Fanfiction

Fall 2022

Instructor: Hannah Jorgensen, Hannah.jorgensen@duke.edu

Class time: Wed Fri 3:30-4:45

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1-3:30, Allen 303D

Other times available to be scheduled.

Note: This syllabus is a living document and subject to change. Depending on class interest and conversations things may be adjusted. And of course, if the last couple of pandemic years have taught us anything, we may shift formats and the syllabus may change accordingly.

Course Description:

Millions of creative works have been published online, all passionately written by fans who craft their own stories based off of the media they love and enjoy. Of course, retelling and borrowing from stories has always been fundamental to literature: Virgil's Aeneid picks up a minor character from Homer's Iliad, and Dante's Inferno casts Homer and Virgil themselves as characters. Other novels like Wide Sargasso Sea imagine backgrounds for characters from works of classic literature. The goal of our course is to fit fanfiction into this broader tradition of authors reimagining their favorite tales.

Our reading will include these retellings from history as well as popular translations of fanfiction into mainstream culture, like 50 Shades of Grey. We'll read from academics writing on popular culture and fan studies, and of course no class on fanfiction would be complete without reading actual fanfiction stories.

As fanfiction has proliferated in online spaces, there is a huge number of stories just waiting to be explored. This class will work towards a final digital project where we will use computational methods to extract data and analyze stories. No coding experience needed! Throughout the semester we will build up our tools, culminating in a final project examining a large collection of fanfiction, looking for things such as character popularity or engagement through comments.

No exams will be given, and all levels of familiarity with fanfiction and coding are welcome.

Course Goals:

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- Have a working definition of what fanfiction is
- Situate fanfiction into the larger narrative of fictional retellings and writing from sources
- Create a corpus of fanfiction stories for digital analysis purposes
- Digitally analyze a corpus in the pursuit of answering a research question

Course Materials:

Required books:

The Aeneid, Virgil trans. Robert Fitzgerald

The Inferno, Dante trans. Robert Pinsky

Wide Sargasso Sea, Jean Rhys (Preferred: W.W. Norton edition)

All other readings and films may be found on Sakai as PDFs or links, or on our class Warpwire page. Please print the materials we are reading for the week or have a reliable way of referring to them during class time.

We will be using several different tools throughout the semester to examine fanfiction stories. The week I introduce a new tool I will have extra office hours for some support. I am not a complete expert, but we'll work together to make sure everything works.

Archive of Our Own:

https://archiveofourown.org/

Please make an account here to be able to read and later scrape stories for analysis. You may use your own if you already have one.

Github:

https://github.com/

Please make a free Github account. I will be showing you the script we'll be using to scrape fanfiction works for analysis.

Python:

https://www.python.org/downloads/

You will need to download Python to be able to run the script for scraping fics.

Gephi:

Free download direct from site.

https://gephi.org/

Docuscope: PLEASE REQUEST THIS WEEK 1 OF CLASS

It takes them time to get you the download link. We won't be using it until later in the course, but please request your link right away.

https://cmu.flintbox.com/technologies/dcb2a164-b661-495d-a5b5-404871842268

Tableau:

Free for Duke students Duke's OIT page:

https://software.duke.edu/node/186

Technology policy:

Please silence cell phones and keep them put away for the duration of class. Laptops are permitted if you choose not to print the readings for the week. However, if they are a distraction, I reserve the right to ask you to put them away. They will always be allowed for the days that we are working with our digital tools. Please always back up your work. Computer problems will not serve as an excuse for an incomplete or missing assignment. If you have trouble with any of the software we will be using, let me know sooner rather than later. I will have specific office hours for help with the various tools, but I am not an expert on everything. Please try YouTube for tutorials specific to your computer's operating system, or for larger system issues I may refer you to the Data and Visualization Lab for help, or to other campus entities.

Support:

> Students with Disabilities: Students who may need special accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Student Disability Access Office (http://www.access.duke.edu/students/index.php) as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion.

> Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**:** Each of you will face some level of challenge during your time at Duke – whether an 'everyday' challenge like procrastination, or a more profound challenge that impairs your ability to function. The CAPS staff includes psychologists, clinical social workers and psychiatrists experienced in working with college age adults. Information about their services and workshops is available here: http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/caps/about-us.

> The Academic Resource Center: The ARC provides academic support and programming for all Duke undergraduates. Their services include one-on-one consultations and peer tutoring, and they work alongside the Student Disability Access Office to serve students with diagnosed learning disabilities. Their programs include opportunities for students to study together in structured groups ("learning communities"), as well as workshops offered throughout the semester. Further information and resources are available on their website: http://duke.edu/arc/index.php.

