

ENC 1145: Writing About Strangeness
Fall 2015 | Section 3322
MWF 7 | 3322 | MAT 002

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Office Hours: Monday period 8 and Friday period 6, or by appointment

Course Description:

In the introduction to *Feeling Very Strange: The Slipstream Anthology*, editors describe “slipstream, the genre that isn’t,” as “a canon [of] mist and wishful thinking” (vii). Slipstream fantasy has long relied on the concept of “strangeness” to show the ways fantastic elements penetrate aspects of daily life. These strange slip-stream elements appear in all lengths of fiction, and each medium complicates the fantastic elements of what “strangeness” really means. In this course, we will engage with a variety of stories to create our own definition of “strange,” of “slip-stream,” and of why these categories have become so popular in contemporary fiction.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, you will:

- Produce writing that possesses a focused thesis, a sustained analysis throughout the essay, and coherence between paragraphs and ideas and within the essay as a whole
- Display a command of grammar, mechanics, punctuation, spelling, and accurate Modern Language Association (MLA) citation and documentation of research
- Work collaboratively in an academic writing community, learning from and contributing to the writing of your classmates in addition to engaging in critical verbal discourse
- Understand and employ various technological resources in your critical reading, writing, and thinking practices, including the use of word processing to develop essays, e-mail to communicate professionally, and the Internet and library database resources to develop research skills
- Understand the usage of vocabulary associated with slipstream fiction and how the genre both rejects and also fits into the larger movements of contemporary fiction

Required Texts, in Order of Use:

You may purchase any version of these texts – hardcover, paperback, or electronic – so long as it is complete. The bookstore has ordered each required text, but you may purchase anywhere.

Feeling Very Strange, the Slipstream Anthology, Tachyon Publications

edited by James Patrick Kelly and John Kessel

Stranger Things Happen by Kelly Link, Small Beer Press

Strange Pilgrims by Gabriel García Márquez, Vintage Editions

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

by Robert Louis Stevenson, Dover Thrift Editions

The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender by Leslye Walton, Candlewick

Additional Readings, in Order of Use, Available on Canvas:

“Of Slipstream and Others: SF and Genre Boundary Discourses” by Pawel Frelik

“Casual Readers Welcome: An Interview with James Patrick Kelly & John Kessel”

by Cheney Matthew

“Stranger in Possum Meadows” episode of *The Twilight Zone*

“The Absence of 9-11 from Science Fiction” by Andrew Fox

“When Is History Alternate?” by Niall Harrison

“Swans” by Kelly Link

“20 Questions with Kelly Link” by Lynne Jamneck

“Author Spotlight: Kelly Link” by Rebecca McNulty

“Gabriel García Márquez, the Art of Fiction No. 69” by Peter Stone

“2015 Morris Award: An Interview with Finalist Leslye Walton” by Hannah Gómez

“Bold Books for Teenagers: Strange Creatures” by Robert Small Jr.

“Strange Attraction” by Doug Davis

“Mr. Norrell Meets The Gentleman” episode of *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell*

Course Assignments:

Close Reading: In this essay, you will chose a passage from one of the short stories we have read and craft a thoughtful and detailed argument about its relevance to the text as a whole. This argument should be both specific and original, and should be grounded in specific examples from your chosen passage. (900-1200 words, 150 points)

Six Response Papers: Reading responses will be focused and organized, showing critical thinking and an attempt to integrate ideas into course topics and objectives. Each student is responsible for writing a response to six total readings, and each student will choose which days to respond. Reading responses are due at the beginning of class. No late responses will be accepted. Part of the first week of class will be evaluating examples as models for successful reading responses.

One additional reading response may be turned in to replace your lowest reading response grade. If you choose to do this additional assignment, you will write a total of seven responses, but only six grades will count for your overall class average. (600-900 words each, 50 points each)

Research Paper: Your final paper for the course will be a research paper related to one or more of the themes and texts that we will discuss throughout the semester. Your paper must make a nuanced and detailed contribution to the subject you choose; you will be required to incorporate a number of critical and academic sources into your paper to support your thesis. (Paper: 1800-2100 words, 300 points)

Participation: The participation grade accounts for in-class discussion, workshops, quizzes, in-class work, a presentation on the story of your choice, and other related activities. A rubric for participation will be posted on Canvas for your reference throughout the semester. (100 points)

Total Points Possible: 1000

Course Grades:

Grading Scale:

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

Grading Rubric:

A brief overview of how I arrive at the grades for all major assignments is below. We will discuss each assignment in more detail as they arrive.

In each paper, I will evaluate:

- 1) content, including argument, development, and support
- 2) organization, including paragraph structure, overall flow of ideas, transitions
- 3) mechanics, including grammar and style.

