

# Literature of the Human Body

Clark Hall 112 | TR 2:30 – 3:45 pm

Dr. Valerie Ann Surret | vsurret@mail.wvu.edu | Colson Hall 327 | MWF 1:30-2:20; T 1:00-2:00 and by appointment

## REQUIRED TEXTS

### **Novels & Plays:**

Octavia Butler, *Kindred*: 9780807083697

Suzan-Lori Parks, *Venus*: 9781559361354

Jeanette Winterson, *Written on the Body*: 9780679744474

Paolo Bacigalupi, *Windup Girl*: 9781597801584

### **Short Stories and Poems:**

All short readings will be posted as PDF files to our class website.

*\*Note: You will need access to PDF readings in class. Either bring a laptop or tablet to access them electronically or print the PDFs for class.*

### **Class Website:**

All class materials (PDFs, assignment rubrics, class calendar) will be available on our class website. Check the site often: <https://vsurret.wixsite.com/english172h>

## COURSE OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Explore how we use literature and language to understand our bodies;
- Explore how literature and language about bodies affects how we perceive the humanity of other people as well as our capacity to empathize with them;
- Explore the ways writing about human bodies can both limit and expand our understanding of personhood, autonomy, and choice;
- Gain an understanding of how literature and language have been used to both challenge and reinforce historical, social, political, and cultural ideas about race, gender, and humanity;
- Practice identifying literary forms, styles, and conventions, as well as ways authors defy literary norms in order to challenge and question cultural norms;
- Develop our ability to independently interpret literary elements and how they contribute to a text's overall meanings and effects;
- Experiment with writing about our own embodiment;
- Develop an awareness of how literature about the human body affects our perceptions and understandings of our own embodiment.

## CLASSROOM POLICIES

- *Come Prepared:* Bring your assigned reading materials, paper, and pencil or pen to class each day.
- *Respect:* Being a respectful student includes: coming to class on time; actively listening to discussions and peer comments; coming to class prepared to discuss all of the assigned readings; thoughtfully contributing to class discussions; bringing class materials with you; and practicing proper use of electronic devices.
- *Phones, Laptops, and Tablets:* Your gadgets are welcome in my class. You may use them at will for note taking and research, and I'll often ask someone to google something for us during class discussions. I do ask that you use devices appropriately and responsibly. Please keep your activity class related and only use devices during appropriate times. Many of us think we are master multi-taskers; very few of us are. I give a lot of instruction about assignments and due dates during class. If you're distracted by your phone or your email, you might miss important instructions that could negatively impact your grade.

- **\*\*\*NOTE: you may not record, film, stream, or share any part of our class—or photograph your instructor or your peers—without permission.**
- **Office Hours and Email:** Office hours are an excellent opportunity to talk one-on-one about your writing, ask questions, and get feedback on your work. You can also use the email address on this syllabus to ask quick questions or notify me of any urgent matters that need attention. I will typically respond within 24 hours Monday-Friday. I rarely respond to emails sent after 5:00 pm M-R before 9:00 am the following day, and I respond to emails sent over the weekend on Monday.
- **Assignment Submission Policy:** All assigned work must be handed in at the beginning of class on the date due. Please print hard copies rather than submitting electronically. I do not accept late work without prior approval. If you are having trouble finishing an assignment or something comes up and you need an extension, you must contact me prior to the assignment due date.
- **Plagiarism/Cheating:** Plagiarism and cheating are unacceptable. I expect any and all work you submit during the semester to be your own. If you are borrowing ideas or language from a source, you must include proper citations. Likewise, all answers you provide on reading quizzes and exams must be your own. At minimum, incidents of cheating and/or plagiarism will result in an automatic F for the assignment. At maximum, disciplinary action will be taken through Office of Student Conduct and you may receive an “F” or an “unforgivable F” for the course.
- **Statement on Inclusivity:** 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.
- **I’m With You.** Please feel free to approach me if you are in need of support. At a minimum, I will try to help you find what you need.
  - **The Eberly Writing Studio:** is a resource that can support you in all aspects of the writing process. It is located in G02 Colson Hall. For more information about the Eberly Writing Studio see *Joining Academic Conversations* or visit [speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio](http://speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio).
  - **WellWVU:** The Students’ Center for Health provides resources to help manage stress, improve relationships, make healthy lifestyle choices, and face new challenges and transitions.
  - **Accessibility:** If you are a person with a disability and 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 (304-293-6700). <https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu>
  - **University Counseling Services:** The Carruth Center provides resources to help manage stress, improve relationships, make healthy lifestyle choices, and face new challenges and transitions. For more information about their hours, services, and location, see <http://well.wvu.edu/ccpps>.
  - **WVU Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** <http://diversity.wvu.edu>
  - **LGBTQ+ Center:** <http://lgbtq.wvu.edu>
  - **WVU Women’s Resource Center:** <https://lgbtq.wvu.edu/campus-resources/women-s-resource-center>
  - **WVU Student Organizations:** <https://studentorgs.wvu.edu>

## OVERVIEW OF REQUIRED WORK

- **Attendance:** Attendance for this class is required. You are allowed five absences for the entire semester. Missing more than five classes will result in an F for the course.
 

