**Honors English Seminar: Magical Realism**

11/12 English Seminar

Ms. Harrison

Fall 2020

[Insert email here]

*“The simple truth is that the truth does not exist; it all depends on a person's point of view.”   
―*[*Laura Esquivel*](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/4694.Laura_Esquivel)*,*[*Like Water for Chocolate*](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/1172473)

**Course Description:**

What do you believe? How does your reality shape your beliefs? And how do your beliefs shape your reality? In this course we will explore the genre of magical realism, style of fiction that paints a realistic view of the modern world while also adding magical elements. Ghosts and spirits feature prominently in these texts. Magical realism often exists in time periods and political contexts in which events have gotten so violent or extreme that people turn to the supernatural to make sense of what is happening.

**Essential Questions:**

* How and why do authors make use of magical realism to advance their themes and messages?
* Why is the genre of magical realism so often embraced by writers from historically marginalized groups? To what extent can magical realism be seen as an act of resistance?
* What truths does magical realism reveal? What truths does magical realism genre conceal?
* In a world of masquerading spectacles and illusions, how does one find and pursue the authentic life?

**Major Texts:**

* *The Famished Road* by Ben Okri
* *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
* *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid
* *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel

**Films:**

* *The Shape of Water* by Guillermo del Toro
* *Beasts of the Southern Wild* by Benh Zeitlin

**Quarter 1 Assessments:**

* Seminars – 2/3x week
* Homework – 2x/week
* Summative Papers – 1
* On-Demand Writing Assignments – 2
* Group Presentation – 1
* Creative Writing Assignment – 1

**Quarter 2 Assessments:**

* Seminars – 2/3x week
* Homework – 2x/week
* Summative Papers – 1
* On-Demand Writing Assignments – 2
* Creative Writing Narrative Paper – 1
* Group Presentation – 1
* Final Project – 1

**Additional Sections Teacher Should Add: Integrity Policy, Google Classroom Instructions, Essay Expectations, Office Hours, “How to Contact” Section**

