

## **Lit-Trans 236—2: Extreme Stories: The Case Study in Law, Psychology, and Literature**

Prerequisites: Successful completion of or exemption from first Communication course.

Courses designated as satisfying Part A of the requirement may not be used to satisfy Part B of the requirement.

Open to Freshmen

Language of instruction: English

Please contact [heldridge@wisc.edu](mailto:heldridge@wisc.edu) with any questions.

The extremes of human experience fascinate us: faced with stories of illnesses that seem to move between mind and body, devastating plagues, or gruesome crimes, we look for explanations that make sense of how and why such events take place. But often enough, attempts to rationalize frightening or confusing events reveal how hard it is to draw the boundaries between “extreme” and “normal,” showing just how slippery our categories of sickness and health, guilt and innocence are. This course looks at case studies, including stories, films, and legal, psychological, and medical texts to examine critically the different ways we try to make sense of these experiences. In paying special attention to the way writers, scientists, lawyers, psychologists, and filmmakers are challenged, inspired, or confounded by these extreme stories, we will look at early case studies published in pedagogical journals and magazines in the eighteenth century, watch as practitioners try to explain mental illness at the birth of psychoanalysis (including Freud’s famous case study “The Wolf Man”), debate the use of cases in establishing mental categories (for example in the discovery and history of Dissociative Identity Disorder), and consider criminal cases (e.g. Leopold and Loeb). We will look further at fictionalized ‘cases,’ such as Nunally Johnson’s film *The Three Faces of Eve*, Friedrich Schiller’s adaptation of a legal case, “The Criminal of Lost Honour,” and Edgar Allen Poe’s short story “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar” to see what these stories about the extremes of the human condition can tell us about what it means to be human and healthy.

Students will analyze the cases, stories, and films in essays of varying lengths and for various audiences; the course will culminate in a project that uses research methods and evidence from the course to write a report influencing public policy on incarceration, public health, and/or mental illness.

### **Required text:**

Freud, Sigmund: *Three Case Histories* (Ed. Philip Rieff). ISBN: 0684829452

All other texts will be made available via Learn@UW.

### **Course goals:**

--*Critical reading*: students will be able to identify different disciplinary texts, summarize and describe the information in those texts, compare different disciplines with one another, connect specific examples with general principles, and select convincing instances of argumentation;

--*Logical thinking*: students will identify thesis or other argumentative statements (such as applications of legal principles, diagnoses, etc.); they will associate certain publication formats (textbooks, journal articles, encyclopedias) with goals and potential biases on the part of the author; they will analyze the connections between argument and example in these texts;

--*Use of evidence*: students will recognize the data used as evidence in argumentative texts; they will analyze narrative strategies for connecting that evidence; they will distinguish different ways of drawing conclusions based on that evidence; they will also distinguish and classify the ways in which the use of evidence has changed over time within specific disciplines;

--*Use of disciplinary style and conventions*: students will be able to describe and produce writing that conforms to disciplinary standards, and explain the reasons for adhering to those conventions;  
--*Information literacy/use of core library resources*: students will be able to find and identify differing types of scholarly resource, including basic data on those resources; students will focus on databases and resources central to their disciplines.

**Required texts:**

Freud, Sigmund: *Three Case Histories* (ed. Philip Rieff). ISBN: 0684829452 (via amazon.com or other)  
All other texts will be made available via Learn@UW.

**Participation:**

1 point/week for 15 weeks: 15 points

- Your active and prepared participation is a fundamental component of your grade. This includes participation in class-wide discussion and group work as well as any smaller assignments (such as answering and turning in targeted reading questions or brief reading comprehension or completion quizzes) given to enhance discussion or evaluate preparation. In order to earn participation points, you must have a copy of the text (electronic or paper) with you in every class meeting.

**Reading responses**

1 point/week for 15 weeks: 15 points

- In order to enhance class discussion, each student is required to write a reading response post on the Learn@UW discussion boards by 12:00 noon the Monday of each week. This post must contain 1) a question about the previous week's reading/films (something you didn't understand, something you found strange or surprising, something you want to know more about) and 2) a question about the reading for the coming Tuesday.

