

Shannon Hayes
Shannonh@uoregon.edu
Office: Library 411
Office Hours: T/TH 3-4pm

PHIL 311 Philosophy in Literature: Memory & Forgetting

Course Description

In this course, we will explore the philosophy in literature using the themes of memory and forgetting as our guide. Philosophy is a written, and therefore literary, tradition, while literature readily draws on concepts and worldviews that are fundamentally philosophical. Philosophy can be literary, literature can be philosophical, and yet the one is not the other. In this course we will explore the possibilities and limitations inscribed in each form through our engagement with *philosophical literature*. These are texts that trouble the distinction between philosophy and literature, where literature veers into philosophy's so-called territory through the inclusion of its concepts and worldviews in narrative fiction. ***Some questions we will explore:*** What is the value of memory? Of forgetting? Of narrative? What is the relationship between literature and truth? What roles do memory and forgetting play in the constitution of subjectivities and the construction of histories? What is the relationship between our past, present, and future? ***Topics:*** memory; forgetting; narrative; subjectivity; history; time/its passage; relationship between past/present/future

Although this course is titled Philosophy in Literature, it is not the case that our discussions will be limited to texts in the so-called literary canon. Literature should be taken in the broad sense to include other forms of narrative fiction and literary art. Other forms include: poetry, autobiography, myth, fable, television, theatre, comic books, video games, philosophy...In lecture I will be relating course ideas and concepts to these other forms and you are encouraged to bring your own experiences with this broad sense of literature to our discussions.

Each class will be a combination of lecture, group discussions, small group-work, and short writing assignments. Over the course of the term we will read philosophical/literary texts by Nietzsche, Freud, Benjamin, Borges, Nabokov, Proust, Delilo, and Dick. This is a reading-intensive course. You are expected to read around 40-50 pages per class meeting (this # may increase when we are reading novels), and to come to class prepared to discuss the material (do you have questions? Concerns? Passages that interest you?). Please come to class with the text. Repeated failure to do so will result in the lowering of your participation grade.

Course Requirements

20 Discussion Questions (8)
30 Reading Responses (8)
35 Final Paper
15 Participation

100%

- **Discussion Questions:** A typed discussion question is due each **Thursday** (eight Thursday classes = eight discussion questions). If there is a problem with your printer, send me your question any time before 11:30 am, Thursday morning and I will print it for you and bring it to class.
- **Reading Responses:** Each week you will write a short (1 pg., double-spaced) response to the week's readings. For each, you should provide an overview of the week's content, explore 1-2 ideas that interest you, and include further questions that the reading has inspired.
Guidelines: 1 pg, double-spaced, cite the texts, your response should be to the texts themselves but informed by the week's discussions.
Due: the following Tuesday at the start of class (Week Two response due Tuesday of Week Three)
- **Final Paper:** The course will culminate in a 7-10 page paper. There will be no prompt for this paper, but it must address the topic (memory/forgetting) in some manner and the main focus should be on one or more of the assigned texts. Additional sources are welcomed but not required.

Paper Abstract (5%)	<i>Due: Tuesday of Week Nine</i>
Paper Presentation (5%)	<i>Due: Thursday of Week Ten</i>
Final Paper (25%)	<i>Due: Tuesday of Week Eleven</i>
- **Participation:** Since this is a small class, the strength of the course will depend on your participation. Participation is expected during each meeting. Occasionally there will be short in-class writing assignments and these will be counted toward this grade.

Course Policies

- **Attendance:** You are allowed to miss three classes during the quarter. The first three times you miss class—whether because of illness, another kind of emergency, or another reason altogether—you do not need to contact me to let me know. If you miss class a fourth time, you **must** provide documentation of illness or emergency, or else you risk failing the course. Although missing class will not directly affect your grade, it will most likely indirectly effect it through the participation grade or if it results in late/missing assignments.
- **Late Work:** All work should be turned in at the beginning of class. If you miss a class, please e-mail your work to me at the beginning of class. If there are extenuating circumstances, let me know as soon as you can (i.e. if you know you have a busy week ahead and will not be able to complete an assignment on time, check in with). Late work will only be accepted on a case-by-case basis.
- **Reading:** The day's reading should be completed prior to the beginning of class. If the reading assignment changes or I choose a selection of the reading to focus on, I will announce it in class and will post the information in an announcement on the class's Canvas page. If you miss class, be sure to check Canvas for an announcement.
- **Electronics:** The use of cell phones is not permitted during class. If you need to answer a call or text, please leave the classroom while doing so. The use of laptops is permitted to read an electronic copy of the day's readings. Please do not use your cell phone to read during class.

The following acts of academic dishonesty will result in course failure, i.e., an "F"

- *Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. By placing one's name on work submitted for credit, one certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. Verbatim statements by others must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from the regular text as indented extracts. Students will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is acknowledgement of indebtedness. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever: 1) one quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product; 2) one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one's own words; 3) one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material—unless the information is common knowledge.
- *Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism.* If in doubt, consult the instructor or seek assistance from the staff of Academic Learning Services (68 PLC, 346-3226). In addition, it is plagiarism to submit as your own any academic exercise prepared totally or in part by another person, even if that person is acting as a tutor or editor (and ends up substantially producing part of the work).
- *Fabrication:* Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive. Examples include, but are not limited to: 1) citing information not taken from the source indicated; 2) listing sources in a reference not used in the academic exercise; 3) inventing data or source information for research or other academic exercises.
- *Cheating:* Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise. - - Examples include but are not limited to: 1) copying from another student's work; 2) collaborating without authority or allowing another student to copy one's work in a test situation; 3) using the course textbook or other material not authorized for use during a test; 4) using unauthorized material during a test; for example, notes, formula lists, cues on a computer, photographs, symbolic representations, and notes written on clothing; 5) resubmitting substantially the same work that was produced for another assignment without the knowledge and permission of the instructor; 6) taking a test for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test for you.

Required Texts

Benjamin, Walter. *Berlin Childhood Circa 1900*

Nabokov, *Speak, Memory*

Proust, Marcel. *Swann's Way*

All other texts will be available on Canvas

Reading Schedule

** Please note: reading schedule is tentative**

Week One: 9/27, 9/29

T Introduction

TH Borges, "Funes, the Memorius"; "The Circular Ruins"

Week Two: 10/4. 10/6

T Nietzsche, "Uses and Disadvantages of History"

TH Nietzsche, "Uses and Disadvantages of History"

Week Three: 10/11. 10/13

T Freud, *Interpretations of Dreams*

TH Freud, *Interpretations of Dreams*

Week Four: 10/18, 10/20

T Benjamin, "The Storyteller"

TH Benjamin, *Berlin Childhood*

Week Five: 10/25, 10/27

T Benjamin, *Berlin Childhood*

TH *Instructor out-of-town; TBA*

Week Six: 11/1, 11/3

T Nabokov, *Speak, Memory*

TH Nabokov, *Speak, Memory*

Week Seven: 11/8. 11/10

T Nabokov, *Speak, Memory*

TH Proust, *Swann's Way*

Week Eight: 11/15. 11/17

T Proust, *Swann's Way*

TH Proust, *Swann's Way*

Week Nine: 11/22. 11/24

T Delilo, *Falling Man*

****Paper Abstract Due****

TH *NO SCHOOL: Thanksgiving Break*

Week Ten: 11/29, 12/1

T Dick, "We can remember it for you wholesale"

TH *Final Paper Presentations*

**** Final Paper Due: Tuesday, December 6th @ Noon (hard-copy; place TBA)****