

ENGL 132.003  
Armstrong 306  
MWF 1:30-2:20  
E-mail: [kopokuag@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:kopokuag@mix.wvu.edu)

Kwabena Opoku-Agyemang  
Office: 330 Colson Hall  
Office Hours: W 2:30-4:00 (and by appointment)  
Mailbox: 107 Colson Hall

## **ENGL 132: Corruption and Sex in The Short Story and the Novel**

A course entitled the Short Story and the Novel will definitely be about short stories and novels. We will interrogate the forms, structures, and styles associated with these two genres in tandem with themes connected to Corruption and Sex. These two themes can be defined in multifarious ways, and we will reserve the implications of foregrounding them (both jointly and separately) for the class proper.

### **Course Aims/Goals**

This course fulfills GEC Objective 5, where you are expected to apply methods and principles of critical inquiry to the analysis of literary or artistic expression; and Objective 7, which enjoins you to develop knowledge critical to the understanding of the issues that shape the culture of the United States. Ultimately, should be able to critically engage literary texts and genres through close reading and writing exercises, as well as via extensive discussions and research. The single most important currency in this class is what you think, and the open-ness to test it.

### **Required Texts – Available at the WVU Bookstore and the Book Exchange**

- *White Teeth* (Zadie Smith)
- *Americanah* (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie)
- *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (Alison Bechdel)
- *The Art of the Story* (Edited by Daniel Halpern)

### **Required Texts – Available on eCampus**

- *The House on Mango Street* (Sandra Cisneros)
- *Persepolis* (Marjane Satrapi)
- Assorted Short Stories

### **Required Resource**

- Twitter Account – Please use your MIX account, and not your personal Twitter account (if you have one).

### **Recommended Resource**

- Please check the OWL Purdue Website:  
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/> for everything MLA.

**Course Requirements\***

- **Participation in class discussion (10%)** – As a literature class, we thrive on the ability to engage with texts both in and outside the classroom. You all have an opinion informed by your own experiences and observations, and the class will be richer if you share them. Your participation grade is therefore informed by the thoughtfulness of your responses (written and/or oral), respect for others' submissions (even if you don't agree with them), group work, and your **overall engagement in class activities**. Respectful, engaged participation in class discussion will boost your final grade, while a lack of positive participation may lower it. Please read the assigned texts **BEFORE** a particular class. Everyone will be expected to contribute to proceedings in class; your opinion counts!
- **Twitter Responses (10)%**: Your participation will be complemented by tweets that should demonstrate clear connections to the text for the particular class day. Think about how you can engage with the piece in memes, links to multimedia, and/or in 140 characters (or even less). Be sure to tweet to my WVU handle @koa\_WVU. You are required to make at least tweet per class, and these should be done at least 3 hours before class.
- **Quizzes (10%)**: These will be unannounced short-answer questions that focus on textual details and close reading, typically with a specific question.
- **First Word (5%)** – At the beginning of each class starting August 19, one student will give a brief presentation (maximum 5 minutes) to start the day. In your presentation, you can say a few words about the author, time-period, text, a contemporary to the author, and/or why you think the author/text should be (or not be) included in the syllabus. There will be guidelines to help with structure if necessary.
- **Proposal/Annotated Bibliography (25%)**: You will draft a proposal that informs your audience of the direction in which you want to take your final paper. Added to this proposal will be an annotated bibliography, which not only acknowledges academic conversations related to your project, but also demonstrates the knowledge you plan to add to the issue at hand.
- **Midterm Presentation (10%)** – You will talk to the class about the project you have decided to work on. We will agree on the format for this presentation.
- **Final Paper (30%)** – We will decide on a format for this paper, which will be the culmination of a semester worth of research, writing, and argument.

**\*The rubric for each course requirement will be discussed in class and then shared on eCampus for easy reference.**

## Course Policies

- **Attendance:** This is a participatory class. **You may miss three classes (a week of class) without penalty. Missing more WILL diminish your overall grade.** Lateness is rude and disrupts discussion and small group work. If you are more than 10 minutes late, your lateness will count as half of an absence (two times being late = one absence). **The only excused absences are for University-sponsored activities (e.g. class fieldtrips and sports related events).**
- **Texts in Class:** Bring the required reading material to class in either electronic or print formats in order to cite directly from the works and to find references easily. Be sure to complete the assigned reading before class.
- **Late Coursework:** Turning in your work late will impact negatively on your grade for the course requirement in question, and will be accepted in very limited circumstances. There will be no room for late submission of your final paper.
- **Inclusivity Statement:** The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please check <http://diversity.wvu.edu>
- **Plagiarism:** WVU's policy regarding plagiarized work can be found online at: <http://studentlife.wvu.edu/studentconductcode.html> (see Section B of Article III). We will discuss plagiarism in class, but it is your responsibility to be familiar with the WVU policy.
- **Conduct:** I expect all members of the class to be respectful of each other and me, regardless of religious, social, or political differences. I will not condone discriminatory remarks regarding race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, health, economic status, etc. Disruptive behavior may negatively impact your class participation grade and, if egregious enough, result in your expulsion from the class. Be mindful that the best way to participate in class is to both talk and listen to what others have to say. I don't expect class members to agree, but I do expect that you will acknowledge other points of view.
- **Eberly Writing Studio:** The WVU English Department has this great resource in Colson G02. You should definitely check it out, especially since you will be writing a research paper.
- **Office Hours:** My office hours are a chance for us to benefit from one-on-one interactions. Drop in during the time at the top of the syllabus and I will be happy to discuss anything related to the course. Alternatively, shoot me an email (which I will respond to within 48 hours of the working week).

