

**ENG 1131.1363: Writing through Media:
Pain, Illness, and Disability (Fall 2020)**

Instructor: Cara Wieland

Class Meeting Times: Screenings are T Period 9-11; the rest of the course is asynchronous

Office Hours: MWF Period 4 by email or on discord

Course website: Canvas page

Email: premaaa@ufl.edu (not cara.wieland@ufl.edu)

Course Description

In *The Body in Pain*, Elaine Scarry writes that “pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it.” Yet, she continues to write. Despite (and maybe even because of) the seeming impossibility to communicate such experiences, writers and artists take a wide range of approaches in trying to express and articulate pain, illness, and disability. This course thus surveys how these articulations are presented in various types of media including (but not necessarily limited to) fiction and nonfiction writing, comics and graphic novels, visual art, museum exhibitions, television/vlogs, and film.

In addition to considering the strengths of each medium as a tool for articulation, we will also consider *who* is represented, *how*, and perhaps even *why*. We will contextualize class discussions by learning about common tropes in disability representation—such as disabled villains—that connect to critical aspects of disability history—for example: the freak show, the asylum. Then, we will parse through nuanced self-articulations with attention to how such tropes are internalized and reflected, diverged from, or subverted.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will analyze and compare a variety of formats with attention to audience, argument, representation, ‘articulation’ of personal experience, and other factors.
- Students will also *compose* work in several formats including an analysis, literature review, and choice of alternative forms of articulation in an “unessay” project.
- Students will learn to negotiate a project proposal and conduct research on their own terms.
- Students will engage with interdisciplinary studies of disability/illness, race, gender, sexuality, class, and more.
- Students will learn, and contextualize their work in, critical events in disability history and activism.

COVID Statement: The beginnings of this course were conceived before March 2020, meaning before Covid-19 hit the U.S. and significantly impacted our daily lives as well as the social order more broadly. Inevitably and especially due to the course theme, however, this class will communicate with the current moment. None of the assigned materials are on Coronavirus, but we will be discussing stigmas that surround illness, public health history, and more. If there is consensus from the class, we can dedicate a week to Covid-19 and 2020 specifically.

Further, this class does not exist in a bubble removed from surrounding social, political, biological, and other factors impacting individual and community wellness. I want to affirm that I am aware individual and/or class needs will be different from previous semesters, as well as

likely change at some point during the course. As you need and as you are able, please feel welcome to write in and discuss any needs so we can find possible adaptations and solutions.

General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C) *or* Humanities (H). ENG 1131 also fulfills 6000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- Composition courses provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes, and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive WR credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication, and critical thinking:

- *Content.* Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- *Communication.* Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- *Critical Thinking.* Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Required Supplies:

1. There are no required texts to purchase for this course. All readings are either open access online, provided as a PDF, or available through the UF library databases.
2. For screenings, all films/episodes are accessible on *Netflix*, *Amazon*, or a free online platform. You will need supplies to take notes of each viewing to use in future assignments.

Each week, I will share the assigned viewings (with captions) synchronously over Zoom at the originally planned screening time (T Period 9-11). However, if you would rather watch the viewings independently through the previously mentioned streaming services, you are welcome to. The synchronous screenings are just an option if you wish to avoid

paying for each film/episode.

3. Lastly, I ask that each of y'all construct what I arbitrarily term a 'joy pack'. Your pack should include an identified selection of things/practices that reclaim a bit of joy when the world feels overwhelming. Things that bring you comfort, stability, or you just think have good vibes—whatever. There's no need to tell me what's in your joy pack (unless you want to), and you're welcome to call it something else if 'joy pack' is too cheesy. But with the start of a new semester during what can objectively be called a *very challenging* calendar year, I suggest you note some tangible things (e.g. a walk outside, a snack you like, re-watching your favorite show, etc.) you can rely on when coursework touches on difficult subject matter amidst broader social uncertainty.

My joy pack includes drinking coffee and journaling on my porch, making art/collages, popcorn, showering and then getting into a bed with freshly clean sheets, and more. If you already know what's in your joy pack, then power to you. This is a reminder that your joy is a priority, even as the academic semester ramps up.

Course Policies:

All assignments must be completed to receive credit for this course.