**Written Assignments (See paper and assignment policies for more detailed description of assignment procedures)**

3 papers + 1 bibliography = 55 points

- **Paper 1: 5 points**  
Summarize a case we have read for a specific reader: a fellow student who has missed the week's reading. Consider what special terms or information this person needs to know. Ca. 500 words.
- **Paper 2: 20 points**  
Diagnose the protagonist of one of the fictional texts we have read using the standards from DSM-V. Be sure to point to specific features in the text that you identify as symptoms of a disorder or disease. Ca. 1000 words.
- **Annotated Bibliography: 10 points**  
Compile and annotate a bibliography of at least 10 sources on a) a legal principle b) a mental disorder or c) a medical disease using appropriate databases, electronic resources, and print resources.
- **Paper 3: 20 points**  
Write a letter to a politician (of your choice) in which you use a case study, supported by your annotated bibliography, to make a policy recommendation, whether legal, medical, or

psychological. Make sure your argument fits your audience: what does this person know, need to know, care about, and want to accomplish?

### **Oral Assignments**

1 oral examination + 1 paper presentation: 15 points

- Oral examination, 10 points: Students will be tested on their knowledge of the texts and their oral communication skills by a 30 minute oral examination in the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the semester. The exam will consist of questions about the texts and films to test completion (Have you done the reading?), comprehension (Did you understand the text?), and synthesis (Can you put together themes and ideas from the texts we have read? Can you compare and contrast types of texts and their styles and goals?).
- Paper presentation, 5 points: each student will practice oral communication skills by giving a brief presentation on her/his final paper topic.

### **Academic Honesty**

*All of the work you do for this course* is to be your own original work, prepared exclusively for this course. Please be aware that plagiarism rules also apply to material found on websites and in other electronic sources. When you need help with your work, or have questions about what sort of outside help might be appropriate, please talk with me. If you are unable to come to office hours because of a schedule conflict, please talk with me about finding another time. You can also consult the guidelines of the UW-Madison Writing Center for information regarding plagiarism, intellectual property rights, and proper citation of references:

[http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA\\_plagiarism.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html)

### **Grading:**

*Participation*: 15 weeks @ 1 point/week: 15 points

*Reading responses*: 15 weeks @ 1point/week: 15 points

*Written assignments*: 55 points

Paper 1: 5 points

Paper 2: 15 points

Bibliography: 10 points

Paper 3: 25 points

*Oral assignments*: 15 points

Oral exam: 10 points

Paper presentation: 5 points

*Total*: 100 points

### **Course Schedule:**

Day/Date/ Week	Texts	Themes, Assignments due, Topics
Tuesday, January 21 (1)	None (criminality and mental illness narratives in class)	Introduction
Thursday, January 23	• Karl Philipp Moritz: <i>Journal of Empirical Psychology</i> (trans. Förstl)	Empirical study of the human soul
Tuesday, January	• DSM-V Introduction: "Brief history,"	Modern diagnosis of mental

