

ENGLISH 618A

Professor Mark Brazaitis

Office: 219 Colson Hall

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Office Hours: by appointment

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Class Hours: Monday 7-9:50 p.m.

Class Location: TBD

Objective: In this class, you will become a better fiction writer.

Requirements: Over the course of the semester, you will read two novels (Kiley Reid's *Such a Fun Age* and Octavia Butler's *Kindred*), stories from a collection (Steven Millhauser's *Dangerous Laughter*) and other work.

Grades: Grades will be based on the effort you put into all aspects of the class. I expect everyone to earn an 'A.' If you are doing less than 'A' work, I will let you know.

Submitting Work: Your stories (or novel chapters) are due by midnight on the Thursday before the Monday class in which they will be discussed. They should be emailed to your fellow students and your instructor. You may turn in a maximum of thirty pages per submission period (as long as it is a continuous work—i.e. a very long story or a series of novel chapters). You may turn in three short-shorts (1500 words or fewer) at a time. Minimum page count? Your choice.

Feedback on Your Peers' Work: You should provide a page or so of typed (12 point) comments on each piece you critique. In-text comments are helpful and appreciated but not required. Your comments should be professional, courteous, and clear.

Workshop Method: Do not address the writer by name. Refer to the writer as "the writer" or "the author." When called on, be prepared to offer one positive comment (what you thought was effective about the work) and one suggestion (what could be improved in the work and how). Do your best not to repeat the comments of your classmates. The first person called on will be asked to provide a summary of the story. The writer whose work is being discussed should remain silent until the end of the discussion, at which point the writer can ask questions or explain what we've all missed. (If, however, the writer feels an intervention is necessary earlier in the conversation — go ahead.)

Your Work: I would love to read everything you've ever written. Unfortunately, I have to restrict myself to what you submit to this class. Exception: if you've asked me to chair or serve on your thesis committee.

Class Schedule and Day-to-Day Assignments

Monday, January 10 Introductions - Writing exercise – Practice workshop – Course expectations Read: “Unread Messages” by Sally Rooney, “The Hollow” by Greg Jackson, and “The Lady, or the Tiger?” by Frank Stockton (two of the stories will be emailed to you; the third is available on line).

Monday, January 17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day – no class

Monday, January 24 Workshop Read: Chapters 1 through 7 in *Such a Fun Age*. Discuss work from: Morgan and Karen. One spot open.

Monday, January 31 Workshop Read: Chapters 8 through 18 in *Such a Fun Age*. Discuss work from: Grace, Anna, and Leslie.

Monday, February 7 Workshop Read: Chapter 19 to the end of *Such a Fun Age*. Discuss work from: Rachael and Melissa. One spot open.

Monday, February 14 Workshop Read: “Cat N Mouse” and “The Disappearance of Elaine Coleman” from *Dangerous Laughter*. Discuss work from: David and James. One spot open.

Monday, February 21 Workshop Read: “The Room in the Attic” and “The Dome” in *Dangerous Laughter*. Discuss work from: Jackson, Morgan, and Karen.

Monday, February 28 Workshop. Read: “The Other Town” and “The Tower” in *Dangerous Laughter*. Discuss work from: Grace and Anna. One spot open.

Monday, March 7 Workshop Read: from “Prologue” through “The Fire” in *Kindred*. Discuss work from: Leslie and Rachael. One spot open.

Wednesday, March 9: Dr. Tabitha Lowery, an assistant professor of African American Literature at Coastal Carolina University, will give a presentation via Zoom at 7 p.m.

March 12-20: Spring recess...Enjoy!

Monday, March 21 Workshop Read: from “The Fall” through “The Fight” in *Kindred*. Discuss work from: Melissa, James, and Jackson.

Monday, March 28 Workshop Read: from “The Storm” to the end of *Kindred*. Discuss work from: David and Morgan. Open spot open.

Monday, April 4 Workshop Read: “Detective Dog” by Gish Jen. (It will be emailed to you.) Discuss work from: Karen and Grace. One spot open.

Thursday, April 7: Professor and poet Mary Ann Samyn will read from her work in the Milano Reading Room of the downtown library at 7:30 p.m.

Monday, April 11 Workshop Read: “Continuity of Parks” by Julio Cortazar. (It will be emailed to you.) Discuss work from: Anna and Leslie. One spot open.