\*\*\*To parents of little people: winter and spring can be tough for college students who are also parents. Daycares and public schools often close for bad weather, and children who run a fever at daycare usually can’t return for 72+ hours. If this happens to you, or if your childcare arrangements suddenly fall through for other reasons, please feel free to bring your little(s) to class. I’m happy to accommodate.
- **Participation & Quizzes (15%):** You are expected to attend all classes. I also expect you to participate in class discussions. This means I expect you to come to class having carefully read all of the assigned readings for the day. Finally, I expect you to be an active and respectful listener. This means taking lots of notes, staying awake,

being respectful of each other's comments, showing a willingness to engage with other students during class discussions, and practicing appropriate use of technology (in other words, not texting or tweeting or taking awkward selfies during class).

- **Quizzes (10%):** I will periodically give reading quizzes at the beginning of class. Reading quizzes will not be announced in advance, and quizzes cannot be made up if you are absent on a day a quiz is given.
- **Response Papers (35%):** You will write four reading responses for this class. Two will adhere to literary analysis conventions and two will ask you to take a more experimental approach. I will distribute descriptions, writing guides, and grading rubrics for each response. Responses should be 2-3 pages in length (double spaced) and follow MLA formatting guidelines.
  - **Late Responses:** I expect you to turn in your work on time. If you are unable to make a deadline, contact me immediately.
- **Exams (50%):** You will take three exams during the semester, one per unit. The first two exams will be given during class and the third will be given during final exam hours. **If you cannot attend class on an exam day, you must contact me at least 24 hours in advance to arrange a make-up exam time.**

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: the class schedule is subject to change. Check the class schedule on our class website throughout the semester for updates and changes. All PDFs will be available on the class calendar page of our website.

Day	Date	Readings & Assignments
T	1/8	Welcome to 172! Le Guin, "She Unnames Them"
R	1/10	Kingston, "White Tigers"
Unit I: Caged Bodies		
T	1/15	Excerpt from Foucault's <i>Discipline and Punish</i>
R	1/17	Poetry Packet I
T	1/22	Betts, "Only Once"; McConnell, "Sing Soft, Sing Loud"
R	1/24	Excerpts from McDonough's <i>Habeas Corpus</i>
T	1/29	Masters, "Scars" & "That Bird Has My Wings"
R	1/31	Bruno, "Untitled"; Jeremiah S. "10 Things the Bullet Sees"  <b>Response 1 Due</b>
T	2/5	Butler, <i>Kindred</i>
R	2/7	Butler, <i>Kindred</i>
T	2/12	Butler, <i>Kindred</i>
R	2/14	In-class readings & activities
T	2/19	<b>Exam I</b>
Unit II: Gendered and Raced Bodies		

R	2/21	Morrison, "Recitatif"
T	2/26	Pain, Race, & Empathy packet <b>Response 2 Due</b>
R	2/28	Parks, <i>Venus</i>
T	3/5	Parks, <i>Venus</i>
R	3/7	Poetry Packet II
T	3/12	Spring Break
R	3/14	Spring Break
T	3/19	O'Brien, "The Things They Carried" and "How to Tell a True War Story"
R	3/21	Winterson, <i>Written on the Body</i>
T	3/26	Winterson, <i>Written on the Body</i>
R	3/28	Winterson, <i>Written on the Body</i>
T	4/2	In-class readings & activities <b>Response 3 Due</b>
R	4/4	<b>Exam II</b>
Unit III: Posthuman Bodies		
T	4/9	Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto"
R	4/11	Vonnegut, "Harrison Bergeron"; Butler, "Bloodchild"
T	4/16	Bacigalupi, <i>Windup Girl</i>
R	4/18	Bacigalupi, <i>Windup Girl</i>
T	4/23	Bacigalupi, <i>Windup Girl</i>
R	4/25	Last Class—Semester Wrap-Up <b>Response 4 Due</b>
		<b>Final Exam</b> —Friday, May 3, 8:00-10:00 AM