1. **Contact:** Outside of office hours, you may email me at any time. I generally reply only during work hours, which means M-F from 9-5; it also may take me up to one business day to respond.
2. **Group Chat (optional to use):** Since the course will be online, most participation will just be making sure to complete the assignments by corresponding due dates. However, screenings, readings, etc., often benefit from and are better understood through discussion. If there's anything you want to discuss, you may post in the class discord server. I will be a member, but that space is meant to be driven by y'all's interests and not dominated by mine. You can ask me questions there, and should tag me if you want to make sure I see your post in a timely manner, but it's your space to use how you want to in relation to the course. Discussions should always be respectful but do not need to be formal.

The discord server can be accessed here: <https://discord.gg/3Uhnjxz>

3. **Attendance:** This course is asynchronous, meaning attendance is via class participation in group discussion posts, etc. For full credit, please "show up" while fully engaging with the class. UF's policy on attendance can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>
4. **Course Behavior:** Whether on Canvas, by email, or in the group chat treat each other, your instructor, and yourself with respect.

At times class materials will discuss sensitive topics such as mortality, sex work, physical and emotional abuse, drug use, and more. Students will almost certainly have differing ideas on these topics due to a variety of social factors. That is okay. Conflict is not a

problem if respect remains present. It should go without saying, but to emphasize, discrimination is not based on respect.

Due to the course theme and how infrequent discussions of ableism are in most social settings, it is likely that students will need to adjust to critical discussions of illness and disability. That is also okay. If you are not yet aware, ‘retard(ed)’ is a slur against intellectually/cognitively disabled people. It should not be used in this class unless you are directly quoting source material.

5. **UF’s Policy on Sexual Harassment:** UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equitydiversity/resources/harassment/>
6. **Paper Format & Submission:** All papers will be submitted on Canvas and should include double spaced Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins and page numbers in the upper-right corner. Citations should match MLA format.
7. **Late Papers/Assignments:** All due dates for major assignments are followed by a 48-hour grace period when you may submit late with no penalty. After that, you may invoke a *shit happens* clause for an extra 3-day extension on **one assignment** this semester, no questions asked. Late assignments will otherwise lose half a letter grade for each calendar day that they are late with exception to extenuating circumstances discussed with the instructor.
8. **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Sometimes Canvas is unreliable, so it is important to have backup documents just in case.
9. **Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism:** Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>
10. **Disability and Accessibility:** Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations legally protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are required to register with the Disability Resource Center, which will provide appropriate documentation to the instructor early in the semester: <https://disability.ufl.edu/>.

That said, making the class more accessible benefits everyone—regardless of diagnosis or documentation. Please write me an email to discuss any access needs that will improve this class for you, regardless of whether you identify as having a disability. You may do this early in the semester or later on as it occurs to you.

*The above is my policy on accessibility every semester, but it seems especially likely, in light of current global circumstances, that individual or class access needs will change at some point during this course. If that happens, we will discuss possible adaptations or

solutions*

11. **Counseling and Wellness:** Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
12. **Grading:** The course rubric is outlined below. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
13. **Grade Appeals** In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Please contact Ms. Blount at cblount@ufl.edu Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
14. **Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages requesting that you do this online: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
15. **Content Notes:** Each viewing will be accompanied by a content note, in which I will do my best to list sensitive content. It is, across the board, never a requirement to share relevant life experiences with me or the class for the sake of class enrichment. It is certainly an option if or when you want to, but it is never a requirement.

Tentative Schedule*:

*Subject to Change

Note: As the class is asynchronous, there is flexibility as to how you distribute your daily workload as long as you meet course deadlines. The calendar shows how I envisioned the course timeline when planning weekly modules.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Friday
UNIT 1: Popular Culture	8/31	9/1	9/2	9/4
Week 1: Course Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introductions and syllabus 	*No screening*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Defining Media Literacy, Representation, and Articulation ■ Introductory discussion post. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Film analysis terminology via Yale database: “Long Road To Hollywood: Why Actors With Disabilities Have Yet To Be Recognized” by Wendy Lu via <i>Huffpost</i>. ■ Syllabus quiz

