

# Honors Program, SUNY Potsdam

## Repeat Course Proposal

**To propose an honors course you have already taught, please send the following to the Honors Program office at Dunn Hall 309 (email to [lawrenbs@potsdam.edu](mailto:lawrenbs@potsdam.edu) is preferred):**

1. This form, completed
2. A copy of the proposed course syllabus, complete with stated course objectives, pedagogical methods, and assessment tools. If you propose a **mixed-cohort course**, your syllabus must specifically indicate the ways you will provide the honors cohort with a suitable "honors" experience distinct from that of other students in the class

### Course Information

Instructor: Derek Maus

Course Department and Number: LITR 100

Term (e.g. Fall 2011): Fall 2011

Day/Time: TBD (likely TuTh, 12:30-1:45)

Credit Hours: 3

Full Honors (enrollment cap):

Mixed-Cohort (enrollment cap):

15 honors/14 regular (29 total)

### Does this course fulfill any specific degree requirements? If so, which ones?

Major/Minor: various English/Comm. minors, elementary ed. English specialization

Cognates for other majors: Secondary ed. English major

General Education descriptors: FC

Prior approval of course by General Education Committee (Y/N): Y

### For Office Use Only

Honors Council Approval (Y/N):

Date:

Department Chair's Approval:

Date:

Dean's Approval:

Date:

## Proposal for mixed-cohort LITR 100 (Intro to Literature) course

I taught basically this same course during the Fall 2010 semester, and based on both my experience with it and the students' evaluation responses, I don't see much reason to tinker with what I did. The distinction between the honors students' work and the regular students' work consisted mainly of two changes in their assignments and assessments, as is reflected by the honors and regular syllabi for the course (appended below):

- 1) All the students in the course wrote a roughly four-page "close-reading" analytical assignment (the fundamental interpretive skill in literary analysis), but the honors students also wrote two more analytical papers (the assignments for which are appended below) of roughly the same length in which they worked with the texts from our course in a critical context that included external sources. In essence, this gave them not only some initial exposure to the idea of using a critical "lens" to analyze meanings in a work of literature, but also required them to write an argumentative paper in which they incorporate both primary and secondary sources. Normally, this skill is not expected of literature students until the 200- and 300-level, so this is a somewhat accelerated, if also still relatively uncomplicated, engagement with literary texts. The honors students wrote these two papers instead of taking the midterm examination required of the other students. Also, the relative weight of each paper (three papers at 15% each rather than one paper at 25%) in regard to the overall grade was slightly lessened for the honors students to account for the increased rigor – and, presumably, unfamiliarity – of these types of assignments.
- 2) In addition to the normal expectation of regular attendance and active participation in class discussions, the honors students also were individually obliged to lead a class discussion for a single class period. This obligation consisted of a single presentation of five-to-ten minutes in length at the beginning of a class period in which the student presented some themes in that day's reading that were of interest to him/her, directed the class to some specific passages that reflected these themes, and posited some interpretive questions about the interrelation of the theme and the specific expression thereof (i.e., the "how" and "why" of the particular choices the author made). The intent of this assignment is for each of the honors student to not only have the experience of participating as a respondent in a discussion but to actually have the experience of shaping that discussion more actively up front by being in control of the agenda of a day's discussion to a greater extent. Especially, but not exclusively, for students planning to be teachers, I have found this to be a valuable initial exposure to the idea of how planning a lesson ahead shapes ensuing discussions. Whereas the normal percentage of the students' final grades determined by attendance and participation is 15%, for the honors students this is reduced to 10%, with the additional 5% being made up by completion of their duties as discussion leader.
- 3) **LITR 100 (Introduction to Literature), Honors Section**  
**MWF 11:00-11:50, Flagg 238**  
**Professor** Derek Maus (mausdc@potdam.edu)  
**Office:** Morey 244 (267-2196)  
**Office Hours:** Tu/Th, 10:00-10:45, M/F, 10:00-10:45; or by appointment  
**Course Website:** <http://www2.potsdam.edu/mausdc/policies/>

### CLASS POLICIES

I expect you to familiarize yourself with all course policies listed on the class website and will assume that you have read and understood them as of the second week of class. Please ask me about anything listed on that site that you do not understand.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- Best American Short Stories 2008, ed. by Salman Rushdie and Heidi Pitlor.
- The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon.
- My Year of Meats by Ruth Ozeki.
- Dead Man's Cell Phone by Sarah Ruhl.
- Haroun and the Sea of Stories by Salman Rushdie.
- Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas by Hunter S. Thompson.

