

ENGLISH 192-007: FIRST YEAR SEMINAR—LIFE AFTER APOCALYPSE IN POPULAR MEDIA
Fall 2017: 5 Sept-14 Dec | T and Th 12:30p-1:45p | Room LUB N130

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OFFICE HOURS T and Th 2:15-4:15 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this seminar, we will explore different media representations of life after apocalypse. The fall of a society or the revelation of its greatest failings rarely signify an utter end to all things—on the contrary, they typically set the stage for new and different ways of living. In this course, we will develop our own perspectives and knowledge about how different texts have imagined life after or during the fall of civilization.

Various cultures imagine themselves in crisis, decay, or decline virtually at any given historical moment—despite or perhaps because of the way they currently enjoy or deploy wealth and power. Sometimes they imagine that contemporary society has lost touch with its traditional virtues, signaling a moral rot. Other times, they imagine that environmental degradation or gross social or economic inequality has set the stage for unavoidable catastrophe. Whatever the case may be, social life rarely ends when things fall apart, even in apocalyptic fiction; it struggles on in forms that can be nightmarish or hopeful (or a bit of both).

Because the most popular forms of apocalyptic imagination are often science-fictional or fantastic, we will focus on those genres in different media, including television, literature, video games, and audio drama. Our primary texts will be supplemented with critical and historical scholarly texts. Students will bring other books and films, such as *The Hunger Games*, *Z: The Last Man*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Mad Max*, and *Wall-E* into seminar discussions via independent reading and writing assignments.

By bringing these texts and perspectives into our conversation, we will develop through our dialogue a framework for applying these concepts and theories to the ways we, too, imagine the crises we perceive in our own cultural moment.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required (Primary Texts)

Sinclair Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here* (ISBN: 978-0451216588)
Log Horizon, Season 1, Episodes 1-10 (<http://www.crunchyroll.com/log-horizon> [free w/commercials])
A Dark Room (<http://adarkroom.doublespeakgames.com> [free])
Welcome to Nightvale (<https://soundcloud.com/nightvaleradio> [free])

Other secondary texts will be provided on D2L.

GRADES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Participation (30 percent). Building your knowledge from discussion with others is one of the cornerstones of academic scholarship. You are expected to participate in class actively. In-class participation means: being on time; paying attention; volunteering questions, opinions, and observations; being respectful; bringing your materials to class with you; maintaining a scholarly attitude. This includes regular attendance. You may miss up to two (2) classes (one week's worth) for any reason whatsoever—no excuses necessary. Every class missed beyond that will result in the reduction of your final grade for the course by one degree (example: from B+ to B). You may come to class late (within ten minutes of starting time) twice (2x), for any reason whatsoever—no excuses necessary. Every tardy arrival after those first two times will count as half an absence. (So you'd need to be tardy twice more in order for it to reduce your final grade by a degree.)

Weekly D2L responses (30 percent). You will write two (2) responses each week on the D2L discussion forum. By 11:59 pm each Friday, you will write a post (minimum 300 words) reflecting on that week's materials and in-class discussions. By 11:59 pm each Monday, you will write a post (minimum 150 words) responding to something one of your peers wrote the Friday before. The purpose of this requirement is to extend our conversation beyond the classroom and to foster a prolonged engagement with our texts and with each other. See the handout for further details.

Research paper (20 percent). You will research and write a 5-7 page paper that will be due near the end of the semester. It will be based on a topic of your choice that is relevant to the themes of this seminar. You will provide a prospectus by the fifth week of the semester (5% of your grade), an annotated bibliography by the eighth week of the semester (5% of your grade), and a final draft of the paper by the twelfth week (10% of your grade). During the last week of the semester, you will each have a chance to present a summary of your research to the class, which will count as part of your participation for that week. See the handout for further details.

Book/film reports (20 percent). During the semester, you will be responsible for doing two reports—one on a book and one on a film—each worth 10 percent of your grade. These reports will be a minimum of 750 words, and each will discuss the form, content, and historical context of a book/film that relates to the themes of this course. You'll publish them on D2L in place of your usual Friday response on those weeks, and you'll then be responsible for responding to one of your peers' reports the following Monday. See the handout for further details.

