

“What a Long Strange Trip It’s Been”: Exploring Homer’s *Odyssey*  
ENG 170: Studies in Literature  
Fall 2017 / Tuesday & Thursday 8:00am-9:50am

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Office hours: T 9:40-11:30am  
Office:301.22



### Course Overview:

A man and his trusty dog, a one-eyed monster, an angry sorceress, and a beautiful but deadly group of women. There’s only one word to describe the travels of Odysseus in the Homer’s *Odyssey*: epic. Homer’s ancient Greek epic, *Odyssey*, is a keystone of Western literature; even though it was composed over twenty-five hundred years ago, it still resonates with our contemporary moment by encompassing such themes as cultural belonging, homecoming, alienation, and friendship. An epic poem, Homer’s *Odyssey* has inspired many adaptations that span different times, geographies, and literary forms and genres. And with these adaptations come new definitions of what it means to be a hero, a man, a woman, and even a human. Designed for students of all majors, ENG 170 will introduce students to the study literature, and reading methods for poetry, drama, and prose fiction through Homer’s *Odyssey* and a selection of its literary adaptations. As we move through these texts together, our studies will be unified through a central question: how do journeys shape our relationships to ourselves, others, and different cultures? This course fulfills the G.E. C.2 requirement.

### Course Objectives:

1. To introduce students to major Western literary forms and genres across different time periods.
2. To develop analytical skills, including close reading, annotating and note taking, and communicating effectively in both written and verbal forms.
3. To familiarize students with different theoretical approaches to literary texts, such as post-colonial, feminist, and visual studies methods.
4. To promote literacy across written and visual texts.

5. To identify and answer some of the major questions within studies of Homer's *Odyssey* and its adaptations.

### Course Expectations:

1. Come in having read the assigned texts thoroughly and be prepared to discuss them.
2. Class will occasionally start with in-class writing assignments. These are short, informal, and designed to prepare you for participating in class. Please take these writing exercises seriously and write the entire allotted time.
3. This course is technology friendly, but non-class-related technology is not permitted.

### Special Needs:

If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, or learning disability that may affect your ability to carry out assigned course work, I urge you to contact the staff with Services to Students with Disabilities (SSD), who will review your concerns and determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation are confidential.

### Required Texts

\*\*Homer, *The Odyssey*, ed. Robert Fagles  
(ISBN-10: 0140268863)

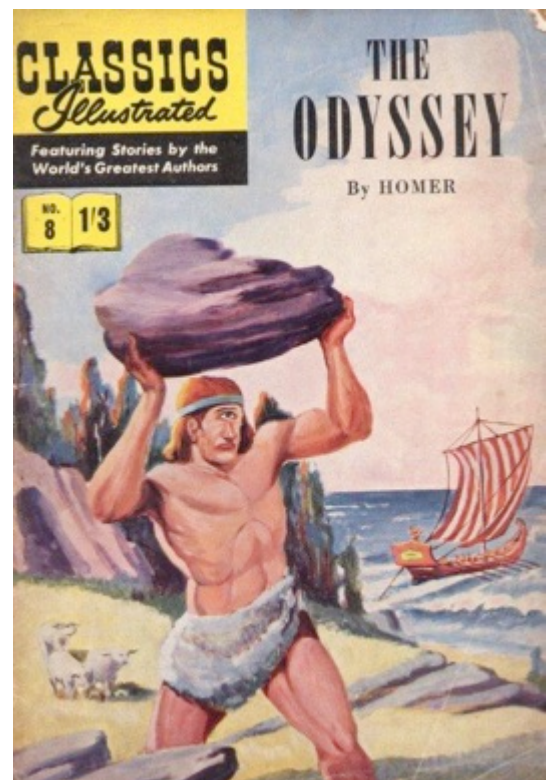
Derek Walcott, *The Odyssey: A Play*  
(ISBN-10: 0374523878)

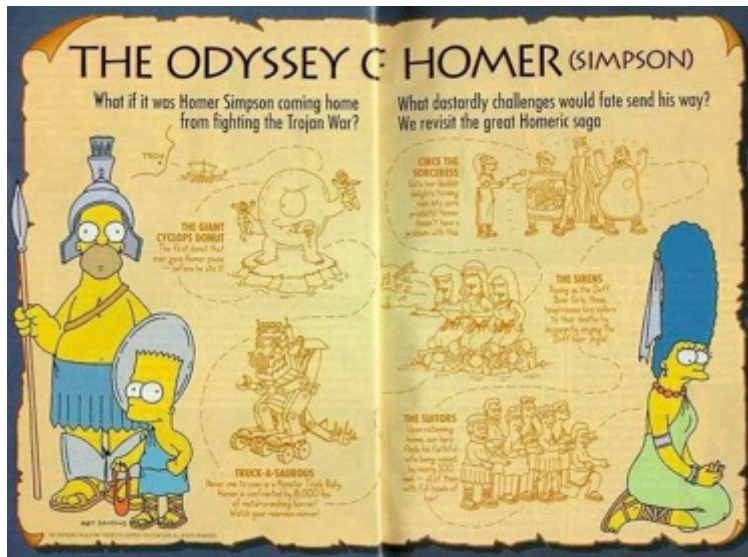
Junot Diaz, *Drown*  
(ISBN-10: 1573226181)

