ENGLISH 102/ Magical Realism

DR. KIM ROSTAN, SPRING 2009

Office: Main 227—drop by!!
Office Hrs: Mon 2-3:30, Tu/Th 10-11:30, & cheerfully by apptmt.
Class Meeting: 10:30-11:20pm (Main 222)

Email: rostanka@wofford.edu
Office phone: 597-4194

Course Description

This course will explore the convergence of what we perceive to be real, normal, or everyday and what we consider unreal, hallucinatory, and downright wacky. Our forays into this genre will take us on imaginative journeys through Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria and back to the U.S. We’ll encounter alternative realities, fantastical plot-occurrences, and frequent transformations of the average and ordinary into the awesome and extraordinary. For all its magic, however, magical realists do not simply produce escapes from reality. In this course we’ll also be exploring: how these literary works challenge dominant, authoritarian political structures; how they question Western rationality and claims to truth; how they confront the challenges of living in a “global society” where there are many versions of truth, and how they imagine alternatives to oppressive realities. In addition, we will navigate the following debates and controversies surrounding Magical Realism: Did it become a commercial stunt? How is magical realism different from fantasy or surrealism? Why might some writers resist being called magical realists? How has magical realism affected the landscape of (North) American literature and film?

Course Materials

BOOKS:
Gabriel Garcia Marquez, One Hundred Years of Solitude
Louise Erdrich, Tracks

FILM:
Pan’s Labyrinth (Dir., Guillermo del Toro, 2006)
Excerpts from Cars (Pixar) and Beauty and the Beast (Disney)

SHORT STORIES AND ARTICLES:
The majority of your readings are short stories or articles available through the Sandor Teszler library E-Reserves. Simply follow the link on the library website to “course reserves” and search under “Rostan” or “English 102H or 102K”. [http://www.wofford.edu/sandorteszlerlibrary/]

*NOTE: On your reading schedule, Electronic Reserves = ER.
Expected Student Learning Outcomes

A. Competency in reading and the analysis of prose fiction.
B. The ability to write effectively for audience and purpose. This skill includes competency in the mechanics (grammar, spelling, and punctuation) of Edited American English.
C. The ability to use and document resources correctly, using the most recent rules for MLA Documentation.

These learning outcomes coincide with the learning goals for general education of the Wofford College Department of English. The writing assignments listed below will assess the students’ success in meeting these goals.

Course Requirements

This is a writing intensive course. In addition to a regular, informal journal, you will write one close reading essay (3-4 pages long), one limited research paper (6 pages), and one formal academic research essay (8-10 pages). Each paper will be peer reviewed. You will each present your research to the class in a mini-conference at the end of the semester.

The most frequent assignment on your syllabus is the Journal Writing. For these assignments, I will ask you to submit a short (a page or less) response to the ENG102H Public Folder, by midnight the night before our class. I may offer you thought-prompts for these questions, but you are welcome to respond to anything that appeals to you in that reading. I want you to think deeply about our class material, but I will not expect your journals to look like formal essays—they're your free space to make something interesting out of the assignment.

Grades/Percentages

- Essays: 60% (15%, 20%, 25%)
- Journal Writing, Attendance and Class Participation: 20%
- Presentation: 5%
- Exam: 15%

Grades are represented on a one hundred-point scale, but you can convert them to a letter grade according to the following: 93-100=A; 90-92=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 80-82=B-; 77-79=C+; 73-76=C; 70-72=C-; 67-69=D+; 60-66=D; 00-59=F

Individual responses are graded on a scale of -, ✓, +, or some combination of the above. ✓ indicates that the response meets the expectations set out in the prompt. Writing that exceeds expectations (whether on account of level of engagement or attention to detail) receives a +.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. After two absences (excused or unexcused), I am required to alert the Dean. If I notice you have more than three unexcused absences, each absence beyond three will lower your final grade by ½ a letter grade. You may also lose points from your participation grade for absences.

If you know already that you plan to be absent at some point in the semester, please try to save your absences for these occasions. If you have extenuating circumstances—prolonged illness or an athletic commitment, I will need you to keep me consistently informed of your schedule and supplied with the appropriate letters from the Dean. Sometimes we have emergencies and I will accommodate your circumstances when appropriate—please consider me a resource when you need help in that regard.
- If you enter class after I have checked the roll, you are late, and it is your responsibility to see me immediately after class to be certain that I count you as present.
- If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed from a reliable classmate.
- If you are ill, it’s in your best interest to go to the doctor; if you an absence to be excused, you must have a signed note from a doctor for that day when you return to class.

**A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM AND DOCUMENTATION:**

I take plagiarism to be a very serious violation of ethical standards and a violation of the student-teacher contract. Each time you turn in your work to me, you are implicitly signing a contract that the work is yours unless you’ve indicated otherwise with appropriate citation. Plagiarism, detected or not, undermines the work we do in the university. It says that you do not really believe that your work or the work of others is important, and ultimately degrades the value of your degree from Wofford College. If plagiarism becomes the norm, then every Wofford graduate has an asterisk after his or her name.

Wofford therefore takes plagiarism very seriously. *Any* instance of plagiarism may result in, among other things, a failing grade for the plagiarized work—even if only small part of it is stolen from another’s work. In order to understand just what plagiarism is, according to the Honor Code at Wofford College, as well as a partial list of acts that can constitute plagiarism, consult page 2 through 12 of the Honor Code: [http://www.wofford.edu/uploadedFiles/studentLife/honorCode0607.pdf](http://www.wofford.edu/uploadedFiles/studentLife/honorCode0607.pdf)

In addition, the Sandor Teszler Library has a shorter online description of plagiarism (go to [http://www.wofford.edu/library/avoid-plagiarism.aspx](http://www.wofford.edu/library/avoid-plagiarism.aspx)), including a link to an article which I urge you to read by Professor Clayton Whisnant called “Living by the Wofford Code” [http://webs.wofford.edu/whisnantcj/handouts/Plagiarism.pdf](http://webs.wofford.edu/whisnantcj/handouts/Plagiarism.pdf).

Generally speaking, plagiarism is taking the work of others and presenting it as your own without proper acknowledgment. It also can be allowing someone else to do your work for you. “Work” may be the actual words of others, or it may be using someone else’s idea even if you put it in your own words. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to the following:

- Copying material from a web page and submitting it as one’s own work
- Quoting extensively from a document without providing proper reference for the source
- The illegitimate use of materials in any form during a quiz or exam
- Copying answers from another student’s quiz or exam
- Plagiarizing (submitting as one’s own ideas the work of another) or falsifying material or information used in the completion of any assignment which is graded and or evaluated as the student’s individual effort
- Allowing any other person or organization to prepare work which one then submits as his/her own.

**Please be aware that plagiarism does not work under the “anything not specifically forbidden is permitted” rubric.** If you ever have a question about whether something is okay—whether you are wondering about a citation form or the degree to which you may consult a classmate on an assignment—ask me. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work is original and contains any and all proper citations.

See these Sandor Teszler Library pages for citation guides:
[http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c08_o.html](http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c08_o.html)