## EVALUATION

Short (3-4 pages in length) analytical papers	3 x 15% =	45%
Final Examination		25%
Class Participation		10%
Discussion Leader Day		5%
Reading Quizzes	5 x 2% =	10%

## SYLLABUS

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I intend to follow this syllabus as closely as possible for the duration of the semester, although changes may be necessary in unforeseen circumstances. Any changes that need to be made will be announced in class several times as early as possible to make sure that everyone is aware of them.

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## POLICY ON CELL-PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

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DATE		READING
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(NOTE: BASS indicates a selection in *Best American Short Stories*)

AUG	M	30	Introductions, bookkeeping, questions/answers
SEP	W	1	Discussion: "What's the use of stories that aren't even true?"
	F	3	Rushdie, <i>Haroun and the Sea of Stories</i> , pp. 1-60
	M	6	Rushdie, <i>Haroun and the Sea of Stories</i> , pp. 61-110
	W	8	Rushdie, <i>Haroun and the Sea of Stories</i> , pp. 111-156
	F	10	Rushdie, <i>Haroun and the Sea of Stories</i> , pp. 157-212
	M	13	Brockmeier, "The Year of Silence" in BASS (pp. 22-35)
	W	15	Chase, "Man and Wife" in BASS (pp. 51-71)
	F	17	Evans, "Virgins" in BASS (pp. 72-84)
	M	20	Lethem, "The King of Sentences" in BASS (pp. 134-144)
	W	22	Makkai, "The Worst You Ever Feel" in BASS (pp. 145-157)
	F	24	Millhauser, "The Wizard of West Orange" in BASS (pp. 158-186)
	M	27	Penkov, "Buying Lenin" in BASS (pp. 230-243)
	W	29	Russell, "Vampires in the Lemon Grove" in BASS (pp. 244-259)
	OCT	F	1
M		4	Sneed, "Quality of Life" in BASS (pp. 269-281)
W		6	Tice, "Missionaries" in BASS (pp. 282-297)
F		8	Wolff, "Bible" in BASS (pp. 312-323)
M		11	<b><u>FALL BREAK – NO CLASSES</u></b>
W		13	Poetry, read handout part I <b><u>SHORT PAPER # 1 DUE AT START OF CLASS</u></b>
F		15	Poetry, read handout part II
M		18	Poetry, read handout part III
W		20	Poetry, read handout part IV
F		22	<b><u>OUT OF TOWN – GONE TO CONFERENCE</u></b>
M		25	Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i> , pp. 1-63
W		27	Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i> , pp. 64-123
F		29	Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i> , pp. 123-197
NOV		M	1
	W	3	Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i> , pp. 253-300
	F	5	<b><u>SHORT PAPER #2 DUE AT START OF CLASS</u></b> No class (midterm for regular section of course)
	M	8	Haddon, <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> (pp. 1-61)
	W	10	Haddon, <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> (pp. 61-115)
	F	12	Haddon, <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> (pp. 115-155)
	M	15	Haddon, <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> (pp. 155-end)
	W	17	Ruhl, <i>Dead Man's Cellphone</i> , Part One (pp. 5-56)
	F	19	Ruhl, <i>Dead Man's Cellphone</i> , Part Two (pp. 56-104)
	M-F	22-26	<b><u>THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASSES</u></b>
DEC	M	29	Thompson, <i>Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas</i> , pp. 3-40
	W	1	Thompson, <i>Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas</i> , pp. 41-87
	F	3	Thompson, <i>Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas</i> , pp. 89-119
	M	6	<b><u>SHORT PAPER #3 DUE AT START OF CLASS</u></b> Thompson, <i>Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas</i> , pp. 121-168
	W	8	Thompson, <i>Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas</i> , pp. 169-end
	F	10	Wrap-up, evaluation, preparation for final exam
	W	15	<b><u>FINAL EXAM – 2:45 - 4:45 p.m.</u></b>

