

## **Fall 2013 PA 70a Questionable Literature: Literature of the Offensive**

3 units (2-0-1)

Student Instructors: Michael Grappone & Ellora Sarkar

Sponsoring Professor: Cindy Weinstein

### **Course Description:**

This is a course in literature not commonly taught in a typical English course primarily due to the questionable content contained within each novel. Excerpts will be taken from the following books: *The Sound and the Fury\**, *Oedipus Rex\**, *Lolita\**, *They Called Themselves the KKK*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin\**, *Gone with the Wind\**, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn\**, *Ain't I a woman*, *Raising Boys Feminists will Hate*, *Feminists Say the Darndest Things*, *50 Shades of Grey\** and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower\**. The course is 3 units and structured with 2 x 1-hour lecture and discussion sections each week, and 1 hour of reading and preparation for the weekly classes.

When the midterm prompts are given out, there will be some short instruction on the mechanics of writing papers that do not follow the generic five paragraph essay format. This includes, but is not limited to: making a useful outline before beginning to write and recognizing awkward sentence constructions.

\*Currently available in the Caltech Library.

### **Classes, Homework, and Grading:**

Grading: Pass-Fail

51% Attendance & Discussion (3% per class)

20% Midterm Essay

29% Final Essay

A passing grade is considered 75% of total points

Since the Discussion is an integral and fun part of the class, only 2 classes can be missed without grade deduction. The midterm essay will be a 1.5-2 page paper (minimum 400 words) on topics relating to units 1 and 2 of the course. The final essay will be a 2-page paper (minimum 500 words) relating to units 3 and 4 that will be due on the last week of class. The topics will be diverse enough to allow students to explore any aspect of the course that interests them without worrying about topic approval.

### **Units:**

1. Blood Relations: Examining the Literary Portrayal of Incestuous Relationships
2. The Amorphous Depiction of African-Americans from the Perspective of American Writing
3. Gender Roles and Equality: The Idiomatic and Cultural Evolution of Women in Writing
4. The S-Word: Understanding Conflicting Ubiquity and Secrecy Regarding Literary Sexuality

### **Topics by week:**

Week 1	Blood Relations	September 30 – October 4
Early Class:	Organizational Meeting, Course Information, and short stories	
Late Class:	The Sound and the Fury	

Week 2	Blood Relations	October 7 – October 11
Early Class:	Oedipus	
Late Class:	Lolita	
Week 3	B.R. & Amorphous Depictions	October 14 – October 18
Early Class:	Lolita	
Late Class:	They Called Themselves the KKK	
Week 4	Amorphous Depictions	October 21 – October 25
Early Class:	Uncle Tom’s Cabin	
Late Class:	Gone With the Wind, Midterm Essay Prompts Out	
Week 5	Amorphous Depictions	October 28 – November 1
Early Class:	The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	
Late Class:	The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	
Week 6	Gender Roles and Equality	November 1 – November 8
Early Class:	Ain’t I a woman	
Late Class:	Raising Boys Feminists Will Hate	
Week 7	Gender Roles and Equality	November 11 – November 15
Early Class:	Raising Boys Feminists Will Hate, Midterm Essays Due	
Late Class:	Feminists Say the Darndest Things	
Week 8	Gender Roles & The S-Word	November 18 – November 22
Early Class:	Feminists Say the Darndest Things	
Late Class:	50 Shades of Grey, Final Essay Prompts Out	
Week 9	The S-Word	November 25 – November 29
Early Class:	The Perks of Being a Wallflower	
Late Class:	None: Thanksgiving	
Week 10	The S-Word	December 2 – December 6
Early Class:	Peer Review for Final Essays	
Late Class:	Final Essays Due, Wrap-up	