, is a rich and recursive process. In this course you will learn how to generate and refine research projects, find and vet different kinds of sources, and mobilize sources in various ways in your writing.

In this seminar we will explore the theme of adventure. In adventure narratives, men and women typically seek out, or are thrust into, unfamiliar spaces where they confront elemental forces. Some adventurers traverse dramatic natural environments while others explore spaces of dramatic cultural difference. We will explore how and why these spaces are represented as staging grounds for conflicts with principles of gender, power, and moral life. In your writing and research you will develop arguments about how narratives of adventure reflect fundamental aspects of the cultural imagination.

Required Texts

The required texts are available from Shakespeare & Company at Broadway & West 4th

They are:

*She* by H. Rider Haggard, (Oxford University Press, 1998.).
*On the Road* by Jack Kerouac, (TBD).
*Civilization and Its Discontents* by Sigmund Freud (TBD)
*The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel, (TBD)
You may use different editions of these works if necessary, but be mindful of page number discrepancies in class, and always try to obtain the right translation of works not originally in English.

Additional readings and handouts for the course will be made available through Blackboard. These readings should be printed and brought to class, or if you have an electronic pdf reader (e.g. ipad), you may use that in class. Please do not use laptops in class for reading or note-taking unless otherwise indicated on the Course Schedule.

Please familiarize yourself with *The Owl*: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/). It is an excellent reference for grammar, citation, and more.

**Course Requirements**

- Interpretive Essays/Assignments (3): 55%  
  - Essay 1: 15%  
  - Essay 2: 20%  
  - Essay 3: 20%  
- Documented Essay (2000 w. min): 25%  
- Research Blog, Drafts, Forums: 10%  
- Reading Blog: 5%  
- Class Participation: 5%

**Course Expectations**

**NYUClasses**: Students are expected to check Classes at least twice a week to keep up with homework assignments. All written assignments and drafts should be submitted through Classes. Please follow these naming conventions for your files:

_LastNameFirstInitial_Assignment#

For example, my second draft of my third essay would be named: GelleneT_E3D2. This naming system helps me keep track of your submissions when I download them to my computer for grading so please use them consistently (thanks in advance!). Though I will use Blackboard to review your writing, make sure to also bring hard copies of your written work to class so that you can participate in class discussions and activities.

Please note: if you find that you are confused about how to post assignments on NYUClasses, please see me within the first week of classes so I can show you how it works. I will not accept assignments by email; you must post assignments correctly on NYUClasses to receive credit.

**Attendance and Lateness**: If you miss more than two classes your final grade will be lowered; for each additional absence beyond the two that are allowed your grade will be lowered a half grade (e.g., C+ to C). Save absences for when you need them; there is no such thing as an “excused” absence. If you miss more than 5 classes, you will not be able to pass the class. Additionally, you are expected to come to class prepared and on time. If you are late to class you may be counted ½ absent. If you do not have
writing to work with in class, especially on peer review days, you may be counted absent.

**Participation:** In order to participate in class, you’ll often need to have your text books and a copy of your latest writing assignment/draft. Please get into the habit of bringing these things to class. Also, plan to participate in class discussion and group activities. The classroom will be a safe place for ideas, and I promise that no one will be punished for giving voice to an unusual question or interpretation. Please do not use cell-phones in class.

**Major Homework Assignments:** Your most important homework assignments will be Drafts of your writing, Forum Posts, and entries in your Research Blog. All these assignments are listed on the syllabus. Research Blog entries will follow a specific format; you can refer to the formatting guidelines on NYUClasses. All Major Homework Assignments must be completed thoroughly and on time to receive full credit. They will be assessed with a ✓+, ✓, ✓-, or NC (no credit). Homework submitted more than one day late will automatically receive NC. I will drop your lowest Research Blog grade at the end of the semester; all other uncompleted homework will negatively impact your grade.

**Reading Blog:** Most reading assignments are accompanied by a short writing assignment which you will enter in your Reading Blog on our NYU Classes site. These entries must be completed thoroughly and on time to receive full credit. They will be assessed with a ✓+, ✓, ✓-, or NC (no credit). Homework submitted more than one day late will automatically receive NC. I will drop your lowest Reading Blog grade at the end of the semester.