You should strive to excel in all three areas; more specific grade breakdowns are as follows:

The A-range essay has strong content, strong organization, AND strong mechanics.

The B-range essay has one key area (content, organization, mechanics) notably in need of revision.

The C-range essay has two key areas (content, organization, mechanics) notably in need of significant revision.

A D-range essay has two or more key areas in need of substantial revision.

An “E” is usually reserved for students who do not do the assignment or fail to attend class. However, an “E” may also be given if an essay blatantly ignores all three areas of evaluation.

Course Policies:

Attendance: This is a participation-oriented, skills-based writing course, which means that you will build your skills incrementally and systematically in each class throughout the semester. Much of the learning that takes place is spontaneous and difficult to reproduce outside of class.

Consequently, if you miss more than **three** classes during the semester, your grade will drop considerably. Each absence beyond three will lower your overall grade by 25 points. However, if you miss more than six classes, you will fail the course. Exempt from this policy are only university-approved absences, such as those for athletics and band and religious holidays. Absences for illness or family emergencies are, with few exceptions, not excused and will count toward your three allowed absences. I advise that you save your absences for when they are truly necessary. If you anticipate having a prolonged absence for any reason, please speak with me in advance to make appropriate arrangements.

If you are absent, it is still your responsibility to make yourself aware of all class discussions and activities as well as any new developments, such as assignments and due dates. You are still responsible for turning assignments in on time. You will not, however, be able to make up any in-class assignments. I will not approach you regarding absences and missing or late assignments; it is your responsibility to keep track of your own attendance and assignments.

Late Arrival: Our class is discussion-based, which means late arrival is both rude and disruptive. Class starts sharply at 1:55 PM, and anyone not in the room by that time will be counted as tardy. Also, if you need to leave early for any reason, that will also count as tardy. Three tardy arrivals will count as one absence, subject to the provisions of the absence policy. If you arrive more than fifteen minutes into a period, you will be counted as absent.

Class Discussion and Preparation: You are expected to add constructively to the conversation we have each day. You will treat the instructor and your fellow classmates with respect at all times, especially when you disagree with them. Anyone who breaks that rule will be asked to leave the classroom.

You are also expected to arrive prepared to actively participate in our class discussions and activities. This means you should come with your homework done, articles/books read and easily accessible, and paper and writing utensils at hand.

Paper Submissions: In order to receive credit for an assignment, you must follow all guidelines set out for paper submission. All assignments should be done on a computer and have a professional appearance. (No stains, wrinkles, etc.) This includes proper MLA formatting, ranging from font and font size to the heading and margins. Any multi-page assignment turned in via hard copy that is not stapled together will lose one letter grade.

Any digital papers should be submitted as .doc, .docx, or PDF. Please include your last name in the document title for electronic submissions.

Papers due via hard copy will be turned in at the start of the class period on the due date. Papers due electronically should be turned in via Canvas by the time that class begins on the due date. No late assignments will be accepted, unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Failure of technology (hard drive crashes, printer out of ink, etc.) is not an excuse. It is your responsibility to keep copies of all graded assignments, even after they have been returned to you.

Paper Maintenance Responsibilities: Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and to make available this material.

Classroom Disruptions: Common courtesy is mandatory in our classroom. Silence all cell phones, pagers, alarms, and so on when you enter the classroom; unexpected noises interrupt everyone's concentration. If a student is found text messaging in class, he or she will be asked to leave and will receive an absence for the day. Sleeping, holding private conversations, and reading other material are also inappropriate behaviors during class time. Students will not need to use a laptop or tablet computer for this class for anything but reading assigned texts, so please put all such devices away before class begins and take them out only for accessing Sakai or Course Reserves. Disciplinary action (dismissal from the classroom, grade deduction, and beyond) will be taken if a student disrupts the learning environment in any way.

Technology: E-readers will be allowed; this does not include cell phones, which must be put away and on silent during class. Other devices, such as laptops and tablets, will be allowed on a provisional basis. I reserve the right to ban them from the classroom at any time.

Email Correspondence: This is an English class, so I expect your emails to me to be professional and follow rules of grammar and etiquette. Please include proper salutations and a signature that includes your name.

Final Grade Appeals: Concerns about grading on individual assignments should be addressed to the instructor. A student who is sure his or her final grade is inaccurate or undeserved may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower grade; the decision is final.

Statement of Composition (C) and Humanities (H) credit: This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

Statement of Writing requirement (WR): This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/gordon.aspx>

Statement of student disability services: The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Statement on harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/scsr/sexual/>

Statement on academic honesty: All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/scsr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Course evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <http://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Course Schedule:

This schedule is tentative and subject to change throughout the semester. All assignments and readings are due on the day they are listed. We will be discussing each of the assigned readings in its entirety, so be sure to follow the syllabus guidelines for when to begin reading so that you do not fall behind. Check your email and Canvas daily for announcements and updates.