	9/7	9/8	9/9	9/11
Week 2: <i>Metaphor, Stereotypes, and Supercrrips</i>	Holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Daredevil</i> (2015): 1x1 (“Into the Ring”) and 1x5 (“World on Fire”). Available on <i>Netflix</i> <p>Content note: violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Metaphor, Stereotype, and the Supercrip ■ “What I Want You To Understand About the Supercrip Stereotype” by Claire Stanley via <i>The Mighty</i> ■ Discussion post on stereotypes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Film analysis terminology via Yale database: “Cinematography” ■ “Five Common Harmful Representations of Disability” by Fay Onyx via <i>Mythcreants</i> ■ Media response 1
	9/14	9/15	9/16	9/18
Week 3: <i>Fairy Tale Creatures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “The Little Mermaid” by Hans Christian Andersen ■ “What if the Little Mermaid Learned Sign Language? Thoughts About Fairytales and Disability” by Margaret Kingsbury via <i>Book Riot</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>The Shape of Water</i> (2017). Available on <i>Amazon</i> (not Prime) <p>Content note: sexual harassment, gore, pet death.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “The Shape of Water Dives Into Individualism” by Foundation for Economic Education via <i>YouTube</i>. ■ “I Belong Where the People Are: Disability and The Shape of Water” by Elsa Sjunneson-Henry via <i>TOR</i> ■ Discussion post on cinematography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introducing the Analysis Paper ■ Quiz on Analysis Paper directions ■ Media response 2
	9/21	9/22	9/23	9/25
Week 4: <i>Reality TV, Inspiration, and the Social Model of Disability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The social model of disability ■ Organizing an argument ■ “The Uses and Gratifications of Reality TV” by Zizi Papacharissi and Andrew Mendelson via <i>Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media</i>, uploaded to Canvas Files. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Queer Eye</i> (2019) 4x2 (“Disabled but Not Really”). Available on <i>Netflix</i> ■ <i>Push Girls</i> (2013) 2x1 (“Strange Love”), 2x6 (“Sex Ed”), 2x7 (“How Dare You!”), 2x10 (“Season Finale”). Available on <i>Amazon</i> (not Prime) <p>Content note: domestic abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Reality Television” (pp. 90-98) by Katie Ellis from Chapter 5 of <i>Disability and Popular Culture</i>, uploaded to Canvas Files. ■ MLA Citations Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “On Being Black and ‘Disabled but Not Really’” by Imani Barbarin via <i>Rewire News</i> ■ Media response 3
	9/28	9/29	9/30	10/2

<p>Week 5: <i>Mental Health I: Children's Animation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer review of analysis paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Inside Out</i> (2015). Available on <i>Amazon</i> (not Prime). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The Many in the One: Depression and Multiple Subjectivities in <i>Inside Out</i>” (pp. 162-168) by Nicole Markotic via <i>Journal of Cinema and Media Studies</i> Discussion post on audience 	<p>Holiday</p>
<p>UNIT 2: <i>Social Issues and History</i></p>	<p>10/5</p>	<p>10/6</p>	<p>10/7</p>	<p>10/9</p>
<p>Week 6: <i>Mental Health II: Young Adult Drama</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Is It Time to Change the Way We Think About Pain?” by Theresa Fisher via <i>The Paper Gown</i> “The Spoon Theory” by Christine Miserandino via <i>But You Don't Look Sick</i> Unit 1 reflection Analysis Paper Due 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Euphoria</i> (2019): 1x1 (“Pilot”), 1x2 (“Stuntin’ Like My Daddy”), and 1x7 (“The Trials and Tribulations of Trying to Pee While Depressed”). Available on <i>Amazon</i> (not Prime). <p>Content note: graphic nudity, aggressive sex, sex work, drug use, overdose, flashing lights (can trigger seizures for folks who are photosensitive).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “‘Euphoria’ Is Too Mature For Teens, But It Can Help Them” by Ben Travers via <i>IndieWire</i> Discussion post on authenticity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the literature review Quiz on literature review directions Media response 4
<p>Week 7: <i>The Asylum in Camp Horror</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>American Horror Story: Asylum</i> (2012): 2x1 (“Welcome to Briarcliff”). Available on <i>Netflix</i>. <p>Content note: gore, flashing lights, abuse, disfigurement used for shock value</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “A Convenient Place for Inconvenient People”: madness, sex and the asylum in <i>American Horror Story</i>” by Harriet Earle via <i>The Journal of Popular Culture</i> Discussion post on genre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “<i>American Horror Story Asylum: The True Story That Inspired Season 2</i>” by Blake Stimac via <i>Screenrant</i> Media response 5
	<p>10/12</p>	<p>10/13</p>	<p>10/14</p>	<p>10/16</p>
	<p>10/19</p>	<p>10/20</p>	<p>10/21</p>	<p>10/23</p>

