

American Novel II: Trickster's Return
English 479.01 — Fall 2004
Dr. Christopher Schedler

Time: TuTh 4:00-5:40
Location: Lang & Lit 223
Course Website: <http://courses.cwu.edu>

Office Hours: MTuTh 11:00-12:00 (L&L 416E)
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Course Description

In his literary history *American Fictions 1940-1980*, Frederick Carl suggests that American novelists writing after WWII "must become tricksters; for they have lost their aura as magicians and spiritualists." During a time period in which many envisioned the death of the novel, the end of history, the loss of a coherent sense of self, and the lack of an objective knowledge of reality, the novelist as trickster must create new literary forms, new understandings of time, multiple personalities, and alternative perspectives on reality. Rather than just reflecting postwar American culture, the novels we will read in this course also critique that culture and imagine new ways of being American. We will examine novels from a variety of the multicultural literatures of the United States to see how what it means to be American changes in different historical and cultural contexts. We will also examine how literary criticism of the novel has developed in America after WWII by collaboratively constructing our own class reader of critical articles on the novels in the course.

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing the course, you will be able to:

- Understand the development of styles and forms of the American novel after 1940.
- Read, analyze, and discuss novels to define the literary techniques and conventions of the genre and evaluate works that exemplify, modify, or challenge genre conventions.
- Engage in literary research and employ library resources to find literary criticism.
- Summarize and evaluate the arguments underlying critical writings about literature.
- Recognize and employ literary terms and critical methods to analyze works of literature.
- Write literary essays based on an argumentative thesis and exhibiting an awareness of the relationship of form and content, critical strategy and perspective, and knowledge of genre conventions.

Required Texts

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952)
Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962)
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1977)
Ana Castillo, *The Mixquiahuala Letters* (1986)
Maxine Hong Kingston, *Tripmaster Monkey* (1987)
Michael Chabon, *Wonder Boys* (1995)

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Participation: Your class participation is determined by your contributions to discussions and activities, in-class and online, and peer-editing responses. You should contribute not just when called upon, but also by volunteering your ideas and questions to the discussion. It is essential that you attend class (arriving on time and remaining until dismissed) and come prepared (with the reading completed and with questions and responses to what you have read).
2. Reading Quizzes: Complete 5 reading quizzes on the assigned books. These quizzes will focus on your knowledge of the content of the books to make sure that you are keeping up with the reading. These quizzes will be taken online.

3. Discussion Opener: Present a 10-minute discussion opener on a critical reading of your choice for a particular novel. The presentation will involve finding a critical article or book chapter devoted to your chosen novel, making a brief oral presentation to the class summarizing the main points of the critical reading, and opening our in-class discussion with some questions about the novel viewed through the critical reading. This opener can be presented formally or informally in class; for example, using a PowerPoint presentation or handout. You must post your discussion opener questions as a message in the online Discussion Board before your scheduled presentation and moderate the online discussion that develops. Your PowerPoint presentation or handout must also be posted in digital form as an attachment to your discussion opener message in the online Discussion Board.
4. Critical Essays: Write 2 critical essays (6-8 pages each). You will be asked to choose a specific and focused topic, construct a strong thesis that argues for a particular position, use evidence from the text, and refer to secondary sources that provide the historical, cultural, or critical context to support your argument.

Alternative Options:

- English Teaching majors may choose to replace one of the critical essays with a unit plan (including context description, objectives and rationale, assessments and writing assignments, and sequence of 3 lesson plans with EALRs addressed, teacher activities, student activities, materials used, assessment strategies, and time frames for each segment) to teach one of the books to students in their own classes.
- Graduate students will write one critical essay (15-20 pages) on one or more of the texts from class. An abstract/proposal (250-300 words) for your essay and an annotated bibliography of 10-15 secondary sources should be turned in on the day the first critical essay is due. Annotations (approximately 100 words for each entry) should both summarize the main argument of the secondary text and evaluate its usefulness for your project.

Grades

You must complete all the assignments in order to receive a passing grade for the course:

Requirement	% of Grade	Total Grade %	Grade Range
Participation	15%	90-100%	A
Reading Quizzes	15%	80-89%	B
Discussion Opener	10%	70-79%	C
Critical Essay 1	30%	60-69%	D
Critical Essay 2	30%	Below 60%	F

Expectations

- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class. If you are late to class, it is your responsibility to make sure you are marked present. You are allowed three unexcused absences. After the third unexcused absence your participation grade will decline by 1/3 of a letter grade for each subsequent absence. After the sixth unexcused absence I may fail you for the course.
- If you must miss class for personal or medical reasons, you must notify me when and why you will be (or have been) absent in order to be excused. If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact someone from class to find out what you missed before the next class meeting. Remember: you are the only person responsible for your success in this course.

