

Course Syllabus

Course Information

- WGS 192: First-Year Seminar
- Masculinities in Post-Apocalyptic Fiction
- Engelmann B73
- TR 3:30-4:45

Instructor Information

- Dr. Dylan Barth
- djbarth@uwm.edu
- 262-212-4768 (call or text)
- Engelmann B50D
- Office hours: TR 2-3pm
- Pronouns-in-use: he/him/his

Mentor Information

- Emma Mae Weber
- weber258@uwm.edu
- Bolton 120
- Office hours: TR 2-3; W 11-1

Course Description

In this course, we will discuss varying ways that gender is constructed in select American post-apocalyptic texts, focusing primarily on the depiction of masculinities as they have been historically situated. Many post-apocalyptic novels subscribe to a common theme: modern culture—particularly consumer culture and its relation to domesticity—is to blame for the emasculation of contemporary men. The remedy for this masculinity crisis often comes in the form of post-apocalyptic fantasy landscapes in which “men can be men.” What masculinity looks like under these conditions varies historically, so this course will progress from 1945 to the present to examine ways in which gender plays out in post-apocalyptic fiction of differing cultural contexts. In addition, the course will introduce students to feminist theories, men’s studies, and speculative fiction as literature. Will this be a great class? Oh yeah!

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of key concepts in Women’s and Gender Studies
- Explain how constructions of masculinity vary historically and culturally
- Identify and critique the conventions of the genre of post-apocalyptic fiction
- Analyze how masculinities shape and are shaped by post-apocalyptic fiction
- Write a post-apocalyptic story using a choose-your-own-adventure style
- Perform a public demonstration of your learning at the FYS Symposium

How to Be Successful in this Class

Adjusting to the first semester of college can be a significant challenge, but there are some simple strategies you can employ to be as successful as you want to be in this course:

- Rent or purchase the required books as soon as possible
- Schedule several hours per week to work on this course
- Set study goals and do your best to meet them
- Visit me or Emma Mae during our office hours
- Ask questions in or out of class when you have them
- Find out what excites you about the material
- Don't wait until the last minute to submit assignments
- Avoid distractions while you're working on this course
- [Learn how to use Canvas](#) if you don't already know how
- Contact me right away if you are struggling with a concept or feel like you're falling behind

Reading

I'm going to be honest with you: this course requires a lot of reading. The good news is that I chose books that I think will both interest you and result in fruitful class discussions. To ensure that you finish each and every reading, I strongly recommend that you read a little bit every day. Yes, every single day. For example, consider Pat Frank's *Alas, Babylon*. It's 316 pages. We'll be reading and discussing it over the course of two weeks. Simple division tells us that if you read about 20 pages per day over 14 days, you'll be able to finish the novel within two weeks. Just 20 pages per day! You might even get hooked and read more than you intended, and that's okay. I think you're more likely to read 20 pages daily than to cram in 100 pages before class, and discussions just don't work well if you haven't read the material.

How to Communicate in this Class

I work at UWM year-round in the [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#), and unless I am in a meeting or have a scheduled vacation day, I am probably working in my office in Engelmann B50D. Please feel free to stop by and visit, or you are welcome **to call or text my mobile number** (262-212-4768) if you have any questions or concerns. You are also welcome to [email me](#) or [message me through Canvas](#). I will respond as soon as I can to your call, text, email, or message, but it will certainly be no longer than 24 hours. I like to spend as much time with my family at night and on the weekends, so it is better to contact me during the day, but I will be as responsive as possible!

I will be communicating with you via the [messaging system in Canvas](#), so you will want to [make sure that your notifications are set to receive emails](#) when you have a message waiting for you.

Required Books

You can purchase or rent the four novels we will read in this course by visiting [UWM's eCampus site](#). **You cannot be successful in this course without these books!** Please let me know right away if you have difficulty acquiring them.

Canvas Help

We will be using Canvas for the majority of the work in this course. To be successful, you'll need to know how to [take quizzes](#), [participate in online discussions](#), and [submit assignments online](#). If you have any trouble with Canvas, please feel free to [contact me](#), [consult the student help files](#), or [contact Canvas directly](#) for support. After all, you are in this course to learn about masculinities in post-apocalyptic fiction, not to be mired in technical trouble!

Attendance

It is important to your success as a student and to our success as a class that all students attend class on a regular basis. Therefore, **for every absence beyond three**, your final grade in the course will be reduced by one grade level (A to A-, A- to B+, etc.). Please note that there is no difference between an excused and an unexcused absence. In other words, if you are not in class, you will be counted as absent, regardless of why you are not there. Plus, we will miss you.

Sustainability

The [science behind global climate change](#) is incontrovertible, and climate change has [doomed many human civilizations](#) of the past. The last thing we want to do in this class is unnecessarily contribute to turning our world into a post-apocalyptic hell-scape. For this reason, I will not be providing any handouts in class; all materials will be posted on the Canvas site. Furthermore, we will use scratch paper for all in-class assignments. Please be mindful of your own environmental impact when you enter the space of our classroom (and beyond). Thank you!

Assignments

In-Class Activities

We will be doing a variety of in-class activities when we meet, which will include, among other things, large-group discussions, small-group work, peer review, pop quizzes, course-related games, and in-class writing. You should expect that at every class period, at least one in-class activity or assignment will be assigned that contributes to this portion of your final grade. You cannot make up missed in-class activities because, well, you kind of have to be there.