## LITR 100 (Introduction to Literature), Section 8

**MWF 11:00-11:50, Flagg 238**

**Professor** Derek Maus (mausdc@potssdam.edu)

**Office:** Morey 244 (267-2196)

**Office Hours:** Tu/Th, 10:00-10:45, M/F, 10:00-10:45; *or by appointment*

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### EVALUATION

Close Reading Paper		25%
Midterm Examination		25%
Final Examination		25%
Reading Quizzes	5 x 2% =	10%
Class Participation		15%

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	M	27	Penkov, "Buying Lenin" in BASS (pp. 230-243)
	W	29	Russell, "Vampires in the Lemon Grove" in BASS (pp. 244-259)
OCT	F	1	Saunders, "Puppy" in BASS (pp. 260-68)
	M	4	Sneed, "Quality of Life" in BASS (pp. 269-281)
	W	6	Tice, "Missionaries" in BASS (pp. 282-297)
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	F	29	Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i> , pp. 123-197
NOV	M	1	Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i> , pp. 198-252
	W	3	Ozeki, <i>My Year of Meats</i> , pp. 253-300
	F	5	<b><u>MIDTERM EXAMINATION</u></b> (Bring blue book!)
	M	8	Haddon, <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> (pp. 1-61)
	W	10	Haddon, <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> (pp. 61-115)
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	W	8	Thompson, <i>Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas</i> , pp. 169-end
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	W	15	<b><u>FINAL EXAM – 2:45 - 4:45 p.m.</u></b>

## LITR 100H

### Second Response Paper Assignment

In contemporary American discussions of the roles associated with gender, the notion of “objectification” occupies a central place. One of the metaphors regularly used to describe the process of objectification is “treating a person like they were just a piece of meat,” an image with an inherently negative and dehumanizing connotation. For example, the image to the right is taken from a recent campaign by the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence and uses a cut of beef dressed in distinctly feminine clothing with the caption “It’s not acceptable to treat a woman like one.” Ruth Ozeki’s *My Year of Meats* intermingles discussions of the production and marketing of meat with discussions of behavioral expectations placed on female characters by a variety of authority-figures – whether those are husbands, bosses, advertisers, or “society” – that seem to diminish their humanity in some way (in other words, to treat them as an object with no will of their own, rather than as a person).



Your assignment in this paper is to find and analyze at least three passages from the novel in which Ozeki uses meat as part of a metaphor to describe how and why one of her characters deals with such objectification. Choose a single character to focus on for the purpose of this assignment. Keep in mind that your task in this assignment is first to articulate a thesis about what Ozeki’s intentions are in using meat metaphors in regard to the character you’ve chosen, and then not just to note instances in which this metaphor occurs, but also to explain how they work together to illustrate the intention you are attributing to Ozeki in your thesis. Your paper should be at least three full pages in length (12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, with 1” margins on all sides) and needs to include properly formatted citation of all sources used (even if you only use the novel). It is due in class or sent to me as an e-mail attachment by Monday, November 8.

## LITR 100H

### Paper #3

Hunter S. Thompson chooses a quote – “He who makes a beast of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man” – from the eighteenth-century British writer Samuel Johnson as the epigraph for *Fear in Loathing in Las Vegas*. This is one of the first of many instances in the novel in which Thompson mixes together images of animals and humans. For this paper, choose three passages from the novel in which Thompson intermingles animal and human imagery and explicate these three passages as support for an interpretive thesis about why Thompson uses this particular technique in telling his story. Note that there may be several reasons within the book for using such mixed images, some of which overlap and some of which contradict one another. Also, there may be times in which the mixing is literal (e.g., the wolverines among the trapeze artists at Circus-Circus) and other times where the mixing is figurative (e.g., the description of the people in the hotel lobby as lizards), so you will want to choose three passages that have a similar purpose, which you should state explicitly in the introductory paragraph of your paper. Your paper should be at least two but no more than four full pages in length, in double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman font with 1” margins on all sides. You do not need a cover sheet or a bibliography, but you should properly cite page numbers for all your quotes from the novel.