> Student Affairs Identity and Cultural Centers: Duke Student Affairs offers a variety of support and advocacy resources for students on campus including Center for Multicultural Affairs, Center for Muslim Life, Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, International House, Jewish Life at Duke, Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture, and the Women's Center. I encourage you to connect with these resources for support from peers or professional staff, or to identify

community-specific programming that you can get involved with during your time at Duke.

Academic Honesty: All students must abide by Duke University Honor Code. You may familiarize yourself with the document at http://www.integrity.duke.edu/links/index.html. You may also find the Duke library's plagiarism tutorial useful. It can be found at http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/.

Masks: I expect all members of our class to adhere to Duke's policies and be fully masked while indoors in our class when it is required. If a student does not abide by this, I will report the student to the Office of Student Conduct. If Duke's requirements change, you can choose to not wear a mask, but please be respectful to those who still choose to wear one.

Assignments/Grade makeup:

Attendance/Participation-10%: I expect you to come to class having read and engaged with the material and ready to contribute to class discussion. I will take attendance for class each day. Students are allowed two unexcused absences. Every additional absence past two will result in a half letter grade deduction from your participation grade. *Failure to read or bring materials to class will be considered an absence: you can't participate fully if you are not prepared.* Participation looks different for everyone, and some days may just be taking notes. If you are present and engaging with the material, you will receive full points here.

To receive an excused absence, you must provide official documentation; if for a sponsored University activity (such as intercollegiate athletics), documentation must be provided in advance.

See this web page for information about STINF procedures: https://trinity.duke.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies/illness

Please reach out with any extenuating circumstances as soon as possible so that we can work together to find a solution.

Weekly journals-30%: Fanfiction is incredibly varied and broad. Instead of me selecting a few stories that would fail to represent the wide range of fanfiction, you will be reading stories you select in a fandom of your choosing. There will be 10 of these throughout the semester. Please refer to the Fanfic Journals assignment sheet.

Fanfiction and reflection-20%: As we'll be examining, writing fanfiction can be a critical endeavor. For your fandom of study, you'll be writing an approximately 8–10-page double spaced fanfiction and a 500-word reflection. Assignment sheet will be given out ahead of assignment.

Digital final project-40%: Since much of the fanfiction written and read today is in a digital format, we'll be considering throughout the semester some tools we can use to understand the huge number of stories. Your digital final project will focus on your fandom of study, and you

will craft a research question, create a corpus, analyze your data, and create a final project that details your findings. Assignment sheet will be given out ahead of assignment.

Fanfiction considerations:

You will be reading fanfictions with an academic interest, which is not how many of these stories were intended to be read by the authors. Your journals may critique the stories that you read, but please always be kind and considerate in your direct interaction with fics. Do not leave criticism or feedback that was not asked for. Leave a kudos or a comment if you like the fic! Fan writers are unpaid, creating works for fellow fans. We will be talking about the role of being a scholar studying something that we love dearly, and part of that is treating fan writers with respect when we interact with them academically.

Please pay attention to story warnings! Fan works are generally tagged very well for explicit or otherwise triggering content. If you are uncomfortable reading something based on the tags, then please don't read it.

Late & Make-up Work: Should an issue arise, you should contact me ASAP. Without a granted extension, late work will not be accepted. Assignments are due by the deadline (both day and time) listed on the assignment sheet or Sakai, whether or not you attend class that day. An absence does not give you an automatic extension or excuse you from work due that day. You can petition for an extension up to 48 hours before a deadline; this does not mean that your request for an extension will be granted, however.

Please reach out to me by email for any questions you have at any time in the semester. I will not discuss grades through email, but you may schedule a meeting or drop by during office hours for any questions you may have. Please allow 48 hours for a reply to any emails you send.

Though I make a sincere effort to provide extensive comments on your work, there may be some element(s) of my grading that you struggle to understand. In the event that this happens and you would like to discuss the issues, I ask that you wait 24 hours (from the time you receive your graded assignment) to discuss the assignment with me. I will not change your grade—unless I've made some sort of obvious mathematical error. I will, however, always meet with you before or after an assignment has been graded to aid your success. Before contacting me, please see the syllabus and assignment sheet; often, reasons for my grading can be found there. I will explain, but not defend, the reasons for my grading.