<p>Week 8: <i>Exhibited Bodies</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesizing sources 	<p>*No screening” instead, investigate the <i>Further into Imperfecta</i> digital museum exhibit via The Mutter Museum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “In the Shadow of the Freak Show” by Richard Sandell via <i>Disability Studies Quarterly</i> Discussion post on agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability, visual art, and the museum Media response 6
<p>Week 9: <i>The Documentary I: Collective Memory and U.S. AIDS activism</i></p>	<p>10/26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The Documentary Real: Thinking Documentary Aesthetics” by Frederik Le Roy and Robrecht Vanderbeeken via <i>Foundations of Science</i>, uploaded to Canvas Files. 	<p>10/27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How to Survive a Plague</i> (2012). Available on Amazon (free). scene from <i>Tales of the City</i> 1x4 (“The Price of Oil”) 28:30-35:25. Available on Netflix. <p>Content note: mortality, sarcoma wounds are shown</p>	<p>10/28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collective memory studies Discussion post on constructing history 	<p>10/30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “7 Miles a Second” by James Romberger and David Wojnarowicz via <i>7 Miles a Second</i>, uploaded to Canvas Files. “ACT UP New York Stages Protest at Whitney, Saying Wojnarowicz Retrospective Fails to Connect to Current HIV/AIDS Issues” by Maximiliano Durón via <i>ARTnews</i> Media response 7
<p>Week 10: <i>The Documentary II: Disability Rights and Community</i></p>	<p>11/2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review on Literature Review 	<p>11/3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution</i> (2020). Available on Netflix <p>Content note: This documentary follows many disabled people with varying conditions, some of which are very visible. If you are not used to seeing that, it will probably feel uncomfortable to watch. There is some drooling and seemingly uninterpretable speech.</p>	<p>11/4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The Directors of Netflix’s Crip Camp on What the Documentary Can Teach Us Today” by Cornelia Channing via <i>Slate</i> - 	<p>11/6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The Overlooked History of Black Disabled People” by Vilissa Thompson via <i>Rewire News</i> “Lomax's Matrix: Disability, Solidarity, and the Black Power of 504” by Susan Schweik via <i>DSQ</i> Lit Review Due
<p>UNIT 3: Unshamed</p>	<p>11/9</p>	<p>11/10</p>	<p>11/11</p>	<p>11/13</p>

<p>Week 11: <i>Laughing at Yourself</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unit 2 reflection due ■ Stand-Up Comedy / “Falling/Burning: Hannah Gadsby, Nanette, and Being A Bipolar Creator” by Shoshana Kessock via personal blog. ■ Introduce the “Unessay” ■ Quiz on directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Special</i> (2019): 1x1 (“Cerebral LOLzy”), 1x2 (“The Deep End”), 1x5 (“Vagina Momologues”), 1x7 (“Blind Deaf Date”), and 1x8 (“Gay Gardens”). Available on <i>Netflix</i>. 	<p>Holiday</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Finally, There’s a Comedy Where Disability Isn’t the Punch Line” by Keah Brown via <i>Bitch Media</i> ■ Media response 8
<p>Week 12: <i>Healing Justice</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11/16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “A Not-So-Brief Personal History of the Healing Justice Movement” by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha via <i>MICE Magazine</i> 	<p style="text-align: center;">11/17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Princess Mononoke</i> (1997). Available on <i>Amazon</i> but only to buy for \$11, this may be a synchronous screening to attend. <p>Content note: mortality, (animated) gore.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11/18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “To ‘See with Eyes Unclouded by Hate’: <i>Princess Mononoke</i> and the Quest for Environmental Balance” by Tracey Daniels-Lerberg and Matthew Lerberg via <i>Princess Mononoke: Understanding Studio Ghibli’s Monster Princess</i>, uploaded to Canvas Files ■ Discussion post TBA 	<p style="text-align: center;">11/20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Animating Studio Ghibli’s Monster Princess” by Tracey Daniels-Lerberg et al via <i>Princess Mononoke</i>, uploaded to Canvas Files. ■ Media response 9
<p>Week 13: <i>Practicing Theory, aka Take a Break</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Good Measure: Lizzie Homersham on Carolyn Lazard’s CRIP TIME (2018)” by Lizzie Homersham via <i>ARTFORUM</i> ■ 250-word proposal for “Unessay” project due. ■ Optional: conferences available all day from 9-5 over 	<p style="text-align: center;">11/24</p> <p>*No screening*</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11/25</p> <p>*****<i>Thanksgiving</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11/27</p> <p>Break*****</p>

