

Disability in Literature Final Paper/Presentation Project Information Packet

This rather hefty packet contains all the information you need regarding the final project for this course. Please ask if you have questions! And please start thinking NOW about what you'd like to work on for the project. The best projects come out of a student's genuine interest in the topic or text. Last-minute selections rarely work out well. I want to see you happy with your project (both because that's nicer for you AND because it usually results in a much better project for me to read). If you need advice on where to start or what to do, please ask!

For your final project for this course (there is no final exam), you have three options:

- 1) Read a text relating to disability that is not on the syllabus and argue for why it should be a part of a course.
- 2) Choose a text that we already have in the course and design a teaching curriculum for it.
- 3) Complete a Service Learning Project with the Lowell Association for the Blind (L.A.B.)

For any option you choose, you will need to complete two parts:

1. Make a **presentation** in class during our final class meeting
2. Turn in a final **written product** during finals period (the specifics of that part vary depending on the choice you make).

FOR EVERYONE/ALL PROJECTS: ABOUT THE WRITTEN PRODUCT:

The written product (whatever form it takes, for all three options) is due on **Monday, December 14th, by noon**. Please note that the registrar's office has scheduled a final exam for us for 12/12/2015; however, there is no final exam for this course, and I would like to give you additional time to complete your paper. I welcome papers earlier than this date. You can put them in my mailbox in the English department office on the 4th floor of O'Leary Library. Please note that access to the English department is only during "regular" business hours; after hours, although the library is open, the English department area will be locked. You **can** leave your paper in the mail slot that goes to the English Department (in the hall on the 4th floor of O'Leary). I recommend that you e-mail me to let me know that you have delivered your paper. Note that I **DO NOT** accept final paper via e-mail. You need to turn in a hard copy by noon on Monday, December 14th. E-mail me with questions: Bridget_marshall@uml.edu

Please remember to cite all quotes – from your primary text, course texts, any critical sources, interview sources, online sources, and from any other resources you use -- in MLA style, which also includes having a Works Cited list at the end of the paper. Please see the previous handout on MLA style, consult a handbook or website that explains MLA style, or ask for assistance if you don't know how to use MLA style.

In the rush of the end of the semester, please be very careful about citing all material. The standard plagiarism policy for this course, which is detailed more thoroughly on the syllabus, includes **FAILURE FOR THE COURSE** if your paper includes plagiarism. Do not plagiarize.

OPTION 1: Read a text relating to disability that is not on the syllabus and argue for its inclusion in the course.

You will need to find a disability-related piece of literature –fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama, or graphic novel -- that you think should be included on our syllabus. Your final paper should make the argument for including this text in future semesters of this course. I am very eager for you to find a book that you like and that you care about so that you can enjoy this project and write a strong final paper.

Please do NOT use a text you have previously read (like something you read for another course); find something new. I will only allow one student to work on any particular text, so please come let me know when you've decided on something.

Your first step is to find an appropriate book that interests you. I am happy to help you do this, but I want to strongly suggest that you start this process now. Some questions that you might think about as you start this process include:

- Is there a particular disability that interests me?
- Is there a particular genre that I like – novels, non-fiction, poetry, drama?
- Is there a particular time period that I like reading about or would like to learn more about?
- Which texts have I enjoyed, and what aspect of them – style, form, content, topic, etc. – were important to me?

Book search sites – like Amazon – can often be helpful for this phase of the project. You can type in a topic or disability and often find a host of suggestions from booksellers and from other readers for books that will fit your particular angle.

I have a list of pre-approved titles available on the course website; please check there for suggestions, or come talk to me. Once you've chosen your text, you have two tasks: Create a **Presentation** for the class, and write a paper for your **Written Product**. See the last page of the packet for info on all presentations; see below for information about the Written Product for this option:

Written Product for Option 1

The final paper for Option 1 should be about 7 - 9 pages and focus on one disability-related text that is not on the syllabus. Your paper must make an ARGUMENT for inclusion. Why should we read this text in this course? This paper is not a plot summary; it should focus on an *analysis* of the text, including how it fits into the syllabus we currently have. Here are some of the things you should do in the paper (in no particular order here; however, you SHOULD develop an order that works for your own paper!):