COURSE POLICIES

Consultation. Please drop by any time during my office hours; I encourage making appointments, but no appointment is necessary. If your schedule does not permit you to make it to my office hours, please make an appointment with me—I'm happy to meet with you outside of my office hours if need be. I will endeavor to answer every e-mail within 24 hours, and you may contact me by phone if necessary. If you're shy or otherwise feel uncomfortable speaking up in class, I especially encourage you to come see me during my office hours or after class.

Paper format. For citations, use MLA format. Submit or post your assignments via D2L (discussion forum or dropbox, as directed) by the assigned due date/time. Every assignment submitted to the Dropbox should be double spaced, with 12-point font (Times New Roman), and the pages should be numbered. Your name, my name, course/section, and the due date of the assignment should all be in the header in the upper left corner on the first page. Submit your papers in .docx file

format. The file name should follow this model, adjusting for your individual last name and the specific assignment name: 2017.spring.eng192.lastname_assignmentname. Assignments that do not follow these guidelines will not be considered submitted until they are formatted correctly.

Late Work. You will be allowed up to two (2) late assignments this semester—no excuses necessary and no negative consequences. Any late assignment, including those two, must still be submitted within five (5) days of the deadline. Any assignment not submitted within five (5) days will not be accepted, and will be given a grade of F. Beyond the first two allowed late assignments, each late assignment automatically will have its grade dropped by a full letter (example: from B to C), with the grade dropping one full letter further for each day it is late. Exceptions will be made according to the sufficiency of the excuse. Any assignments not submitted by the end of the semester will result in your final grade being lowered by one degree (example: from B+ to B) for each assignment that remains unsubmitted by the final day of class. (Example: if you fail to submit three assignments, a final grade of B- would be lowered to C-.)

Devices. You may use electronic devices during class *if and only if* you are instructed or specifically permitted to do so. You may take notes with pen and paper during in-class discussions. No ear buds, smartpads, or laptops will be permitted unless they are part of the in-class activity on that day. No smart phones are permitted in the classroom at any point while we are meeting. We will be using D2L for submissions and other activities, so get comfortable using it as soon as you can. You may call the UWM Help Desk at 1.414.229.4040 or visit the Web page at: <http://www4.uwm.edu/technology/help/campus/index.cfm>.

Plagiarism. Never pass someone else's work off as your own. If I find that you've copied original work and claimed it as your own, I will report it and recommend the fullest possible penalty.

Library page: <http://guides.library.uwm.edu/content.php?pid=217260&sid=1806375>

Academic misconduct policy: http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm

Obstacles. Many students face a variety of challenges to accomplishing their academic goals. Sometimes life just seems to get in the way. For these things, there are university resources available to help you, and I encourage you to see the links provided at the end of this syllabus. (Also visit the Student Success Center. Link: <http://www4.uwm.edu/ssc/>) While it is ultimately your responsibility to satisfy the requirements and policies of this course, you should know that if you keep in contact with me about things that directly impact your studies for this class, I am more than willing to work with you. Don't forget that your instructors are resources who care about your success, but we don't necessarily know how best to help you unless you take the initiative to let us know. Please don't forget that we are here to help you, and we appreciate the opportunity to do so!

Extra credit. If you are interested in going above and beyond in your work for this class, you may select a text in a genre of interest to you in consultation with me and prepare a critical interpretation of it according to guidelines we will work out. These guidelines will then be written up as an individual syllabus addendum. The highest grade you can get for the course is an A, and if your coursework is already at that level, this project will not boost it any higher. If you're interested in this, come talk to me during my office hours.

Syllabus policy. While this syllabus is in many ways a kind of contract between students (you) and instructor (me), it may become necessary to revise certain policies and calendar commitments during the semester. Amendments to this syllabus will not be made arbitrarily, and you will be given as much advance notice and justification as possible for any changes that are made. Some amendments are

pre-planned, and will be given to you at the appropriate time. Please use the following schedule to keep track of changes and additions as they occur.

