

INTERMEDIATE COMPOSITION – FANDOM & FAN STUDIES

ENGL 2120-501

Instructor: Natalie Sheppard

Office: Zoom – <https://unm.zoom.us/j/3839566272>

E-mail: nsheppard1@unm.edu

Office Hours: MW 2:00-3:00 MST

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course builds upon and refines the writing skills acquired in previous writing courses, with a focus on non-fiction prose. Research, composition, exposition and presentation abilities will be practiced and developed. Through analysis and revision, students will develop strategies to improve the versatility and impact of their writing. Course topics and emphases may vary by section.

COURSE THEME

The theme of this course is “Fandom & Fan Studies.” Together, we’ll explore what it means to be a fan and how fans create community and culture in digital spheres. We’ll read, watch, play, and listen to a variety of media that have inspired large and thriving fan communities such as Harry Potter, Star Trek, Disney, and Dungeons and Dragons. We’ll engage with the creative endeavors produced by the fandom and create fanworks of our own. Finally, we’ll explore the academic side of digital ethnography, thinking and writing critically about the creation of these communities and the unique ideas that exist within, around, and about fan culture.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND TOOLS

There is no traditional required textbook for this class, all readings, assignments, and discussions will be provided on Canvas. You should also have access to Zoom (provided by UNM).

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Office Hours: Office hours will be held on Mondays from 2:00-3:00 MST and by appointment. During this time, I will be sitting at my computer, Zoom open, and able to answer any email within 15 minutes.

Email: Send any and all questions, concerns, or comments to nsheppard1@unm.edu. I generally am pretty quick to reply during business hours (M-F 9:00-5:00), but if you don’t hear from me by the next business day you should send a follow-up email. Additionally, you can expect at least weekly email updates from me with reminders and updates for the course.

Make-Up Work: Because this is a remote asynchronous course, you are responsible for completing all work by the assigned dates. Several of the assignments require group work and your group will be reliant on your timely completion of that work. Therefore, not all work is eligible to be made up. With that being said, it never hurts to ask. If you find yourself struggling with the work load or missing assignments, the earlier you can reach out the more likely we will be able to figure out a way for you to catch up.

Weekly Open Chats: Once per week, I will host an open Zoom meeting for us to discuss the readings, assignments, essays, and the state of the world. These chats are optional, and you do not have to attend but they may be useful for getting to know your classmates, asking questions, and receiving feedback.

Pods and Discussions: Pods are chosen alphabetically and will remain in place for the duration of the semester. Your Pod will be a group of 4-5 who will be your main discussion partners and will occasionally complete assignments as a group. Discussions may be facilitated over Canvas discussion boards or another medium such as zoom, discord, messaging, or chat if your pod prefers. If you and your pod are not getting along for whatever reason, send me an email as soon as possible to work through a solution.

Revise and Resubmit: All major essays are eligible to be revised and resubmitted for a better grade so long as the author schedules a conference with me within one week of receiving their graded essay. The essay must show significant revisions beyond small corrections to be eligible for an improved grade. The author must also turn in a one page reflection on the revision process which outlines the major changes made and how it improves the paper.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Accommodations: UNM is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for students with documented disabilities. As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate an inclusive classroom setting, in which students have full access and opportunity to participate. To engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations for this class and/or program, please contact Accessibility Resource Center at arcsrvs@unm.edu or by phone at 505-277-3506.

Title IX: Our classroom and our university should always be spaces of mutual respect, kindness, and support, without fear of discrimination, harassment, or violence. Should you ever need assistance or have concerns about incidents that violate this principle, please access the resources available to you on campus, especially the LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center and the support services listed on its website (<http://loborespect.unm.edu/>). Please note that, because UNM faculty, TAs, and GAs are considered "responsible employees" by the Department of Education, any disclosure of gender discrimination (including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual violence) made to a faculty member, TA, or GA must be reported by that faculty member, TA, or GA to the university's Title IX coordinator. For more information on the campus policy regarding sexual misconduct, please see: <https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2740.html>.

Academic Integrity: Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty or otherwise fails to meet the standards. Any student judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in course work may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or for the course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to,

dishonesty in quizzes, tests, or assignments; claiming credit for work not done or done by others; hindering the academic work of other students; misrepresenting academic or professional qualifications within or without the University; and nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other University records.

Indigenous Peoples' Land and Territory Acknowledgement: Founded in 1889, the University of New Mexico sits on the traditional homelands of the Pueblo of Sandia. The original peoples of New Mexico – Pueblo, Navajo, and Apache – since time immemorial, have deep connections to the land and have made significant contributions to the broader community statewide. We honor the land itself and those who remain stewards of this land throughout the generations and also acknowledge our committed relationship to Indigenous peoples. We gratefully recognize our history.