Week One: Introduction to Strangeness

August 24: Course Introduction

August 26: Defining Strangeness

Read: "Slipstream, the Genre that Isn't." *Feeling Very Strange*.

Read: "Of Slipstream and Others: SF and Genre Boundary Discourses." Available on Canvas.

August 28:

Read: "I Want my 20th-Century Schizoid Art" Parts I-IV, *Feeling Very Strange*

Read: "Casual Readers Welcome: An Interview with James Patrick Kelly & John Kessel" Available on Canvas.

Week Two: Introduction to Strange Papers

August 31: Read: "Sea Oak," *Feeling Very Strange*

September 2: MLA Format and Citation

September 4: How to Craft a Thesis Statement

Week Three: Strange Stories, Events, and Television

September 7: No Class. Labor Day!

September 9: *The Twilight Zone*: “Stranger in Possum Meadows”

September 11: Slipstream and September 11th

Read: Fox, Andrew: “The Absence of 9-11 from Science Fiction” including the comments. Available on Canvas.

Read: Harrison, Niall: “When Is History Alternate?” Available on Canvas.

Week Four: Strange Stories, Events, and Television Continued

September 14: How to Perform a Close Reading

Read: “The Rose in Twelve Petals,” *Feeling Very Strange*

September 16: *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell: Mr Norrell Meets The Gentleman*

September 18: Discuss *Jonathan Strange*

Week Five: Kelly Link!

September 21: Writing Introductions

September 23:

Due: Due: Reading Response 1

Read: “Swans.” Available on Canvas.

Read: “20 Questions with Kelly Link” and “Author Spotlight: Kelly Link” Available on Canvas.

September 25:

Read: “Travels with the Snow Queen,” *Stranger Things Happen*

Read: “The Specialist’s Hat,” *Stranger Things Happen*

Week Six: Kelly Link Continued

September 28: Writing Conclusions

September 30: Close Reading Practice

Read: “The Girl Detective,” *Stranger Things Happen*

Due: Last Day to Turn in Reading Response 2

October 2: How to Peer Review

Week Seven: Close Reading Preparation

October 5: Peer Review Close Reading

October 7: Conferences

October 9: Conferences

Due: Close Reading

Week Eight: Gabriel Garcia Marquez**October 12:****Read:** “Prologue” and “Bon Voyage, Mr. President,” *Strange Pilgrims***Read:** “Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the Art of Fiction No. 69” Available on Canvas.**October 14:****Read:** “The Saint” and “Sleeping Beauty and the Airplane,” *Strange Pilgrims***October 16:****Read:** “I Sell My Dreams,” “I Only Came to Use the Phone,” and “The Ghosts of August,” *Strange Pilgrims***Due:** Last Day for Reading Response 3**Week Nine: *The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender*****October 19:****Read:** Part 1 pages TBA**Read:** “2015 Morris Award: An Interview with Finalist Leslye Walton” Available on Canvas**October 21:** Generating Paper Topics**October 23:****Read:** Parts 2-3 pages TBA**Week Ten: *The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender* Week 2****October 26:** Effective Research: Finding Sources**October 28:****Read:** Parts 4 - 5 pages TBA**October 30:****Read:** Part 6 pages TBA**Due:** Last Day for Reading Response 4**Week Eleven: Research Techniques****November 2:** Applying Sources**Read:** “Bold Books for Teenagers: Strange Creatures.” Available on Canvas.**November 4:** Effective Research: Library Day!**November 6: No Class: Homecoming!****Week Twelve: Research Continued; Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde****November 9:** Effective Research: Evaluating Sources**November 11: No Class: Veterans Day!****November 13:****Read:** *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde***Due:** Reading Response 5

Week Thirteen: Research Paper Preparation**November 16:** Outlining**November 18:****Read:** “Biographical Notes to ‘A Discourse on the Nature of Causality, with Airplanes,’” by Benjamin Rosenbaum,” *Feeling Very Strange***Read:** “Strange Attraction” by Doug Davis. Available on Canvas.**Due:** If planning optional Reading Response 7, this is the second to last reading of the course, so you should consider Reading Response 6 due today.**November 20:** Tips for Revision**Week Fourteen: Research Paper Continued****November 23:****Read:** “The God of Dark Laughter,” *Feeling Very Strange***Due:** Last Day for Reading Response 6**November 25: No Class: Thanksgiving!****November 27: No Class: Thanksgiving!****Week Fifteen: Research Paper Continued****November 30:** Incorporating Sources**December 2:** Paper Topic Conferences**December 4:** Peer Review Final Research Paper**Week Sixteen: Concluding Strangeness****December 7:** Conferences**December 9:** Wrapping Up**Due:** Final Papers