SCHEDULE

(university deadlines are in italics)

Sept 5 — first day of class

Sept 18 — last day to add/drop on PAWS

Oct 2 — last day to drop classes with “W” on record

Oct 6 — book review (D2L)

Oct 10 — book review (presentation)

Oct 26 — prospectus

Oct 27 — last day to drop classes

Nov 14 — annotated bibliography

Nov 17 — film review (D2L)

Nov 21 — film review (presentation)

Nov 22 — start of Thanksgiving break

Dec 5 — final paper

Dec 14 — last day of class

Dec 29 — instructor deadline for grade submission

Unit 1: When Will It Happen? (Sept 5 - Sept 7) — introductions and definitions

Unit 2: This Can't Happen. (Sept 12 - Oct 5) — *It Can't Happen Here*

Unit 3: This Isn't Really Happening. (Oct 12 - Oct 24) — *Welcome to Nightvale*

Unit 4: What Just Happened? (Oct 26 - Nov 16) — *Log Horizon*

Unit 5: What Is Happening? (Nov 28 - Dec 7) — *A Dark Room*

Unit 6: What Have We Learned? (Dec 12 - Dec 14) — project presentations and wrap-up

RESOURCES

Writing Center

You can visit the Writing Center in Curtin 127 or its satellite in the East Wing of the library. You are encouraged to make an appointment, but walk-ins are welcome. If you can't make it in person, the Center also offers online tutoring. Fall hours are 9a-7p (M-W), 9a-4p (Th), and 9a-1p (F). Contact them at 414.229.4339 or visit the Web site: <http://www4.uwm.edu/writingcenter>.

Health Services

If you require health counseling of any kind, the Norris Health Center can put you in touch with someone who can help. It's located at 3351 N. Downer Ave., Milwaukee WI 53211 and the phone number is 414.229.4716. You can also e-mail general questions to nhc-help@uwm.edu.

Campus Safety

The UWM Police Department is located at 3410 N. Maryland Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53211. If you have questions, require assistance, or need to report an incident, call them at 414.229.4627 (for emergencies, use one of the Blue Light SAFE Phones, or, if you're calling from a campus phone, dial 9-911), file a report in person, or e-mail at uwm-police@uwm.edu.

Library

The Learning Commons opens at noon on Sunday, and is open 24 hours throughout the week until Friday, when it closes at 7p. Saturday hours are from noon to 7p. Check the Web site (<http://www4.uwm.edu/libraries/>) to verify exceptions to those hours throughout the semester. The site also gains you access to the online catalogue, through which you can not only search for books, but request them from other libraries via Interlibrary Loan or have UWM library staff pull materials off the shelf for you. The online catalogue is also the best way to search for and access peer reviewed journal articles. You can call the library at 414.229.1459 or contact librarians electronically at the "Ask a librarian" page: <http://www4.uwm.edu/libraries/ask/>.

SYLLABUS LINKS

1. **Students with disabilities.** Notice to these students should appear prominently in the syllabus so that special accommodations are provided in a timely manner. <http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/SACltr.pdf>
2. **Religious observances.** Accommodations for absences due to religious observance should be noted. <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm>
3. **Students called to active military duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted.
Students: http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm
Employees: <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S40.htm>
4. **Incompletes.** A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf>
5. **Discriminatory conduct** (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf>
6. **Academic misconduct.** Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm
7. **Complaint procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm>
8. **Grade appeal procedures.** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of

graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School. <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S28.htm>

9. **Other.** The final exam requirement, the final exam date requirement, etc. <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm>

SYLLABUS ADDENDUM: GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

This course meets the criteria for General Education Requirement Humanities credit at UWM by addressing “questions, issues and concepts basic to the formation of character and the establishment of values in a human context; ... induc[ing] an organic study of letters and knowledge; [and providing] literary, aesthetic and intellectual experiences which enrich and enlighten human life,” as specified in UWM Faculty Document No. 1382. The course uses humanistic means of inquiry, including critical use of sources and evaluation of evidence, judgment and expression of ideas, and organizing, analyzing and using creatively substantial bodies of knowledge drawn from both primary and secondary sources. In addition to addressing other GER Humanities criteria, the course introduces substantial and coherent bodies of historical, cultural and literary knowledge to illuminate human events in their complexities and varieties, and enhances appreciation of literary and other arts by thoughtful, systematic analyses of language and artifacts such as novels, stories and films.