28 (2)	“revision history,” “cultural issues,” and “gender differences” (DOI: 10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596.144 896)	illness <b>Sample paper activity (at home; bring to class 1/30)</b>
Thursday, January 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Georg Büchner: <i>Lenz</i></li> </ul>	Realism and the case study
Tuesday, February 4 (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSM-V <i>Handbook of Differential Diagnosis</i> Chapter 1: “Differential Diagnosis Step by Step” (DOI: 10.1176/appi.books.9781585629992.123 969)</li> </ul>	Can fictional characters be diagnosed?
Thursday, February 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freud: “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,” Sections I-III (pp.161-185)</li> </ul>	<b>Paper 1 due</b>
Tuesday, February 11 (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freud: “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,” Sections IV-IV (pp.186-204)</li> </ul>	The ‘science’ of extreme stories: Freud’s case studies
Thursday, February 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freud: “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,” Sections V-VI</li> </ul>	<i>[Paper 1 revisions due]</i>
Tuesday, February 18 (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freud: “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,” sections VII-VIII (pp.230-262)</li> </ul>	
Thursday, February 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Johnson: <i>The 3 Faces of Eve</i></li> <li>DSM V Dissociative Disorders: “Dissociative Identity Disorder” (DOI: 10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596.411 590)</li> </ul>	Filmic representations of mental illness
Tuesday, February 25 (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Herzog: <i>The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser</i></li> <li>Simon: “Kaspar Hauser’s Recovery and Autopsy: A perspective on neurological and sociological requirements for language development”</li> </ul>	Social and environmental factors
Thursday, February 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schiller: “Criminal of Lost Honor”</li> <li>Gail K. Hart, “True Crime and Criminal Truth: Schiller’s ‘The Criminal of Lost Honor’”</li> </ul>	<b>Paper 2 due to writing fellows</b>
Tuesday, March 4 (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Darrow: <i>The plea of Clarence Darrow[...] in defense of Richard Loeb and Nathan Leopold, Jr</i> (excerpts)</li> <li>Bonnie et al: “Mental abnormality”</li> </ul>	Criminality and psychology
Thursday, March 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Darrow: <i>The plea of Clarence Darrow[...] in defense of Richard Loeb and Nathan Leopold, Jr</i> (excerpts)</li> <li>DSM V: “Cautionary Statement for Forensic Use of DSM-5 (DOI: 10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596.744 053)</li> </ul>	Mitigation

Tuesday, March 11 (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hitchcock: <i>Rope</i></li> </ul>	
Thursday, March 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review, Paper workshopping</li> </ul>	<b>Paper 2 due to Professor Eldridge</b>
MARCH 15-23	SPRING RECESS	NO CLASS
Tuesday, March 25 (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mann, <i>Doctor Faustus</i> (excerpts)</li> <li>Franzen "Syphilis in Composers and Musicians"</li> </ul>	Sexuality and disease: syphilis
Thursday, March 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mann, <i>Doctor Faustus</i> (excerpts)</li> <li>Kent 'Reexamining Syphilis'</li> </ul>	<i>[Paper 2 Revisions]</i>
Tuesday, April 1 (10)	<i>Oral exams Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> and Wednesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup></i>	NO CLASS
Thursday, April 3	<i>Library information session</i>	<i>Meet in Memorial Library</i>
Tuesday, April 8 (11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chalke: "The Impact of Tuberculosis on History, Literature and Art"</li> <li>Poe: "The Masque of the Red Death"</li> </ul>	Sample bibliography activity (at home; bring to class 4/10) Aestheticization of disease: Tuberculosis
Thursday, April 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Puccini: <i>La Bohème</i></li> </ul>	Creativity, counter-culture, and disease: Tuberculosis
Tuesday, April 15 (12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cochrane: "When AIDS Began" "Preface" (pp. xi-xiii), "Introduction" (pp.xix-xxiii)</li> <li>Beyer et al.: "Twelve Myths about HIV/AIDS and people who use drugs"</li> </ul>	Diagnosis and judgment: AIDS
Thursday, April 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cochrane, Chapter 3: "The Early Demographics of AIDS" (pp.54-83)</li> </ul>	Sexuality and disease: AIDS <b>Annotated bibliography due to Professor Eldridge</b>
Tuesday, April 22 (13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jonathan Larson: <i>Rent</i></li> </ul>	Counter-culture and disease: AIDS
Thursday, April 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poe: "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar"</li> </ul>	Case and horror, case and hoax <i>[Annotated Bibliography Revisions due]</i>
Tuesday, April 29 (14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Johnson "The Ghost Map" (excerpts)</li> <li>Mann: "Death in Venice" (chapters 1 &amp; 2)</li> </ul>	Cholera: plague, panic, decay
Thursday, May 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mann: "Death in Venice" (chapters 3-4)</li> </ul>	<b>Paper 3 due to writing fellows</b> Sexuality, creativity, and disease
Tuesday, May 6 (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mann: "Death in Venice" (chapter 5)</li> </ul>	Paper presentations I
Thursday, May 8	Review, paper presentations	Paper presentations II

***Your final paper is due to Professor Eldridge on Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup> by 5:00 pm (via Dropbox)***