

## HON 110 First Year Seminar in Honors: Text and the City

Fall 2009

Dr. Julie Nash

Instructor	Dr. Julie Nash	Class Section	304
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Office Hours	MW 10-11, F 12-1	Class Times	2:00-4:20
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The First Year Seminar in Honors (FYSH) uses Lowell as its primary text, although we are using two other books this semester, along with electronic materials and films. Rich in history and culture, and home to your chosen home for the next four years, the City of Lowell offers a perfect venue for students to connect to their surroundings while learning how to view the city through the lens of the Humanities.

**Goals.** At the conclusion of this course, students will:

- Describe the history of Lowell: its industrial past, the role of slavery and immigration in sustaining the city, and its more recent role as an artistic community.
- Read and interpret a variety of texts including historical, artistic, and literary.
- Think critically about the role of place in our lives.
- Identify the differences between primary and secondary sources in research and scholarship in the humanities, describe the strengths and limitations of each, and produce an annotated bibliography that draws on both types of sources.
- Produce academic and creative responses to course content in writing and other art forms.
- Identify resources on campus and in the community for research into Lowell history and culture.

**Requirements.** Students are expected to attend class regularly and actively. Absences during a weekly seminar add up quickly and will have a strong adverse impact on your grade. Seminars are distinguished by joint student-faculty participation and contributions to the learning experience. You should come to class fully prepared to discuss any readings or assignments for that day, and should participate in all class field trips and activities, asking questions and making observations as appropriate.

Grades will be determined by averaging the following (each component worth 20% of your final grade):

- Creative Writing Assignment
- Visions of Lowell: Art Project
- Annotated Bibliography
- Reaction papers and in-class writing in response to the course content

- Attendance and participation in two supplementary enrichment activities associated with the class (both on and campus).

**Texts.** The primary text is the City of Lowell. Others are:

- David Daniel, *The Heaven Stone*. \*\* Note: This book is out of print and not available at the bookstore. It is available used at *Amazon*, usually for under \$5.00 including shipping. Order it now so you will have it when we begin reading it in November.
- William Moran, *The Belles of New England: The Women of the Textile Mills and the Families Whose Wealth They Wove*.

**Important Internet Resources:**

\* The Center for Lowell History: <http://library.uml.edu/clh/index.Html>

\* Harvard's Open Collections—"Women Working 1800-1930":

<http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/ww/>

**Schedule:**

Complete all assigned readings prior to class, take notes during lecture and discussion. The schedule is subject to change.

Week 1 (9/2): Introduction to class and the city of Lowell.

Week 2 (9/9): **Unit One: The Lowell Mills and the Mill Girls**

- Lecture: The Industrial Revolution in England and America.
- Read William Moran, *Belles of New England*, Chapters 1 and 2 before today's class.
- Also, read the home page of "Mill Life in Lowell" from the Center for Lowell History located here: <http://library.uml.edu/clh/mo.htm>. Browse the links, choosing at least ten items to read more closely.
- Reaction paper: Come to class with a 2-page written response to these primary source materials. What do they add to your understanding of life in early Lowell? What interested you? What surprised you?
- Discuss creative writing assignment.

Week 3 (9/16): Field Trip: Suffolk Mills Turbine Exhibit.

<http://www.nps.gov/lowe/planyourvisit/upload/suffolk.pdf>. Meet in front of the exhibit at Wannalancit Mills at 2:15. We will follow the visit with a walk downtown (weather permitting).

Week 4 (9/23):

- Lecture: Slavery and the North.
- Read *Belles*, Chapter 3 before coming to class.
- Read home page and selected links to the website “Slavery in the North” before coming to today’s class: <http://www.slavenorth.com/slavenorth.htm>. Take notes as you read as you will be asked about specific information from the site.
- Reaction paper: Prior to preparing for today’s class, were you aware of the North’s role in American slavery? What does all this have to do with the Lowell mills?

Week 5 (9/30):

- Field Trip: Boott Cotton Mill. Meet at 2:30 at Boarding House Park (next to giant spindle) for Mill tour. Continue reading *Belles* this week.
- Creative Writing Assignment due today. Be prepared to share your work with the class next week.

Week 6 (10/7):

- Conclude *The Belles of New England*. We’ll discuss the role of immigration, the Civil War, and the labor movement.
- Discuss Creative Writing projects.

Week 7 (10/14): **Unit Two: Lowell and the Arts**

- Lecture: Jack Kerouac and the Beat generation.
- Before class, explore the NPR story on Kerouac’s *On the Road* and listen to some of his words and music.  
<http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/patc/ontheroad/>
- Read Kerouac excerpts before coming to class (handout).
- Watch and discuss the short film, *Pull My Daisy*.
- Watch and discuss the short film, *Lowell Blues*.
- Discuss photography/artistic assignment.

Week 8 (10/21): Field Trip: Revolving Museum and Brush Art Gallery in downtown Lowell. Meet at 2:30 at the Revolving Museum on Shattuck Street in downtown Lowell. We’ll spend some time there and then move on to the Brush Art Gallery across the street.

Week 9 (10/28): No class. Use today’s class time to work on your projects. Begin reading *The Heaven Stone*.

Week 10 (11/4):

- Begin discussion of *The Heaven Stone* (up to page 109). As we read this book, we’ll focus on a number of literary issues such as plot and character, but we’ll mostly focus on depictions of the city of Lowell. How does Daniel use this setting to advance his story, to set the mood, etc.?

- Response Paper: Before coming to class, identify a passage in which the city of Lowell is explicitly described and write a close analysis of that passage.
- We'll also use this book to discuss the Cambodian community in Lowell. What do you know about Cambodians in Lowell? How does the novel depict Cambodian characters?

Week 11 (11/11): Watch film *The Killing Fields* about the Khmer Rouge.

- Photography/artistic project due today.

Week 12 (11/18):

- Discuss film and conclude *The Heaven Stone*.
- Response paper: *The Killing Fields*/Cambodians in Lowell (1-2 pages).
- Discuss and share artistic projects.

Week 13 (11/25): **Unit Three: Lowell Today.**

- Reaction paper: Now that you've been in the city for several months, have walked around it, have visited its sites, what does the city mean to you? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
- Discuss annotated bibliography/research assignment.

Week 14 (12/2): Discuss annotated bibliography and work on it in class. We will meet in a classroom computer lab today.

Week 15 (12/9): Annotated bibliography due. Share findings. Conclude class.

**Supplementary Enrichment Activities:** Participate in at least two of these activities or events and hand in a 1-2 page reaction paper for each within 1 week of your participation in this activity. Additional activities will be announced throughout the semester and events listed below are subject to change.

1. Attend the Lowell Arts Festival Sept. 25-27. <http://www.lowellartsfestival.org>.
2. Attend the Kerouac Conference (Oct. ??)
3. Attend a session of the New England American Studies Association's conference on "The Post-American City." (Oct. 16-18). <http://www.neasa.org/>
4. Attend an event at the Lowell Poetry Festival downtown Lowell: <http://masspoetry.org/>
5. Historical Snapshots Friday at the Revolving Museum (Oct. 30). Stories of Lowell's past and immigrant history. <http://www.revolvingmuseum.org/events.html>