UWM seeks Essential Learning Outcomes throughout the undergraduate curriculum in four key areas: Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World; Intellectual and Practical Skills; Personal and Social Responsibility; and Integrative Learning. GER courses in particular contribute to these learning outcomes. Student work in GER courses is assessed individually for course-specific outcomes and goals, and holistically as part of departmental self-assessment of learning outcomes throughout the major.

Humanities Distribution GER Criteria (Rev. 2012)

4.2 Humanities

(a) **Definition:** The academic disciplines that investigate human constructs and values, as opposed to those that investigate natural and physical processes, and those concerned with the development of basic or professional skills.

The humanistic disciplines—such as art history, history, language and literature, philosophy, religious studies, film and media studies—are concerned with questions, issues, and concepts basic to the formation of character and the establishment of values in a human context. They also provide literary, aesthetic, and intellectual experiences that enrich and enlighten human life. In these courses, students will use humanistic means of inquiry, such as: the critical use of sources and evaluation of evidence, the exercise of judgment and expression of ideas, and the organization, logical analysis, and creative use of substantial bodies of knowledge in order to approach the subject of study.

(b) **Criteria:** Courses satisfying this requirement shall incorporate criterion 1 and at least one other of the following learning outcomes. Students will be able to:

1. identify the formation, traditions, and ideas essential to major bodies of historical, cultural, literary, or philosophical knowledge; and
2. respond coherently and persuasively to the materials of humanities study; this may be through logical, textual, formal, historical, or aesthetic analysis, argument and/or interpretation; or

3. apply diverse humanistic theories or perspectives to other branches of knowledge or to issues of universal human concern.

Grading and Assessment

In English 224, students will demonstrate learning outcomes in “Knowledge of Human Cultures” and in “Intellectual and Practical Skills”: by engagement with key questions in literary and other cultural artifacts, and by producing written literary or cultural analysis that reflects thoughtful, informed engagement with source material and standards of evidence and argumentation in humanistic disciplines. This outcome will be assessed through review of papers written in the course, a requirement of all English GER courses, via the following rubric.

	Humanities Criteria (1)	Humanities Criteria (2)	UW Shared Learning Goal (2)
5	Work is highly successful in identifying the formation, traditions, and ideas essential to major bodies of historical, cultural, literary, or philosophical knowledge.	Work is highly successful in responding coherently and persuasively to the materials of humanities study; this may be through logical, textual, formal, historical, or aesthetic analysis, argument, and/or interpretation.	Work is highly successful in displaying critical and creative thinking skills including inquiry, problem solving, and higher-order qualitative and quantitative reasoning.
4	Work largely demonstrates the ability to identify the formation, traditions, and ideas essential to major bodies of historical, cultural, literary, or philosophical knowledge.	Work largely demonstrates the ability to respond coherently and persuasively to the materials of humanities study; this may be through logical, textual, formal, historical, or aesthetic analysis, argument, and/or interpretation.	Work largely demonstrates the ability to display critical and creative thinking skills including inquiry, problem solving, and higher-order qualitative and quantitative reasoning.
3	Work demonstrates mixed success with respect to the ability to identify the formation, traditions, and ideas essential to major bodies of historical, cultural, literary, or philosophical knowledge.	Works demonstrates mixed success with respect to the ability to respond coherently and persuasively to the materials of humanities study; this may be through logical, textual, formal, historical, or aesthetic analysis, argument, and/or interpretation.	Work demonstrates mixed success with respect to the ability to display critical and creative thinking skills including inquiry, problem solving, and higher-order qualitative and quantitative reasoning.
2	Work attempts but largely does not demonstrate the ability to identify the formation, traditions, and ideas essential to major bodies of historical, cultural, literary, or philosophical knowledge.	Work attempts but largely does not demonstrate the ability to respond coherently and persuasively to the materials of humanities study; this may be through logical, textual, formal, historical, or aesthetic analysis, argument, and/or interpretation.	Work attempts but largely does not demonstrate the ability to display critical and creative thinking skills including inquiry, problem solving, and higher-order qualitative and quantitative reasoning.