Monday, April 18 Workshop Read: “This is Pleasure” by Mary Gaitskill. (It will be emailed to you.) Discuss work from: Rachael and Melissa. One spot open.

Thursday, April 21: Calliope reading in Colson 130 at 7:30 p.m.

Monday, April 25 Workshop Discuss work from: James and Jackson. Conversation on publishing.

Thursday, April 28: MFA graduation reading, Rhododendron Room, Mountainlair, 7:30 p.m.

COVID-19 Syllabus Statement

WVU is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment for all students, faculty, and staff. Should campus operations change because of health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible that this course will move to a fully online delivery format. If that occurs, students will be advised of technical and/or equipment requirements, including remote proctoring software.

In a face-to-face environment, our commitment to safety requires students, staff, and instructors to observe the social distancing and personal protective equipment (PPE) guidelines set by the University at all times. While in class, students will sit in assigned seats when applicable and wear the required PPE. Should a student forget to bring the required PPE, PPE will be available in the building for students to acquire. Students who fail to comply will be dismissed from the classroom for the class period and may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for further sanctions.

If a student becomes sick or is required to quarantine during the semester, they should notify the instructor. The student should work with the instructor to develop a plan to receive the necessary course content, activities, and assessments to complete the course learning outcomes.

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 are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in your classes, please advise your instructors and make appropriate arrangements with [the Office of Accessibility Services](https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/). (<https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>)

More information is available at the [Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](https://diversity.wvu.edu/) (<https://diversity.wvu.edu/>) as well.

Incomplete Policy

The WVU Catalog contains the full [Incomplete Policy](#).

Sale of Course Material Statement

All course materials, including lectures, class notes, quizzes, exams, handouts, presentations, and other course materials provided to students for their courses are protected intellectual property. As such, the

unauthorized purchase or sale of these materials may result in disciplinary sanctions under the [Student Conduct Code](https://studentconduct.wvu.edu/campus-student-code). (<https://studentconduct.wvu.edu/campus-student-code>)

Sexual Misconduct Statement

West Virginia University does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence. It is important for you to know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff; keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the [Title IX Coordinator](#).

If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the [Carruth Center](#), 304-293-9355 or 304-293-4431 (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the [Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center](#) (RDVIC), 304- 292-5100 or 304-292-4431 (24-hour hotline).

For more information, please consult [WVU's Title IX Office](https://titleix.wvu.edu/resources-offices) (<https://titleix.wvu.edu/resources-offices>).

Student Evaluation of Instruction Statement

Effective teaching is a primary mission of West Virginia University. Student evaluation of instruction provides the university and the instructor with feedback about your experiences in the course for review and course improvement. Your participation in the evaluation of course instruction is both strongly encouraged and highly valued. Results are strictly confidential, anonymous, and not available to the instructor until after final grades are released by Admissions and Records. Information about how you can complete this evaluation will be provided by your instructor.

Important Telephone Numbers

1. [911](#) (9-911 from campus phones)
2. Department of Public Safety / Campus Police: [\(304\) 293-2677](#)
3. Environmental Health and Safety: [\(304\) 293-3792](#)
4. Health Sciences Safety Office: [\(304\) 293-6924](#)
5. Carruth Center for Counseling and Psychological Services: [\(304\) 293-4431](#)
6. Faculty-Staff Assistance Program: [\(304\) 293-5590](#)
7. Parents Club Hotline: [1 \(800\) 988-0096](#)
8. Student Health Service: [\(304\) 285-7200](#)

Student Emergencies Numbers

In the event of emergencies involving WVU students, students and parents should contact the Office of Campus and Community Life at [\(304\) 293-5611](#).

If the emergency occurs outside normal business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:15 am – 4:45 pm), please call the Department of Public Safety at [\(304\) 293-3136](#) where someone is on call 24 hours a day.

How do I get zoom?

Follow these instructions:

<https://app.box.com/s/dzop520q0pm3kf0p4d4zngslh48ynb83>

What happens if I am ill or quarantined?

Please contact me to devise a plan to complete the work, per University policy:

https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements# covid_syllabus.

Students may also request an emergency leave of absence in some situations:

<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/enrollmentandregistration/#Emergency>