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| Day 1  Intro to Course | Day 2  Intro to Course | Day 3  *The Famished Road 1* | Day 4  *The Famished Road 2*  Seminar #1 | Day 5  *The Famished Road 3* |
| Day 6  *The Famished Road 4* | Day 7  *The Famished Road 5*  Seminar #2 | Day 8  *The Famished Road 6* | Day 9  *The Famished Road 7*  Seminar #3 | Day 10  On-Demand Writing #1 |
| Day 11  *The Famished Road 8* | Day 12  *The Famished Road 9*  Seminar #4 | Day 13  *The Famished Road 10* | Day 14  *The Shape of Water 1* | Day 15  *The Shape of Water 2* |
| Day 16  *The Famished Road 11* | Day 17  *The Famished Road 12*  Seminar #5 | Day 18  *The Famished Road 13* | Day 19  *The Famished Road 14*  Seminar #6 | Day 20  *The Famished Road 15* |
| Day 21  *The Famished Road 16*  Intro Paper | Day 22  *The Famished Road 17* | Day 23  Writer’s Workshop #1 | Day 24  Writer’s Workshop #2 | Day 25  Writer’s Workshop #3 |
| Day 26  Writer’s Workshop #4  Paper Due | Day 27  *Beloved* 1 | Day 28  *Beloved 2* | Day 29  *Beloved 3*  Seminar #7 | Day 30  *Beloved 4* |
| Day 31  *Beloved* 5 | Day 32  *Beloved 6*  Seminar #8 | Day 33  *Beloved 7* | Day 34  *Beloved 8*  Seminar #9 | Day 35  On-Demand #2  (Creative Task) |
| Day 36  *Beloved 9*  Intro Creative Writing Narrative Paper | Day 37  *Beloved* 10 | Day 38  Writer’s Workshop 1 | Day 39  Writer’s Workshop 2 | Day 40  Writer’s Workshop 3  (Peer Review & Editing) |
| Day 41  Writer’s Workshop 4 | Day 42  *Exit West* 1  Creative Writing -First Draft Due | Day 43  *Exit West 2* | Day 44  *Exit West 3*  Seminar #10 | Day 45  *Exit West 4* |
| Day 46  *Exit West 5* | Day 47  *Exit West 6*  Seminar #11 | Day 48  *Exit West 7* | Day 49  *Exit West 8*  Seminar #12 | Day 50  On-Demand Writing #3 |
| Day 51  *Exit West 9*  Intro Group Presentations | Day 52  *Exit West 10*  Seminar #13 | Day 53  *Exit West* 11 | Day 54  Group Presentations Workday #1 | Day 55  Group Presentations Workday #2 |
| Day 56  Group Presentations Workday #3 | Day 57  Presentations #1 | Day 58  Presentations #2 | Day 59  *Beasts of the Southern Wild* Day 1 | Day 60  *Beasts of the Southern Wild* Day 2 |
| Day 61  On-Demand #4  Movie Response | Day 62  *Like Water for Chocolate* 1 | Day 63  *Like Water for Chocolate 2* | Day 64  *Like Water for Chocolate 3*  Seminar #14 | Day 65  *Like Water for Chocolate 4* |
| Day 66  *Like Water for Chocolate 5* | Day 67  *Like Water for Chocolate 6*  Seminar #15 | Day 68  *Like Water for Chocolate 7* | Day 69  *Like Water for Chocolate 8* | Day 70  *Like Water for Chocolate 9* |
| Day 71  *Like Water for Chocolate 10*  Introduce Book Response | Day 72  *Like Water for Chocolate 1 (Movie)* | Day 73  *Like Water for Chocolate 2 (Movie)* | Day 74  Final Project Introduced  Book Response Due | Day 75  Final Project Workday #1 |
| Day 76  Final Project Workday #2 | Day 77  Final Project Workday #3 | Day 78  Final Project Workday #4 | Day 79  Final Project Workday #5 | Day 80  Final Project Workday #6 |
| Day 81  Final Project Workday #7 | Day 82  Final Project Workday #8 | Day 83  Semester Final Project Due |

**Sample Deeper Learning Task:**

***Beloved* Creative Writing Narrative Task**

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| **Goal:** The goal of this assignment is to demonstrate familiarity and mastery of the literary tools of magical realism that we’ve seen in our novels thus far, as well as the essential qualities of the main characters. |

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| **Overview:** In this assignment, first choose three or four characters from the novels that we have read in *Magical Realism*. Then, create and describe the *setting* in which your characters will interact. The setting should incorporate some components of magical realism, so please be creative. Then, once you have finished your setting, place your characters in conversation, as if they were sitting around a dinner table talking about their lives. In the world that you have created in the *setting*, what would the characters be saying to one another? How would their commentary be influenced by the lives that they lived in our novels? The dialogue that you ultimately create should demonstrate that you understand the intricacies of the characters that you bring to life, as well as the foundational literary tools that make magical realism what it is. |

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| **What’s Due:**  **Setting:** At least 500 words, written in descriptive prose. This is where you make your world vividly come to life.  **Dialogue:** At least 2 pages double spaced. This should be written like a movie script, with characters speaking back and forth to one another. You need at least three characters in the conversation.  **Characteristics:** You should work to incorporate as many of these five characteristics of magical realism into your setting and dialogue as you can.  1. An "irreducible" magic which cannot be explained by typical notions of natural law.  2. A realist description that stresses normal, common, every-day phenomena, which is then revised or "re-felt" by the marvelous. Extreme or amplified states of mind or setting are often used to accomplish this. (This distinguishes the genre from pure myth or fantasy.)  3. It causes the reader to be drawn between the two views of reality.  4. These two visions or realms nearly merge or intersect.  5. Time is both history and the timeless; space is often challenged; identity is broken down at times. |

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