Plus/Minus Grade Policy:

For determining mid-term and final grades, the following scale will be used:

100-97=A+	89-87=B+	79-77=C+	69-67=D+	59-0=F
96-93=A	86-83=B	76-73=C	66-63=D	
92-90=A-	82-80=B-	72-70=C-	62-60=D-	

ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN

15% Autoethnography (1000 words)

For this initial paper students will write a short autoethnography describing their own history as a fan of popular entertainment. You should explore whether or not you think of yourself as a fan, what kinds of fan practices you engage with, how you define a fan, how you became invested in the media franchises that have been part of your life, and how your feelings about being a fan might have adjusted over time.

10% Fandom Exploration/Annotated Bibliography (500 words)

Students will choose a fandom of interest and explore some seminal works of that fandom. This assignment will ask you to read/watch/listen/play the media that inspired the fandom, the major works of fan art, as well as some articles or news pieces about the fandom. Students will cite each work they read/watch/listen/play in MLA format and provide a short 100-200 word commentary on each citation.

20% Argument (1500 words)

Students will write a researched argumentative essay about a prominent issue in Fan Studies within the context of a fandom of their choosing.

20% Analysis (1200 words)

Students will choose a piece of fanfiction and analyze it as both a piece of literature and media criticism.

20% Creative Fanwork/Reflection (750 words)

Students will create their own piece of fanwork and reflect on the process of creation and participatory culture.

15% Participation

Throughout the semester, students will be asked to complete various assignments to reinforce learning outcomes. These might include reading responses, writing exercises, quizzes, feedback surveys, conferences, peer review, or discussion boards.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

All course materials will be open the second week of class (January 22). This schedule is for YOUR benefit to keep you from falling behind as the semester progresses, and as such the due dates are flexible so long as you work with me IN ADVANCE. You should feel free to read and work ahead on the individual assignments, work with your pod for the group assignments and discussions, and reach out to me as soon as possible if you find yourself falling behind. In addition to the required texts listed, you should expect a written or filmed lecture from me each week to place the texts in context and explain the week's assignments/discussions. All Assignments are due Sunday of the posted week.

Week One (Jan 17-21) – Introductions

January 16 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

January 17 – Classes Begin

Readings: Course Documents
“Textual Poachers” by Henry Jenkins

Discussion: Introductions, Are you a “fan”?

Assignment: Reading Response/Autoethnography pre-writing

Week Two (Jan 22-28) – Harry Potter & Modern Fandom

January 27 – Last day to ADD sections and CHANGE credit hours on LoboWEB

January 27 – Last day to CHANGE grade mode on LoboWEB.

January 27 - Last day to PETITION for In-State Tuition Classification (continuing students only).

Texts: “How Harry Potter Shaped Modern Internet Fandom” by Kayti Burt (Den of Geek, 2018)
My Life as a Background Slytherin
Dear Mister Potter... (selections)

Discussion: Coming of Age in Fandom

Assignment: Autoethnography

Week Three (Jan 29-Feb 4) – Star Trek & The Invention of Fanfic

February 1 – First Day of Black History Month

February 3 – Last day to DROP without "W" grade and receive a 100% tuition refund on LoboWeb

February 3 - Last day to ADD sections and/or CHANGE credit hours with form, \$10 per transaction. After this date \$75

Texts: “*This is How Star Trek Invented Fandom*” by Molly McArdle
(<https://www.gq.com/story/this-is-how-star-trek-invented-fandom>)
Spockanalia
(<https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=spockanalia>)
“*Darmok*” *Star Trek: The Next Generation*

Discussion: Towards a Fandom Lexicon

Assignment: Conceiving a Zine (due Sunday)

Week Four (Feb 5-11) – Superwholock & Mashup Fandoms

Texts: “*An Ode to Ten Years of SuperWhoLock*” by Maddie Agne
(<https://www.michigandaily.com/arts/an-ode-to-ten-years-of-superwholock/>)
“*SuperWhoLock, Gif Fics, and Fan Pastiche*” by Paul Booth
SuperWhoLock Trailer (Canvas)

Discussion: DIY Mashup

Assignment: “Cringe”

Week Five (Feb 12-18) – Star Wars & Cultural/Canon Hierarchy

Texts: Hoshino – *A Star Wars Fan Film*
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7-n36MBs1A>)
The People vs. George Lucas
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nC77wKPoaPw>)
“*How Star Wars’ Toxic Fans Are Hurting Star Wars*” by Scott Mendelson
(<https://www.forbes.com/sites/scottmendelson/2018/06/08/star-wars-toxic-fans-kelly-marie-tran-last-jedi-ghostbusters-oceans-8-incredibles/?sh=482c55a7522a>)

Discussion: Fans Behaving Badly

Assignment: Fandom Exploration/Annotated Bibliography

Week Six (Feb 19-25) – Game of Thrones & What Fans are “Owed”

February 20 – President’s Day

February 21 – Mardi Gras

Texts: “Entitlement Issues....” By Neil Gaiman
(<https://journal.neilgaiman.com/2009/05/entitlement-issues.html>)
“Write Like the Wind (George R.R. Martin)” by Geek & Sundry (YouTube)

Discussion: What Are Fans Owed?