Your final grade will be determined according to Duke's grading scale:

A (93–100), A- (90–92)

B+ (87–89), B (83–86), B- (80–82)

C+ (77–79), C (73–76), C- (70–72)

D+ (67–69), D (63–66), D- (60–62)

F (0-59)

Course Schedule:

Week/Day	Assigned Readings	Discussion Focus/Assignments due
Week 1		
Wed 8/31	Please read syllabus in advance and come ready with any questions you may have.	Syllabus Overview Prep for The Iliad
Fri 9/2	*The Iliad*, Books 5 and 20	Homer's Aeneas Prep for The Aeneid
Week 2		Journal 1 due 9/7
Wed 9/7	*The Aeneid,* Books 1 through 4	Virgil's Aeneas
Fri 9/9	*The Aeneid,* Book 5 through 8	Mythical retellings
Week 3		Journal 2 9/14
Wed 9/14	*The Aeneid,* Book 9 to end	Finish Aeneid
Fri 9/16	Wilson, "The role of affect in fan fiction" Farley, "Versions of Homer"	Is the Aeneid fanfiction? Prep for Dante
Week 4		Journal 3 due 9/21
Wed 9/21	*The Inferno*, Book 1 to 16	Dante's Virgil and Aeneas
Fri 9/23	*The Inferno* Book 17 to end	Finish Dante
Week 5		Journal 4 due 9/28
Wed 9/28	Watch: *Jane Eyre* 2011 Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* Pg 1 through 86	Literary transformations
Fri 9/30	Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* Pg 86 to end Rosen, "Minor characters have their day" Introduction	Minor character elaboration
Week 6		Journal 5 due 10/5 Create Github account and download Python

			as needed.
Wed 10/5	Coppa, "A Brief History of Media Fandom" Jameson, *Fic* "A Prehistory of Fandom"	Crash course in fandom history Creating a corpus
Fri 10/7	Fall Break	
Week 7		Fanfiction and reflection due
Wed 10/12	Jenkins, *Textual Poachers* Introduction and Chap 1	Beginnings of fan studies, poaching
Fri 10/14	Voyant	Exploring corpuses
Week 8		Journal 6 due 10/19 Download Gephi for Friday.
Wed 10/19	Lamb and Veith, "Romantic Myth, Transcendence, and Star Trek Zines" Jamison, *Fic* "Science Fiction, *Star Trek* and the Birth of Media Fandom"	Zine fanfiction culture
Fri 10/21	Gephi	
Week 9		Journal 7 due 10/26 Download Docuscope
Wed 10/26	Gephi cont. Hellekson and Busse, *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet* Introduction Vadde, "Amateur Creativity: Contemporary Literature and the Digital Publishing Scene"	Digital fanfiction
Fri 10/28	Docuscope	More corpus investigation
Week 10		Journal 8 due 11/2 Download Tableau
Wed 11/2	Coppa, in *Fic*, "An Archive of Our Own" Organization for Transformative Works website: Watch https://www.youtube.com/embed/PNd2YzVeGZE Read https://www.transformativeworks.org/what_we_believe/ de Kosnik, *Rogue Archives* Introduction and Conclusion	Archive of Our Own
Fri 11/4	Tableau	Visualizing data
Week 11		Journal 9 due 11/9
Wed	Watch *Twilight* (2008) and *50 Shades of Grey*	Filing off serial

11/9	Jones "Fifty shades of exploitation: Fan labor and 'Fifty Shades of Grey'" Skim: https://dearauthor.com/features/industry-news/master-of-the-universe-versus-fifty-shades-by-e-l-james-comparison/	numbers
Fri 11/11	*Class cancelled*	
Week 12		Journal 10 due 11/16
Wed 11/16	Stanfill, *Exploiting Fandom* Intro Stanfill, "Fandom and/as Labor" Time Permitting: Questions about tools and final research design	Modern fandom
Fri 11/18	Richard So: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/12/11/opinion/culture/diversity-publishing-industry.html Walsh and Antoniak, "The Goodreads 'Classics'"	
Week 13		No journal
Wed 11/23	Thanksgiving	
Fri 11/25	Thanksgiving	
Week 14		No journal, work on final projects Send me case studies
Wed 11/30	Hills, "Implicit Fandom in the Fields of Theatre, Art, and Literature: Studying 'Fans' Beyond Fan Discourses"	Back to the beginning: are they fanfiction?
Fri 12/2	Time for FCQ Activity: Is it fanfiction?	
Week 15		
Wed 12/7	Final project presentations	
Fri 12/9	Final project presentations	