Writing Assignments

You will be assigned ten writing assignments in this course that will ask you to extend or apply concepts from the readings or from class. Each homework assignment will be different, but all of them will require you to do 1-2 pages of writing. Some assignments may be fun, some may be interesting, but all will be challenging. I will provide specific prompts for each of the assignments at least one week before the due date.

Online Discussions

Twice during the semester, I will be out of town at professional conferences, and we will not meet face-to-face as a class. These dates are indicated on the Course Summary below. In lieu of meeting, we will discuss the course texts using the online discussions tool within Canvas. Each online discussion will be comprised of two parts: 1) an initial post of 300 words, and 2) two

response posts of 150 words each. You will be provided with a specific and unique prompt for each part of the online discussion. You can learn a lot from each other, so **you are expected to read all of the discussion posts.**

Quizzes and Surveys

You will be asked to complete one quiz covering the Syllabus and two reflective surveys distributed at the middle and end of the semester. The reflective surveys are a way for me to gauge what you have learned, what you might be struggling with, and what I can do to better support you as a student. Furthermore, reflection surveys provide you with an opportunity to reflect on your own learning and to apply what you learned to your personal life.

Group Project

For the group project, you will develop a game-based, choose-your-own-adventure (CYOA) story using the digital humanities tool [Twine](#). The primary purpose of this project is for you to explore the conventions of traditional post-apocalyptic fiction in a creative way. You will work in small groups of 3-4 over eight weeks of the semester to write a second-person POV story with branching logic; in this story, you will be providing your readers/players with difficult choices that align with the choices faced by the many characters and situations we will have read about.

Your group will be responsible for deciding the nature of the apocalyptic event; the social, cultural, and economic landscape of the post-holocaust world; and the ways that gender can be re-imagined in a newly-defined cultural space. You will have in-class time to frame and storyboard your projects, and I will provide a self-created example for you so that you can see how to proceed with your own work. I will also provide technical support and documentation, as needed.

As part of the group project, **you will present your CYOA stories at a public venue, the First-Year Seminar Symposium, which will be held from 1-3pm on December 6, 2019.** At this event, students in several First-Year Seminar courses will be presenting their course projects using printed posters and digital slides or presentations. Your group will use a laptop to invite attendees to play through your Twine CYOA stories, and you will have a chance to engage in deep discussions about the subject and your choices for the group project.

Late Policy

For all assignments submitted online, **you will lose one-half of a letter grade (5%) for each day the assignment is late.**

Final Grades

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Final Grades by Points	
In-Class Assignments	1250 points

Writing Assignments	2000 points
Online Discussions	400 points
Quizzes and Surveys	150 points
Group Project	1700 points

Final grades will be determined using the following scale:

Final Grades by Letter Grade	
A	4650 points
A-	4500 points
B+	4350 points
B	4150 points
B-	4000 points
C+	3850 points
C	3650 points
C-	3500 points
D+	3350 points
D	3150 points
D-	3000 points
F	Less than 3000 points

You may notice that you would receive 5500 points if you earned every single point in the class but that you need only 4650 points to receive an A. If you did the math, you'd see that I have based the final grades upon 5000 points, which means that you have 500 points that you can miss without penalty. Because I will not be offering any additional extra credit opportunities, my recommendation is to save up these points in case of an emergency or until the end of the semester!

Time Expectations

According to UW System policy, “study leading to one semester credit represents an investment of time by the average student of not fewer than 48 hours” (UWS ACPS 4). In other words, a 3-credit course such as this one will require a minimum of 144 (3 x 48) hours of your time. Learning takes time, after all! 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:

- 40 hours in the classroom;
- 80 hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, reflecting, journaling, and completing homework assignments; and
- 24 hours working on the Group Project.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism, or passing off someone else's work as your own, is not acceptable in the academic community. When using the exact words or even the ideas of other people, you need to indicate the source using proper citation—with in-text citations and full citations on a Works Cited page. We will go over citation conventions in class. Students found plagiarizing or engaging in other forms of academic misconduct are subject to severe sanctions, which include a failing grade for the course and a letter in their university file that may lead to suspension or expulsion from UWM. So why risk it? If you have any questions about whether or not something might be considered plagiarism, ask me.

Accessibility Resource Center (ARC)

If you work with an advisor at the ARC, please bring your VISA statement to me within the first week of class. If you are concerned that you might have a physical, emotional, or cognitive disability that could affect your performance in this class, visit the ARC office in Mitchell Hall 112. They're good folks.

Campus Policies

- [Academic Misconduct](#)
- [Active Duty Military Policy](#)
- [Complaint Procedures](#)
- [Discriminatory Conduct Policy](#)
- [Final Exam Schedules](#)
- [Grade Appeal Procedures](#)
- [Incomplete Policy](#)
- [Religious Observances](#)
- [Title IX and Sexual Violence](#)

Campus Resources

- [Accessibility Resource Center](#)
- [Center for International Education](#)
- [Inclusive Excellence Center](#)
- [LGBT Resource Center](#)
- [Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Military and Veteran's Resource Center](#)
- [Norris Health Center](#)
- [Panther Academic Support Services](#)
- [UWM Libraries](#)
- [Women's Resource Center](#)
- [The Writing Center](#)

Course Schedule

The schedule of assignments for this course is available below in the Course Summary area as well as within the weekly modules on the course Home page, in the To-Do list on the course Home page, and in the Canvas calendar.