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# English 318

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**Gail Galloway Adams, ENGL 318, Spring 2004,**

### Topics in Creative Writing

English 318: Special Topics: World War I and its Literary Landscape.

Wed 4:00 (1600) - 6:50 (1850), Stansbury Annex 46B.

Gail Galloway Adams, 462 Stansbury, 293-2107 ext. 434 (o) or 292-2540 (h);

e-mail: [gadams@wvu.edu](mailto:gadams@wvu.edu). Office hours: MW 2-3:30; Tues 2-4:30; all other hours by appointment.

Texts: *All Quiet on the Western*

*Front*, Erich Maria Remarque; A

*Farewell to Arms*,

Ernest Hemingway; *World War*

*I British Poets* :

Brooke, Owen, Rosenberg & Others;

*Regeneration*

, Pat Barker;

*Birdsong* , Sebastian Faulks;

*Kyrie* , Ellen Bryant Voigt;

*Tender is the*

*Night* , F.Scott Fitzgerald.

Creative Writing 318 is an upper level fiction workshop specifically designed for advanced writers in the creative writing concentration and focuses both on questions of craft and the particular thematic passion of the instructor. My course aims to introduce some of the literature connected to the cataclysmic event of WWI and examine writing specific to that historic time in addition to the recent spate of works that have used The Great War as central to explorations of a more contemporary sensibility. The course will use Paul Fussell's idea of World War one as cultural artifact in the move toward modernism and the part this war played in the making of modern memory. Reference will be made to various historical examinations by writers such as Fussell, Keegan, Tuchman and also a brief examination of other literary works that use this war as central--*Goodbye to*

*All That* , *The Ice*

*Cream War* , *A*

*Soldier of The*

*Great War* , *A*

*Month in the*

*Country and Fly*

*Away* , *Peter* among others. A central question is why in the past decade has this war been the frame on which so many current writers are hanging their historical hats? I hope that the writing students in this class will help me enter and expand this debate. Of course, a main concern is the development of the individual student's writing and to that end,

there will be exercises in craft/technique questions linked to the works read.

Each work will be discussed in class and short exercise pieces built around a craft element will be required on each book. In addition, brief typed responses to each of the works will be .~ required--samples will be provided. In the case of the poetry, we'll work with narrative elements & image and examine Kyrie with close eye to form. Students will also write during the term at least one short story 8 - 25 pp in length that will also be submitted in revised form after its full class critique. It is hoped that there will be a chance for a second story, but this will depend on the size of the class. It is imperative for the class to remember that although we'll be reading and immersing ourselves into this specific topic, the other main focus of this class has to be your own writing. Attendance is crucial in a workshop that meets only once weekly and will be factored in as follows: 0-1 (A), 2 (B), 3 (C). At 3 I'll ask you to consider leaving the class since it is likely that t failure will follow and I'd rather you drop. All this work will be gathered into a final portfolio. Why do we love what we love? I don't know, but it makes me very happy to have the chance to work with these materials and with this era and with you in exploring these questions.

## **JANUARY**

**Wed 14** Get acquainted night. Examination of materials.

Possible handout of some student sample stories built around this event. Possible reading of Mary Swan's "The Deep," title story from her story collection named as NYTimes Notable Book for 2003. I'm sure that we'll do some in-class writing. Sign up for the first story and arrangement for its distribution. Story

schedule to be set next class.

**Wed 21** Short informational lecture. Begin All Quiet on the Western Front (several movies Y have been made of this including very early now classic). As you read, please pay attention to matters of style in addition to content. We'll spend two weeks on each of the works, but it always helps discussion and interest if you can have as much of the novel read as possible. At a minimum to Chapter Eight. From dedication to end of Chapter 7, identify some lines from which you can write a short short (less than 1500 words). Write it and type it up and bring it in. Story distribution. Sign up for stories.

**Wed 28** To complete All Quiet. Again within the text find a passage/line/section that speaks to specific element of craft and see what you can make of this. Peer story critique and distribution of next stories.

**FEBRUARY** James Harms, Director of WVU's Creative Writing division will read Thursday 21; also Saturday 21, Twelfth Undergraduate Literature Symposium.