	chat or email to talk over ideas for project			
	11/30	12/1	12/2	12/4
Week 14: <i>Reclaiming the Gaze</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Staring Back: Self-Representations of Disabled Performance Artists” by Rosemarie Garland Thomson via <i>American Quarterly</i> uploaded to Canvas Files ■ “Moving Toward the Ugly: A Politic Beyond Desirability” by Mia Mingus via <i>Leaving Evidence</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Sin Invalid: An Unshamed Claim to Beauty</i> (2013). Posted in Canvas Module. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Sins Invalid: An Unshamed Claim to Beauty in the Face of Invisibility Soon to be Documentary Film” by Jenese Jackson via <i>Center for Research & Education on Gender and Sexuality</i> ■ Discussion post: make a joy scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Unessay” workshop ■ Media response
	12/7	12/8	12/9	12/11
Week 15: <i>Fiction, Krip-Hop, and Disability Poetics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “The Evening and the Morning and the Night” by Octavia Butler, uploaded to Canvas Files 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *No screening* work on final projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Krip Hop and Disability Poetics ■ Concluding discussion post 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ *NO EXAM* ■ “Unessay” project due 12/14 ■ Unit 3 Reflection due 12/14

Assignments

Assignments total 6,000 words and 1,000 points

Media Responses: (10 @ 250 words each = 2,500 words. 10 @ 30 pts each = 300 pts)

In approximately 250 words, analyze a piece of media from the current week (the previous week is okay too if there was not a response assigned). You can choose one piece of media or multiple, but at least one should be from the current viewing period. Here, with the term ‘media’ I refer primarily to image/texts like films, television episodes, and comics, but short stories and the *Imperfecta* exhibit are totally okay too. Really anything but an article, which can be used in the response but should not be the only thing analyzed.

Each media response can differ, but should respond to at least one of the following prompts:

- Did anything occur in the text/film—on the levels of both writing style, narrative, cinematography, or technology—that challenged or informed your expectations about pain/illness/disability, the medium, the time period, or a combination of those things (e.g. how disability was viewed in that time period, etc)? If so, how? Why is this important?
- What kind of political, cultural, or social intervention might the text/film be making?

- Are *we* the audience for this text/film? Are *you* the audience for this text/film? Who might the audience of this text/film be, and how should that change the way we read/view it? Are there any aspects of the text/film that might be inaccessible to us due to our backgrounds in life?
- Did anything trouble or bother you in this text/film? In what ways did it trouble you, and what might we gain from talking over why this content is troubling?
- If there are multiple representations of pain/illness/disability in the media analyzed, how do they interact? How are they influenced by co-constitutive identifiers like race, gender, and/or class?
- Respond to the argument of an article you think applies to the media analyzed. It can be an article we've read as a class, or one found independently. Your response should be "critical" in that it is a close examination, but it can agree with or counter the argument as it relates to the text/film (or if you're feeling more grey than black-and-white, which is often the case, you can certainly do a mixture of those things).

There is some freedom to the substance of these responses, but the overall shape should match what is outlined here. It does not need to be ordered as a formal essay. You may incorporate reflections from discussion posts in your response (if it is your own post, you may reuse it without comment. If you respond to another student's post, then you must credit them for their idea). Email me if you want to propose an alternative route for this assignment or double-check that your approach fits!

Analysis Paper: (1000 words. 125 pts)

Complete an argumentative close reading analysis of any narrative primary text/film and examine its content, context, form, and rhetorical elements to make claims backed by specific evidence. You may choose a text/film from the course, but it is also acceptable to find one on your own as long as your argument relates to course themes. The paper can expand on an idea in a discussion post/media response or it can cover a new topic. Include at least two scholarly sources to converse with.