1	Work does not demonstrate the ability to identify the formation, traditions, and ideas essential to major bodies of historical, cultural, literary, or philosophical knowledge.	Work does not demonstrate the ability to respond coherently and persuasively to the materials of humanities study; this may be through logical, textual, formal, historical, or aesthetic analysis, argument, and/or interpretation.	Work does not demonstrate the ability to display critical and creative thinking skills including inquiry, problem solving, and higher-order qualitative and quantitative reasoning.
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GER Course Assessment

All GER courses in the Department require significant student writing, including papers of varying length. The Department samples GER courses in each semester, including primarily papers from the required ENG 192 course, evaluating them on a holistic scale, according to the following rubric:

1. Work does not meet disciplinary standards for critical analysis, evidence-based argument, and interpretation of literary or cultural artifacts. Work does not meet expectations for clarity of thought and language, and for edited academic prose. Work does not show student awareness of conventions for analysis and expression.
2. [Work quality falls between 1 and 3]
3. Work shows some awareness of conventions for analysis and expression but may contain distracting errors. Work meets some disciplinary standards for critical analysis, evidence-based argument, and interpretation of literary or cultural artifacts, but inconsistent in doing so. Work meets some expectations for clarity of thought and language, and for edited academic prose, but is inconsistent in doing so.
4. [Work quality falls between 3 and 5]
5. Work meets most or all expectations for analysis and interpretation, argues from evidence, and is written clearly and without significant mechanical errors, showing student awareness and achievement the learning outcomes for the course.

Numeric scores are used to generate snapshots of how well GER courses meet the department's stated learning outcomes and what, if anything, needs to be altered when the course is next offered.

SYLLABUS ADDENDUM: CREDIT HOURS

The university has asked departments to break down for students how much time they will spend working on various aspects of their classes.

As the UW System assumes "that study leading to one semester credit represents an investment of time by the average student of not fewer than 48 hours" (UWS ACPS 4), a 3-credit course such as this one will require a minimum of 144 (3 x 48) hours of your time. You may find it necessary to spend additional time on a course; the numbers below only indicate that the course will not require any less of your time.

If this is a **traditional, or face-to-face** course, you will spend a minimum of

- 37.5 hours in the classroom
- 75 hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, completing minor exercises and assignments, and discussing course topics with classmates and the instructor in structured settings
- 31.5 hours preparing for and writing major papers and/or exams.

If this is an **online** course, you will spend a minimum of

- 37.5 hours reviewing instructional materials prepared by your instructor and placed online

- 75 hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, completing minor exercises and assignments, and discussing course topics with classmates and the instructor in structured settings
- 31.5 hours preparing for and writing major papers and/or exams.

If this is a **hybrid** course, you will spend a minimum of

- 18.75 hours in the classroom
- 18.75 hours reviewing instructional materials prepared by your instructor and placed online
- 75 hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, completing minor exercises and assignments, and discussing course topics with classmates and the instructor in structured settings
- 31.5 hours preparing for and writing major papers and/or exams.

Notes

- The breakdown above is for a standard 15-week semester. In a 16-week semester, the numbers breakdown above changes as follows. Traditional: 40 hours in classroom, 80 for preparation, 24 for papers and exams; online: 40 hours of online instruction, 80 for preparation, 24 for papers and exams; hybrid: 20 hours in classroom, 20 for online instruction, 80 hours for preparation, 24 for papers and exams. Again, these are minimums.
- UWM Credit Hour Policy, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Faculty Document No. 2838, can be found at https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/faculty/2838_Credit_Hour_Policy.pdf.
- UWS ACPS 4, the University Of Wisconsin System Policy On Academic Year Definition And Assorted Derivatives, can be found at <http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/acps/acps4.pdf>.
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