**Wed 4** Begin A Farewell to Arms (again several movie versions of this). Brief lecture and discussion of Hemingway and others such as e.e. cummings (The Enormous Room). Read at least half (160+), but always the more the better. Supplemental material on EH and some modeling ideas from DelBanco's new text. Peer story critique and distribution of stories.

**Wed 11** Complete A Farewell to Arms and share the models (copies for classmates) using DelBanco's suggestions. Peer story critique and distribution of stories.

**Wed 18** Will begin the World War One British Poets. Short

informational lecture. Brief biographies on poets. We'll concentrate on each of the main four, but this week Brooke up in to Sassoon. McCrae's "In Flanders Field" was once required memorization for my generation. We are always looking for elements of story and how these link to story. Peer critiques and distribution of stories.

**Wed 25** Complete the WWI British Poets. Would like from you this class brief typed assessment and ranking of the poems presented in terms of your own aesthetic. Possible hand-outs of some other poets not represented ie.Americans. Peer critique and distribution of stories.

**MARCH** English Department Piza Party, Wed 3; Kevin Oderman & Gail Galloway Adams Reading Wed 24th at 7:30 Robinson Reading Room; Friday 26 Deadline English Department Writing contests.

**Wed 3** Begin Regeneration by Pat Barker. Brief informational lecture. Possible visit from guest lecturer on this night talking about treatment of shell shock in WWI. Bio on Barker. Read first two parts. Again as you read look for stylistic elements--all these works on the same topic/theme/close in content so how then are they distinguished in presentation/voice/tone? Peer story critique and distribution of story. Great movie Behind the Lines based on this.

**Wed 10** Complete Regeneration. Turn in assessment of Barker's work and/or piece that springs from iVis modeled on it. Peer critique. Story distribution. Start on Birdsong for the 31.

**Wed 17 SPRING BREAK** REST RESTORE OBSERVE READ WRITE! Begin Birdsong.

**Wed 24** Class will meet, but for shorter time since I'll be reading this night. Will do the peer critiques of stories and will also distribute for the next week. Will meet from 4:00 - 5:30. See you at the reading!

**Wed 31** Begin Faulks' *Birdsong*--complete the first 200 pages, but hope that since you've had break and shortened class without assignment you'll have most of it completed. Short informational lecture. Peer critique and distribution of story.

**APRIL NATIONAL POETRY MONTH.** This month lots going on including the end of the term! Wed 14, Calliope reading; Wed 21 Awards Luncheon; Thursday 22, Terrence Hayes of Hip Hop Logic; Thursday 29, MFA graduates.

**Wed 7** Complete *Birdsong*.

Since epistolary is so central to this novel, try something along these lines yourself. At least 1500 words. Peer critique and distribution of stories.

**Wed 14th** This night is the Calliope reading right after class-- see you there! Begin *Kyrie*. Short informational lecture on the Spanish Influenza pandemic. We're moving out of the war and to the aftermath of the war. This collection is superb for negotiating the terrain of poetic narrative. Try your hand. Peer critique and story distribution. Next week we'll finish up *Kyrie*, but also begin *Tender is the Night* so start reading.

**Wed 21** Finish up *Kyrie* and start on Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*. Brief talk on FSF and the link of this novel to Zelda Fitzgerald's *Save Me the Waltz*. Will also discuss FSF's wonderful *The Crack-Up* and what his notebooks show to writers. Peer critique. Final story distribution would be optional

as we prepare for the final class. I'll also hand out a portfolio checklist.

**Wed 28** Final class. On this night we'll finish up with Tender is the Night and our thoughts on FSF and the overall arc of the term's reading. Portfolios of your work-responses/stories/exercises should be ready to be turned in. All be prepared to share with classmates: 1 ) passage/passages from these works that struck you as worth saving--could type them up and make copies to share; -and 2) at least one page (but no more than three) of your own writing--exercise and/or story that you think is most fully realized. There will be, of course, food and celebration and best wishes for those graduating and moving on to other realms.

**Grades:** Yes. You will be responsible for reading each of these seven wonderful works- additional materials that you want to add in to this reading load will be credited; there will be a formal typed response of some kind on each of these works; there will be, I hope, some imaginative models that work off the strengths in these works; there will be at least one short short (1500 and less) and at least one short story 8 - 15 pp that will have been peer critiqued and revised. All this will be put into a portfolio with a brief overview assessment of the readings.

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