Literature Review: (1250 words. 150 points)

Compile research to compose a freestanding literature review on a topic of interest related to course themes. Topics can vary; ideas of what you might cover range from 1.) prosthetics/makeup techniques for disfigured monsters in cinema to 2.) AIDS activism in comics to 3.) university accommodations following the Covid-19 pandemic or 4.) another option entirely, these are just examples to get you thinking. Choose something that interests you or that you think will be useful for you to learn more about.

The literature review's introduction should examine your topic and the current status of research or coverage regarding it. The body of your paper should be the synthesis of sources, organized by issue or by concept (not just source by source). Your conclusion should reiterate your findings, note any research limitations, and discuss ideas for future research. Include at least five scholarly or relevant popular sources to inform the review. If applicable, use headings to organize the separate sections throughout the document.

“Unessay” Final Project: (1000 words + 250-word proposal. Total of 220 pts)

The unessay can be a blogpost, digital story, photo essay or graphic novel, sculpture, song, artwork, video, podcast, game, or another proposed project that differs from the traditional paper format you’ve likely come to expect from university coursework. It may build on a paper topic from a previous assignment or be something totally new as long as it relates to course themes. The only stipulations are that your project must be informed by substantive primary and secondary source research, be accompanied by an expository transcript discussing your approach in relation to the course, and include a Works Cited page.

Do something that genuinely aligns with your interests. This is a creative assignment, but it does not necessarily need to be ‘artistic’ – though the lines between what is 'art' and what is 'not art' are ever-elusive. You are welcome to take a journalistic, archival, scientific, engineering, or other approach.

Several weeks before the unessay is due, you will submit a proposal, outlining your prospective approach to the project, for feedback.

Miscellaneous Assignments: (205 pts)

This includes discussion posts, peer reviews, quizzes, reflections, and all other assorted minor assignments. Quizzes are not on the source material; they are fairly straightforward on syllabus policies, assignment descriptions, etc, just to make sure that accidental miscommunications online are cleared up. They are graded based on completion, not correctness.

These assignments are useful for digesting course information and are meant to help foster your critical thinking/writing skills. That said, if extenuating circumstances interfere with completing miscellaneous assignments (not major assignments or media responses, which make up this course’s 6000-word count) then please contact me. As many of these assignments substitute in-person classwork, the first two miscellaneous assignments that you miss will be excused with no questions asked (as your first two absences would be in an in-person course).

Grading Scale

A / 100 - 94	C / 75 – 73
A- / 93 - 90	C- / 74 - 70
B+ / 89 – 86	D+ / 69 - 66
B / 85 - 83	D- / 65 - 60
B - / 82 - 80	E / 59 - 0
C+ / 79 - 76	

Rubric

Formatting conventions and grammar are critical in general education English classes. That said, I do not take off points for these things while you learn the form and experiment with your writing style. I will, however, leave feedback with particular attention to any patterns I notice that obscure argument clarity.

A level work: A-papers put forth a clear argument, with a thesis statement, and support it with evidence from adequately cited primary and secondary sources. They closely examine the visual, rhetorical, and formal properties of primary sources with attention to course themes, and critically engage with secondary sources.

Rather than merely summarizing the succession of events, the paper is organized based on claims that build the argument. Further, the argument has clear stakes and implications: beyond just “The film does *x*,” the paper considers why creators might choose to do *x* or why doing *x* matters beyond the text/film.

B level work: B-papers put forth an argument, with a thesis statement, and support it with adequately cited primary and secondary sources. They examine the visual, rhetorical, and formal properties of primary sources with attention to course themes and engage with secondary sources. However, it is perhaps less clear how claims and evidence connect or what stakes are present beyond the text/film.

C level work: C-papers show potential with an argument related to course themes but are obscured by lacking evidence or leaning heavily on summary. The stakes of the argument are therefore made unclear. Primary and secondary sources are present and cited.

D level work: D-papers do not present an argument. They do engage with primary and secondary sources as well as reference the visual, rhetorical, and formal properties in relation to course themes.

E level work: E-papers do not engage with the visual, rhetorical, or formal qualities of primary or secondary sources in relation to course themes.