Margaret Atwood, *The Penelopiad*  
(ISBN-10: 1841957984)

*Arguing About Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, ed. Schilb and Clifford  
ISBN-10: 1457662094

\*\*readings available on course website





## Assignments

Midterm: **25%** (October 31<sup>st</sup>)

Final Exam: **30%** (Finals week)

Final Paper **30%** (November 30<sup>th</sup>)

**25%** for paper

**5%** for prewriting

Response Writings: **10%**

Quizzes & Participation: **5%**

**Midterm (25%) and Final (30%) Exams:** These will be in-class exams comprised of short answer, matching, and fill-in responses. For your final exam, you will also have one longer essay in addition to the short answer, matching, and fill-in responses.

**Final Paper (30%; 7 pp): “Found Footage” Assignment:** For this assignment we will be writing like Greeks, or in the spirit of “Dionysian imitatio.” The “imitatio” is the rhetorical practice of emulating, adapting, and enriching the source text of another author. Creative writing will be a platform for conducting a close reading of literary text’s form or genre. You will choose one of the texts that we have read this quarter. Paying close attention to the author’s style and themes, as well as the text’s form and genre, you will be responsible for crafting a “lost” fragment of the text that has now been found in the style of that particular author. In addition to this short creative piece, you will write an accompanying critical piece that explains how your creative “addition” to the novel reflects the concerns of the texts, and how it may confirm or change the text’s treatment of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, etc. To prepare you for your final paper, you will have a series of short pre-writing assignments to make sure you are on the right track.

**Response Writings (10%; 2% per writing):** Every two weeks you will be responsible for turning in a 1-2 page (double spaced) response paper. For this assignment, you will choose a short passage from the text that we are reading and conduct a close reading and analysis of it, taking into consideration stylistic elements particular to that form (poetry, short story, drama, etc.) The goals of these writings are to gain familiarity with the practice of writing about literature, and to prepare you for your final paper.

**Quizzes & Participation (5%):** Throughout the quarter, there will be short quizzes on the readings.

## Reading Schedule

\*available on Blackboard

\*\*denotes due date for response paper

### Unit 1: Poetry

**Thurs, September 21<sup>st</sup>**: Introduction to ENG 170 & Greek epic tradition

**Tues, September 26<sup>th</sup>** : \**The Odyssey* Books 1, 5; \*AAL CH. 4 “The Reading Process,” 88-91

**Thurs, September 28<sup>th</sup>** : \**The Odyssey* Books 9-11

**Tues, October 3<sup>rd</sup>** : \**The Odyssey* 12,13, 21, 22; \*AAL CH. 5 “The Writing Process,” 121-135

**\*\*Thurs, October 5<sup>th</sup>** : \**The Odyssey*, 23; \*Alfred Tennyson, Lord “Ulysses” \*AAL, CH. 6  
“Writing About Poetry” 179-182

### Unit 3: Drama

**Tues, Oct 10<sup>th</sup>**: Walcott, *The Odyssey* Act I (1-50) / \*AAL CH. 6 “Writing About Literary Genres: Writing About Plays” 196-204

**Thurs, Oct 12<sup>th</sup>** : Walcott, *The Odyssey* Act I (50-end) ; \*Rushdie “The Empire Writes Back”

**\*\*Tues, Oct 17<sup>th</sup>**: Walcott, *The Odyssey* Act II

### Unit 4: Short Stories

**Thurs, Oct 19<sup>th</sup>** : Diaz, *Drown* (“Ysrael,” “Aurora”); AAL CH. 6 “The Elements of Short Fiction,” 155-165

**Tues, Oct 24<sup>th</sup>** : Diaz, *Drown* (“Drown,” “Augatando”)

**\*\*Thurs Oct 26<sup>th</sup>** : Diaz, *Drown* (“No Face,” “Negocios”)

**Tues, Oct 31<sup>st</sup>** : \*Ellison, “Battle Royal” from *Invisible Man* (AAL 1147-1160); \*AAL  
Charles J. Ogletree Jr. “Condemned to Die Because He’s Black,” 1003-1005

**Thurs, Nov 2<sup>nd</sup> Midterm Exam** (Short Answer; matching; vocabulary)

### Unit 5: Novels

**Tues, Nov 7<sup>th</sup>** : Atwood;

**Thurs, Nov 9<sup>th</sup>** : Atwood

**\*\*Tues, Nov 14<sup>th</sup>** : Atwood

**Thurs, Nov 16<sup>th</sup>** : Atwood

### Unit 6: Comparative, Visual and Literature

**Tues, Nov 21<sup>st</sup>** : Coen Brothers, *O, Brother Where Art Thou?*; \*AAL CH. 6 “Writing About Literary Genres: Comparing Poems and Pictures,” 184-186

**Thurs, Nov 23<sup>rd</sup>** : holiday

**\*\*Tues, Nov 28<sup>th</sup>** : Coen Brothers, *O, Brother Where Art Thou?*

**Thurs, Nov 30<sup>th</sup>** : Coen Brothers, *O, Brother Where Art Thou?*

**FINALS WEEK: EXAM & PAPER DUE**