- You will have the opportunity to participate in online peer-editing groups for each of your papers. I will ask those of you whose writing I'm unfamiliar with for a brief writing sample to place you into peer editing groups. Responding to the drafts of your peers' papers is an essential part of your participation grade. This is your opportunity to receive feedback on your paper drafts and develop your editing skills, as well as help your peers with their written work. Failure to contribute peer-editing responses to your group will cause your grade for that paper to decline by a full grade point. Failure to submit a draft of your paper for peer editing will cause your grade for that paper to decline by 1/3 of a grade. Because you will be drafting and revising each of your critical essays before turning it in, there will be no revisions after the papers are graded.
- Written work will be submitted online in digital format, so you must have access to a word processing program and the Internet either at home or at school. If this will be a problem please see me immediately. Papers must be submitted by midnight of the due date. Late papers will be downgraded 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late.
- I will comment on your papers in digital format and post them online for your review. Reminder to English majors: All English Language and Literature majors, English/Language Arts Teaching majors, and English -- Writing Specialization majors are required to take either English 489: Senior Colloquium or English 488: Teaching Portfolio; all majors should retain a copy of all paper assignments and papers for this course for the purpose of revision and possible inclusion in their senior portfolios. Please check the Portfolio Guidelines for your specific English major program. Guidelines are available in the English Department Office.
- I expect everyone to behave respectfully in class, listening attentively to the ideas of others and asking for clarification if necessary. You are free to disagree with any ideas that are presented in class, but you must be willing to support your own perspective, maintain a civil tone, and accept differences of opinion.
- I assume that all work turned in bearing your name will be your work. Quotations and ideas taken from other sources need to be fully acknowledged; otherwise, you are liable to the charge of plagiarism, which may result in punishments ranging from a failing grade for the paper to failure in the course and a charge of academic misconduct.
- In accordance with university policy, incompletes are given solely as a response to emergency situations and at the discretion of the instructor. In order to receive an incomplete, a student must be passing at the time of the request.
- If you have a learning disability or other special needs, you should register with Disability Support Services (Bouillon 205; 963-2171). Only then will I be able to accommodate you. This information will be kept confidential.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings/Assignment(s)
Week 1	TH 9/23	Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll in course through Blackboard • Print syllabus • Introduce yourself in Discussion Board • Ellison: <i>Invisible Man</i> (Prologue)
Week 2	T 9/28	Invisible Man	• Ellison: <i>Invisible Man</i> Chapters 1-6 (pp. 15-150)
	TH 9/30	Invisible Man	• Ellison: <i>Invisible Man</i> Chapters 7-13 (pp. 151-295)
Week 3	T 10/5	Invisible Man	• Ellison: <i>Invisible Man</i> Chapters 14-20 (pp. 296-444)
	TH 10/7	Invisible Man	• Ellison: <i>Invisible Man</i> Chapters 21-End (pp. 445-581)

Week 4	T 10/12	Cuckoo's Nest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelsey: <i>Cuckoo's Nest</i> Part 1 (pp. 3-138)
	TH 10/14	Cuckoo's Nest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelsey: <i>Cuckoo's Nest</i> Part 2 (pp. 141-311)
Week 5	T 10/19	Ceremony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silko: <i>Ceremony</i> (pp. 1-130)
	TH 10/21	Ceremony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silko: <i>Ceremony</i> (pp. 131-262) • 1st Paper Draft Due Online
Week 6	T 10/26	Mixquiahuala Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castillo: <i>The Mixquiahuala Letters</i> • Peer Edit Responses Due In Class & Online
	TH 10/28	Mixquiahuala Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castillo: <i>The Mixquiahuala Letters</i> • Critical Essay 1 Due
Week 7	T 11/2	Tripmaster Monkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kingston: <i>Tripmaster Monkey</i> Chapters 1-4 (pp. 3-164)
	TH 11/4	Tripmaster Monkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kingston: <i>Tripmaster Monkey</i> Chapters 5-9 (pp. 165-340)
Week 8	T 11/9	Wonder Boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chabon: <i>Wonder Boys</i> (pp. 3-126)
	TH 11/11	Veterans Day Holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Class
Week 9	T 11/16	Wonder Boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chabon: <i>Wonder Boys</i> (pp. 126-245)
	TH 11/18	Wonder Boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chabon: <i>Wonder Boys</i> (pp. 246-368)
Week 10	T 11/23	Film Viewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wonder Boys</i> (Film)
	TH 11/25	Thanksgiving Holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Class
Week 11	MON 11/29	2 nd Paper Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd Paper Draft Due Online
	T 11/30	Film Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wonder Boys</i> (Film)
	TH 12/2	Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluations • In-class quiz on film • Peer Edit Responses Due In Class & Online
Finals Week	MON 12/6	Final Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Essay 2 Due Online