**Essay:** Three essay assignments are required; specific assignments will be distributed in advance. These assignments will undergo revision and rewriting with the assistance of peer review, instructor feedback, and your own further thinking. All essays will adhere to MLA format for research papers, including documentation. There will be penalties for late essays. See the “Grades” section below for more information about late work.

**Research Essay:** For your fourth essay, you will develop an original research topic, amass multiple sources, and write a research essay.

**Grades**

Students must **submit all major writing assignments in order to pass the class.**

**Other things that can affect your grade:** Your course grade will be calculated using the percentages described above with the following exceptions: excessive absence, missing work, and submitting plagiarized work.

- **Missing Work:** You must submit all major assignments to pass the course.
Late Work: Late Drafts will not receive comments from the instructor and will count against your homework grade. They may also affect your participation grade if you are unable to participate in class, because you do not have a draft with you. Late Final Drafts will be penalized 1/3 grade for every class day they are late. To clarify, any time after the deadline counts as the next class day, even if you submit your late essay before the next class actually meets.

Absences: If you miss more than 5 class meetings you can not pass the course.

Violating Academic Integrity: It is important to uphold the conventions of Academic Integrity as defined by Gallatin. Please review Gallatin’s statement on Academic Integrity:
http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html

Further Support

The Writing Center is a great resource for all writers at Gallatin. At the Writing Center, trained consultants offer students free consulting/tutoring on all aspects of the writing process. Make sure to schedule appointments in advance; they will fill up.

Course Schedule

This schedule may change slightly throughout the semester. Be sure to check the course schedule on NYUClasses for up-to-date information. If a class must be canceled due to an emergency, students will be contacted through a Classes announcement. Once again, it is important to frequently check email and NYUClasses.

Tuesday, January 29
In class: Introduction to the Course. Introduction to Research Questions. Tennyson’s “Ulysses” & Edna St. Vincent Millay “Unexplorer.”
For our next class: Read The Epic of Gilgamesh, Tablets I-VII (p. 1-62)

Thursday, January 31
In class: Discuss Gilgamesh themes
For our next class: Finish Gilgamesh, Tablets VIII-XI (p. 62-99). Read “Articles for Gilgamesh” posted on NYUClasses. In your Reading Blog, freewrite for 5-10 min your answer to this question: what issues do you feel you saw in the epic that these sources missed or misinterpreted?

Tuesday, February 5
Research Blog Entry #1 Due (Gilgamesh)
In class: Discussion of Gilgamesh and articles.
For our next class: Read excerpts from The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus (posted on Blackboard). In your Reading Blog, freewrite for 5-10 min on the significance of one recurring theme that you find interesting in the text.

Thursday, February 7
In class: Discuss Columbus
For our next class: Read “Articles for Columbus” posted on NYUClasses. Begin work on “Assignment 1: Article Analysis.”

Tuesday, February 12
Research Blog Entry #2 Due (Columbus)
In class: Discussion of Columbus and articles.
For our next class: Begin reading Heart of Darkness, Part I & II. In your Reading Blog, freewrite for 5-10 min on the significance of one recurring theme that you find interesting in the text. Identify 2 key passages that raise this theme.

Thursday, February 14
Consider coming to office hours to discuss Article Analysis in-progress.
In class: Discuss Heart of Darkness.
For our next class: Finish reading Heart of Darkness. Complete Article Analysis.

Tuesday, February 19
Assignment 1—“Article Analysis”—due
In class: Discuss Heart of Darkness. Lit Review Assignment; Research Strategies.
For our next class: Begin research for lit review. For Thursday 21, begin researching Heart of Darkness as if you were planning to use it for your Lit Review Assignment. Please keep track of what search engines databases you use, the search terms that you use, and anything else you do to find the sources that you find. What “trending topics” are you noticing? Pick a trending topic that interests you and select the most credible and authoritative source you found on that topic. Why did you identify this source as credible and authoritative? Please record this information in your Reading Blog, and bring a hard copy of your records to class on Thursday.

Thursday, February 21
Research Blog Entry #3 Due (Conrad).
You should bring your laptop or borrow a laptop for class today.
In class: Discuss Findings. More research strategies
For our next class: Read She, Introduction-Chapter XVI (p.11-170). In your Reading Blog, freewrite for 5-10 min on the significance of one recurring theme that you find interesting in the text. Identify 2 key passages that raise this theme.