Assignment: Reading Response

Week Seven (Feb 26-Mar 4) – Dungeons & Dragons & Retro Revival

Texts: “The Vanishing of Will Byers” *Stranger Things* (season 1, episode 1)
“What the Dungeons & Dragons Movie Could Learn From Stranger Things” by Spencer Bollettieri <https://screenrant.com/dungeons-dragons-movie-stranger-things-lessons/>

Discussion: “You All Start in a Tavern....”

Assignment: Create a Character

Week Eight (Mar 5-11) – Anime & Fandoms Without Borders

Texts: “The History of Anime’s Journey to America” by Drew Dietsch
<https://www.fandom.com/articles/anime-history-america>
Watch Some Anime (See Canvas for Complete List)

Discussion: Viewing Response

Assignment: Anime vs. Animation

Week Nine (Mar 12-18) – (Spring Break)

March 12-19 – Spring Break

March 17 – St. Patrick’s Day

Week Ten (Mar 19-25) – The Magicians & Deconstructing Fandom

Texts: *The Magicians* (s1e1)
“The Magicians and the Mainstreaming of Fan Culture”
<https://www.themarysue.com/the-magicians-and-the-mainstreaming-of-fan-culture/>

Discussion: Deconstructions & Love Letters

Assignment: Issues in Fandom Argument

Week Eleven (Mar 26-April 1) – Free Culture & Intellectual Property

Texts: *Free Culture* (ch. 1) by Lawrence Lessig
“Bring on the Female Superheroes!” by Christopher Bell (TEDtalk)

“Why Netflix’s Bridgerton Lawsuit is Good For Fan Fiction”
(<https://copyrightlately.com/why-netflixs-bridgerton-lawsuit-is-good-for-fan-fiction/>)

Discussion: Fandoms in Capitalism

Assignment: Reading Response

Week Twelve (April 2-8) – Fifty Shades of Grey & Fan Labor

Texts: “Fifty Shades of Exploitation: Fan Labor and Fifty Shades of Grey” by Bethan Jones (<https://doaj-org.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/article/067b2afeca234a38a17ab7dfad2b9409>)

Discussion: Fan Economy

Assignment: Reading Response

Week Thirteen (April 9-15) – FanFiction & Potential

Texts: “The Promise and Potential of FanFic” by Stephanie Burt
(<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-promise-and-potential-of-fan-fiction>)
“Your Handy guide to AO3” by Backofthebookshelf
(<https://www.tumblr.com/backofthebookshelf/618945087408390144/your-handy-guide-to-ao3-searching-and-filtering>)
“ao3 101” by Icaruspendragon (TikTok)

Discussion: AO3 Exploration

Assignment: Finding a Fic

Week Fourteen (April 16-22) – FanFic As Criticism

April 14 - Last day to DROP without Dean's Permission on LoboWEB

Texts: “FanFiction is Always Media Criticism” by Mary Kate McAlpine
(<https://marykatemcalpine.medium.com/fanfiction-is-always-media-criticism-d34f0c3f64f6>)

Discussion: What it means to participate in Fandom

Assignment: Analysis Practice

Week Fifteen (April 23-29) – Harry Potter & The Death of the Author

Texts: “Harry Potter and the Author Who Failed Us” by Aja Romano
<https://www.vox.com/culture/21285396/jk-rowling-transphobic-backlash-harry-potter>

Discussion: Separating Art from the Author

Assignment: Fanfic Analysis

Week Sixteen (April 30-May 6) - Participating in Fandom

May 5 - Last Day for CHANGE grade mode with form

May 5 - Last Day to ADD sections and/or CHANGE credit hours with forms \$75 per transaction

May 5 - Last day to DROP with Dean's Permission with form

Texts: TBD

Discussion: Autoethnographies Revisited

Assignment: Write a Fanfic/Create a FanWork, Reflection

Week Seventeen (May 7-13)

May 8-12 – Final Exams

May 12 - Last day to report removal of Incomplete

May 13 - Commencement