- Thumbnail sketch of plot summary (a paragraph or so – really! Don't do too much of this!)
- Your response/recommendation – what you liked or disliked about the text. BE SPECIFIC and explain why you had the reaction you did.
- Close reading of a few passages: You should have quotes (properly cited of course!!) from the text to illustrate your points and ideas, and you should discuss/analyze those quotes.
- Connect the text to other texts in the course and to our discussions in the course. Where might this text fit into the current syllabus? What book might it replace? What teaching tactics or classroom activities might be well-suited to this text?
- Find at least one article about or review of the book (it could be positive or negative). This review should come from a UML library source.
- A Works Cited list. This might include only the novel itself and your one additional source (article or review). Keep in mind that if you quote other books, you should cite them properly and include it in the

Works Cited. And keep in mind that you should cite ALL material that came from outside sources; do not plagiarize!

- **Your paper must have a clear thesis. A thesis for this paper might look something like this:**
 - Novel X should be included in the “Disability in Literature” course because it does X, Y, and Z.
 - This memoir shows A, offers B, and questions C, making it an excellent pairing with “Text Q” on the syllabus.
 - This text, which portrays A, B, and C, provides a perspective that is currently missing from the course.
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OPTION 2: Design a teaching curriculum for a text/unit

Design a lesson plan for teaching one of the texts in the course. You can choose anything we’ve read (or watched) this semester. You could also choose a specific topic (for instance, autism, or cerebral palsy). You can also choose the audience for this curriculum: do you want to teach this text in a high school class? An undergraduate class? A graduate-level class? Do you want to find a way to adapt it for an elementary school class? Perhaps some kind of Continuing Education class? It’s your choice, and you can go in the direction that seems most useful and/or interesting to you.

Here are a few things you will want to do to get started with this option:

- Decide on a text/topic and on an audience
- Figure out the timeline (how long will the assignment take – one day’s lesson, or a few days?)
- Figure out what you will do before class (will you change the assignment, break it down into chunks, give take-home reading questions, etc.)
- Figure out what you will do on the day of class (discussion? What questions? A quiz? A presentation? A lecture?)
- Do research on the text (and perhaps the author, or the associated disability, or other aspects related to the text) so that you have lots of information in order to teach it.

Once you’ve chosen your text and have a general idea of your lesson plan, you have two tasks: Create a **Presentation** for the class, and pull together your **Written Product**. See the last page of the packet for info on all presentations, but note that if you wanted to, you could put a part of your lesson plan into action during the presentation session. See below for information about the Written Product for this option:

Written Product for Option 2:

If you want to do this option, here are the things you will need to submit as your Written Product:

- 1) **Overview of the Lesson Plan:** This is a roughly 3- to 4-page overview of the lesson plan. This includes an introduction that explains what text you chose, why you chose it, your selected audience (and why you chose it) and what you propose to do with this imagined class. You should then do a more detailed outline of how the class(es) would run. This includes when you would assign the text, what extra materials you would add, etc. You should include a timeline breakdown of your class session (i.e., “Spend 15 minutes discussing X, Spend 20 minutes in group work on Y...” etc.)
- 2) **Annotated Research Guide:** This should consist of all online or real-world resources you would use in the teaching of this text. There should be at least 3-5 resources. They could be links to websites, or articles that give you background on a disability, and author, etc. If you plan to show any videos or presentation materials in the classroom, your annotated bibliography should include those. Note that an annotated bibliography is a listing of sources, but also includes 2-3 sentences about each. So you list a resource and then say something like “I read this and got useful information about the author, some of which I will share with students when that comes up” or “I thought this was a useful

resource, so I will share this in class with the students, or e-mail it to them before class or..." (you get the idea).

- 3) **Classroom Materials:** This includes anything you'll give your students: handouts of pre-reading questions, group work questions, discussion questions, or activity guides for the class session. If you would do a lecture with a powerpoint presentation, include the slides you would use.