Tuesday, February 26
In class: Discuss She
For our next class: Finish She.
Research Blog Entry #4 Due (Haggard)
Consider coming to office hours or visiting a research librarian at Bobst to discuss your literature review in-progress.
In class: Discussion of She
For our next class: Read On the Road, Part 1-2. In your Reading Blog, freewrite for 5-10 minutes considering how On the Road compares and contrasts with the other texts that we’ve read so far.

Tuesday, March 5
In class: Discuss On the Road
For our next class: Finish On the Road. Complete formal draft of Literature Review.

Thursday, March 7
In class: Discuss On the Road
For our next class: Read Civilization and Its Discontents. In your Reading Blog, identify and explain an idea from Freud that resonates with On the Road. Freewrite for 5-10 minutes exploring that resonance. Then repeat this, exploring an interesting resonance between Civilization and Its Discontents and one of our other readings.

Assignment 2—“Literature Review”-- Draft Due Friday by 7p.m.

Tuesday, March 12
Research Blog Entry #5 (Kerouac)
In class: Discuss Freud and On the Road. Lens Moves.
For our next class: Read excerpt from Kant and essay by Cronon posted on NYUClasses. In your Reading Blog, identify and explain an idea from Kant or Cronon that resonates with one or more of the texts we have read. Freewrite for 5-10 minutes exploring that resonance.

Thursday, March 14
In class: Discuss Kant and Cronon. Finding other lenses.
For our next class: Read Life of Pi. In your Reading Blog, freewrite for 5-10 minutes on the significance of one recurring theme that you find interesting in the text—ideally one we haven’t discussed at length before. Identify 2 key passages that raise this theme.

SPRING BREAK March 18-24

Tuesday, March 26
Final Draft of Assignment 2—Literature Review— Due
Research Blog #6 Due (Freud/Kant/Cronon)
In class: Discuss Life of Pi. Possible Lenses.
For our next class: Find and post possible lens sources to the Life of Pi discussion forum.

Thursday, March 28
In class: Discuss Life of Pi. Research Topics.
For our next class: Read *Collected Works of Billy the Kid*. In your Reading Blog, pick one particularly interest passage from Billy the Kid and write about it for 20 minutes, explaining what you think it means in the context of the work as a whole.

**Tuesday, April 2**  
*Research Blog #7 Due (Topic Proposal)*  
In class: Discuss *Billy the Kid*. Select possible Lens Sources.  
For our next class: Read class-selected lens sources.

**Thursday, April 4**  
In class: Lens Moves  
For our next class: Complete draft of Essay 3

**Tuesday, April 9**  
*First Draft of Essay 3 Due (bring hard copy to class)*  
In class: Revision Workshop—Organization  
For our next class: Revise Essay 3

**Thursday, April 11**  
*Second Draft of Essay 3 Due*  
*You should bring your laptop or borrow a laptop for class today.*  
In class: Prospectus Assignment. In-class research day.  
For our next class: Work on Prospectus

**Tuesday, April 16**  
*Prospectus Due*  
In class: Sign-Posting & Coherence  
For our next class: Complete Essay 3

**Thursday, April 18**  
*Final Draft of Essay 3 Due*  
*You should bring your laptop or borrow a laptop for class today.*  
In class: In-class research/writing day  
For our next class: Work on Research Essay

**Tuesday, April 23**  
In class: Writing Workshop: Structure  
For our next class: Work on Research Essay

**Thursday, April 25**  
*First Draft of Documented Essay (bring a hard copy to class).*  
In class: Style Workshop  
For our next class: Revise style

**Tuesday, April 30**
Please bring a hard-copy of your Research Essay Draft with you to class today. You may also want to bring a laptop.

In class: Sign-posting & Coherence
For our next class: Work on revision of Research Essay

Thursday, May 2
Please bring a hard-copy of your Research Essay Draft with you to class today. You may also want to bring a laptop.
In class: Drawing Conclusions
For our next class: Complete Second Draft of Research Essay

Tuesday, May 7
Second Draft of Research Essay Due (bring a hard copy to class with you).
In class: Revision Workshop/Peer Review
For our next class: Complete Final Draft of Research Essay

Thursday, May 9
Final Draft of Research Essay Due