**SCHEDULE (Subject to changes, all of which will be announced beforehand)****Week 1**Monday August 17 (**Late Registration Fee in Effect for All Students**)

- Introductions, Syllabus Overview, Expectations

Wednesday August 19

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie "Birdsong"  
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/09/20/birdsong-2>

Friday August 21 (**Last day to Register, Add New Courses, Make Section Changes, Change Pass/Fail and Audit**)

- *Americanah* (Chapters 1-2)

**Week 2**

Monday August 24

- *Americanah* (Chapters 3-9)

Wednesday August 26

- *Americanah* (Chapters 10-15)

Friday August 28

- *Americanah* (Chapters 16-22)

**Week 3**

Monday August 31

- How to Structure an Essay – Thesis Statements, Formatting, Arguments, MLA
- *Americanah* (Chapters 23-41)

Wednesday September 2

- *Americanah* (Chapters 42-49)

Friday September 4

- *Americanah* (Chapters 50-55)

**Week 4**

Monday September 7

**Labor Day – No Class**

Wednesday September 9

- *Fun Home* (Chapters 1-2)

Friday September 11

- *Fun Home* (Chapter 3-4)

**Week 5**

Monday September 14

- *Fun Home* (Chapters 5-6)

Wednesday September 16

- *Fun Home* (Chapter 7)
- *The Art of the Story* (Julia Alvarez, “Amor Divino”)

Friday September 18

- Library Session (**class to be held at Downtown Library**)

**Week 6**

Monday September 21

- *The Art of the Story* (Toni Cade Bambara “Gorilla, My Love”)

Wednesday September 23

- **Proposal Presentations**
- *The Art of the Story* (Martin Amis, “The Immortals”)

Friday September 25

- **Proposal Presentations**
- *The Art of the Story* (Ken Saro-Wiwa “Africa Kills Her Sun”)

**Week 7**

Monday September 28

- *White Teeth* (Chapters 1-5)

Wednesday September 30

- *White Teeth* (Chapters 6-8)

Friday October 2 **(Mid-Semester)**

**Annotated Bibliography and Proposal Due**

- *White Teeth* (Chapters 9-11)

**Week 8**

Monday October 5

- *White Teeth* (Chapters 12-15)

Wednesday October 7

- *White Teeth* (Chapters 16-18)

Friday October 9

- *White Teeth* (Chapters 19-20)

**Week 9**

Monday October 12

**Fall Break - No Class**

Wednesday October 14

- *The House on Mango Street* (“The House on Mango Street” – “Marin”)

Friday October 16

- *The House on Mango Street* (“Those Who Don’t” – “The First Job”)

**Week 10**

Monday October 19

- *The House on Mango Street* (“Papa Who Wakes Up Tired in the Dark” – “Sally”)

Wednesday October 21

- *The House on Mango Street* (“Minerva Writes Poems” – Mango Says Goodbye Sometimes”)

Friday October 23 **(Last Day to Drop a Class)**

- *The Art of the Story* (Edwidge Danticat “Night Women”)

**Week 11**

Monday October 26

- *Persepolis* (“The Veil” – “The Sheep” pages 1-71)

Wednesday October 28

- *Persepolis* (“The Trip” – “The Wine” pages 72-110)

Friday October 30

- *Persepolis* (“The Cigarette” – “The Dowry” pages 111-153)

## **Week 12**

Monday November 2

- *The Art of the Story* (Ben Okri “In the Shadow of War”)

Wednesday November 4

- *The Art of the Story* (Tatyana Tolstaya “On the Golden Porch”)

Friday November 6

- *The Art of the Story* (Luisa Valenzuela “Who, Me a Bum?”)

## **Week 13**

Monday November 9

- *The Art of the Story* (Amos Oz “Where the Jackals Howl”)

Wednesday November 11

- *The Art of the Story* (Peter Carey “The Fat Man in History”)

Friday November 13

- *The Art of the Story* (Raymond Carver “Are These Actual Miles?”)

## **Week 14**

Monday November 16

- *The Art of the Story* (Vikram Chandra “Dharma”)

Wednesday November 18

- *The Art of the Story* (Kazuo Ishiguro “A Family Supper”)

Friday November 20

**NO CLASS – Instructor is presenting at the African Studies Association Conference**

**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Week 15**

Monday November 30

- *The Art of the Story* (Nicola Barker “G-String”)

Wednesday December 2

- *The Art of the Story* (Nuruddin Farah “My Father, the Englishman, and I”)

Friday December 4

- *The Art of the Story* (Roy Jacobsen “Encounter”)

Week 16

Monday December 7 **(Last Day to Drop a Class)**

- *The Art of the Story* (Mohammed Mrabet “The Canebrake”)

Thursday December 10

**Turn in Paper at agreed upon time and venue**