OPTION 3: Service Learning Project at Lowell Association for the Blind (LAB)

The third option for the Final Project is a Service-Learning project at the Lowell Association for the Blind (LAB). The standard Service-Learning project for the course is to complete at least one hour of "Reading for Radio" at the LAB. If you are interested in doing something other than Reading for Radio, you should talk to me now and start having a conversation with Elizabeth about what the LAB needs. For the most part, the easiest way to complete this project is by doing Reading for Radio, but I am glad to have you do something else if you are willing to work with Elizabeth to figure out a project that will be useful for LAB. See me ASAP if you want to do something other than Reading for Radio for this project!

If you are interested in doing the Reading for Radio Service Learning Project, here's what I will need from you:

1. **Complete a Volunteer Form:** this is in the LAB packet and must be completed and provided to me and to LAB prior to signing up to read.
2. **A Pre-Activity Reflection:** This is a 2-page response that you complete and submit to me BEFORE doing your reading for radio activity. See the LAB packet for the survey.
3. **A Reflection Paper:** See the LAB packet for more information; this reflection paper is 3 – 5 pages, reflecting on your expectations and experiences of working at LAB, and connecting it with our course material.
4. **A Brief Presentation:** This will be just a brief overview for your classmates about your experience at LAB.

****PLEASE SEE THE SEPARATE "SERVICE LEARNING AT LAB PROJECT PACKET" for more information, specific details, and forms/surveys for this version of the project.****

FOR EVERYONE/ALL PROJECTS: ABOUT THE PRESENTATIONS

Presentations will happen on in our regular final class meeting time on **Friday, 4 December**. The main point of the presentations is to share what you've learned on your own with the rest of the class. At the time of the presentation, **you are not required to have finished your text, your project, or your final paper**. Also, **you do not have to stand up in front of the class** (unless you wish to do so). The presentations can be relatively informal – basically, we sit in a circle and the presenter talks about the final paper (whether that's about a book, a lesson plan, or a service learning project). Here's what you need to do:

- Provide your classmates with a **roughly 3- to 4-minute presentation**. You'll be able to use what you have on your visual (see below) as a guide to your talk. Introduce the class to what you did (read a book, designed a new lesson plan, did a service project) and how you're feeling about it (what has been hard, what has been easy, what has been fun or not fun). You could include some kind of audience interaction if you like (though obviously, it would have to be quite short!). Doing your own presentation and watching those of others should help to give you ideas for your own final paper, and help us all reflect on what we've learned through the course texts during the semester.
- Create some kind of visual for everyone in the class. Your "visual" can be all text – it need not be an image or work of art. Basically, it's something to help focus our attention, and to aid visual learners in the class. It also gives you something concrete to focus on in case you're nervous about presenting. It might include an image of a book you're discussing, or images related to it. It might include background information on a disability, or about an author. It might include photographs of your experiences at the LAB. The design and content of your visual should follow your own interests. You could include quotes from the text, create or find related images, offer bullet-pointed notes about your project, or explain how it connects with other texts we've read in the class. Here are some options for what form your "visual" might include (note that you **don't** need all of these – just one!):
 - A handout for everyone in the class (we have 35 students): You should bring enough copies of the handout so that everyone can have one. These could be just a half-page each; in any case, don't go over one double-sided page. Your handout might serve as a flyer or ad for your chosen book, or a quiz or curriculum piece, or something else entirely.
 - A poster: You could include images from or about the text or project, background information, or whatever kind of information you think would be useful. You can go small or large; it can be a poster that you hold at the front of the room, or we can pass it around so people can get a closer look.
 - A few Powerpoint slides (or a short Prezi): You should keep these to a small number (say, 5 maximum). Keep in mind that the presentations are short – you should not show up with 20 slides to get through! I will set up the computer for class. It does have internet (when it's working), so you can e-mail your slides to yourself and to me. You might also want to bring your slides on a thumb drive. I'd also recommend that you bring one print out of your presentation as backup, just in case there's tech trouble (you can pass the slides around to show the class).
- I'll bring a timer to our class session, and I'll cut people off at the 5-minute mark so that we're sure to have enough time for every student to present. After each presentation, we will (hopefully) have time to ask questions of the presenter, too. We'll need a bit of time at the start of each session to get the technology set up for everyone, and to get settled, but please, please, please be on time this class session so that no one's presentation is interrupted. Also, particularly if you have technology, please try to arrive a bit early if possible.