The Many Faces of Harry Potter

The wildly successful *Harry Potter* series has been noted for its capacity to cross traditional boundaries. Conventional wisdom claims that young girls won’t read a book with a male protagonist and young boys won’t read a book by a female author, yet *Harry Potter* has found an enthusiastic readership among children of both sexes. Age boundaries have proven to be equally elastic; the popularity of the series among adults has even prompted the creation of an adult-friendly edition of the series with dark cover art suitable for reading on public transportation. The flexibility of the series may relate to its roots in a wide variety of genres including the gothic novel, detective fiction, fantasy, adventure, and even the dystopian novel. This course will examine the *Harry Potter* series in relation to all these genres. We will read all seven books alongside other novels and short stories that illustrate the generic conventions Rowling is using.

**Required Texts**

J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, Bloomsbury  
*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Bloomsbury  
*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Bloomsbury  
*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Bloomsbury  
*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Bloomsbury  
*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Bloomsbury  
*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Bloomsbury  
*The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, Bloomsbury  

Markus Zusak, *The Book Thief*, Knopf  
George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Penguin  
Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay*, Scholastic
The Many Faces of Harry Potter - English 2092F (001)

Schedule of Classes
Sept. 15: Introduction

The Actively Detecting Reader
Arthur Conan Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia” (on OWL)
“The Wizard and the Hopping Pot” (from The Tales of Beedle the Bard)
Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone

Uncovering the Past: The Gothic
Sept. 29: Elizabeth Gaskell, “The Old Nurse’s Story” (on OWL)
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

Oct. 6: Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

Nazis and Death Eaters
Oct. 13: Markus Zusak, The Book Thief
Oct. 20: Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

Dystopia
Oct. 27: George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty Four
Nov. 3: Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix
Nov. 10: Test
Suzanne Collins, Mockingjay

Film
Nov. 17: Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince
Nov. 24: film screening (Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince)

Fairy Tale and Allegory
Dec. 1: Geoffrey Chaucer, “The Pardoner’s Tale” (on OWL)
“The Tale of the Three Brothers” (from The Tales of Beedle the Bard)
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows

Dec. 8: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows (cont’d.) / Review

Marking
Introductory Paragraph (250 words, due Oct. 13) 5%
Test (Nov. 10) 10%
Essay (2500 words, due Nov. 24) 30%
Film Discussion (300 words, due Dec. 1) 10%
Attendance and Participation 10%
Final Exam 35%

NOTE: As in all courses in the Department of English, students must pass BOTH the term work and the final examination in order to pass the course.

General Information
1. Regular attendance at lectures is essential. Absenteeism can result in debarment from writing the final examination, which results in failure of the course.
2. All essays should be double-spaced and printed in a standard font such as 12-pt Times Roman. Please follow MLA format (see attached guidelines). Essays should be submitted both on paper and electronically; the paper copy can be handed in during class or dropped off in the Department of English Essay Drop-Off Boxes (across from
AHB 2G02); the electronic copy is due at 7:00 pm on the due dates listed above. Do not leave essays under office doors. Two percent per day (including weekends) will be deducted from late essays. Extensions will be approved only with a recommendation for accommodation from an academic counsellor. No paper will be accepted after the last day of classes (Dec. 8).

3. Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). Any student who commits this or any other act of academic dishonesty will receive a grade of zero and a note will be placed on his or her academic record.

4. Plagiarism Checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

5. Film Discussions: This assignment asks you to compare the film *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* to the book, examining the significance of a single change. The purpose is not to review the movie or assess its entertainment value, but rather to consider the meaning of one element of the story (a character, perhaps, or a single scene) and how that meaning changes in the translation from text to film.

6. The Attendance and Participation Grade will reflect not only your presence in class but also your engagement in the course, which may take the form of vocal participation in class discussions and/or participation in the Forums board on the OWL. On the Forums board, students can post questions about the course material and/or answer questions posted by other students. Those who participate every week, either vocally or online, will achieve the highest results in this portion of the course.

7. All grades, once assigned and/or posted, are final. While formal appeal processes do exist in the Department of English and Writing Studies, grades will not be changed after the fact in response to emailed requests and/or GPA requirements, nor will the weighting of assignments be altered for individual students.

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course, the successful student will be able to

- recognize how the *Harry Potter* series employs conventions from a variety of genres
- identify and analyze the basic elements of literature such as plot, character, point of view, theme, setting, imagery, and diction
- understand the political, religious, moral, and philosophical underpinnings of the texts on the course
- write an essay about a work of literature containing an effective thesis supported by adequate evidence from the original text
- offer independent insights, beyond those outlined in class
- organize and present ideas clearly and effectively
- document essays using MLA format
Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism
The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf.”

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

“All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).”

Prerequisites
The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

“Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded and that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) that they have taken. If the student does not have the requisites for a course, the University reserves the right to remove the student from the course and to delete it from the student’s record. This decision may not be appealed. A student will receive no adjustment to his or her fees in the event that he or she is dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

Medical Accommodation Policy
For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): https://studentservices.uwo.ca under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical or other grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication, and the Program requires students in these circumstances to follow the
same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth less than 10% of their final grade must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on non-medical grounds, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an ‘Attendance’ policy in the course). All medical documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student’s home Faculty.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
### Grading Rubric:

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<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis</strong></td>
<td>Forceful, fresh and challenging</td>
<td>Clear development of a specific thesis</td>
<td>Reasonably clear thesis</td>
<td>Unclear, overgeneral</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Argument (ideas)</strong></td>
<td>Original, analytical, persuasive, depth of insight</td>
<td>Analytical, persuasive, with some originality and depth</td>
<td>More descriptive than analytical, not fully persuasive</td>
<td>Plot summary or lengthy paraphrase, general observations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>Paragraphs focus on clearly articulated, meaningful topics</td>
<td>Paragraphs support thesis adequately</td>
<td>Most paragraphs support thesis; some problems with coherent paragraphing</td>
<td>Significant problems with paragraphing</td>
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<td><strong>Use of Sources</strong></td>
<td>Detailed engagement with text, seamless integration, proper documentation</td>
<td>Adequately detailed reference to text, proper documentation</td>
<td>Effort to support points with reference to text and proper documentation</td>
<td>Overgeneralization with inadequate support, little effort at documentation</td>
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<td><strong>Style</strong></td>
<td>Graceful, rhetorically impressive, few if any errors</td>
<td>Clear writing style, errors relatively few and minor</td>
<td>Some problems with clarity, grammar, punctuation, or wordiness</td>
<td>Errors serious enough to interfere with understanding</td>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>90+</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>80-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>70-79</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>60-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>50-59</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Inadequate across several areas</td>
<td>!</td>
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</tbody>
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Wit and Wizardry
The Armchair Detective in Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Purloined Letter” and J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*

If you have a snappy, attention-grabbing title, follow it with an informative subtitle that indicates your topic as well as the works you will be discussing. Titles of books should be italicized. Titles of articles and short stories should be put in “Quotation Marks.” Introduce quotations in your own words, identifying the speaker and context:
EXAMPLE: As Hermione points out, “A lot of the greatest wizards haven’t got an ounce of logic” (207). Use ellipses to indicate where you have omitted words from the quotation, and put any changes in brackets: EXAMPLE: Draco opposes the admission of Muggle-borns to Hogwarts: “I really don’t think they should let [Muggle-borns] in, do you? … I think they should keep it in the old wizarding families” (61).

If the quotation is longer than four lines, do not use quotations marks; instead, indent the passage ten spaces from the left and continue to double space.
EXAMPLE: Harry sees his family for the first time in the Mirror of Erised:

> They just looked at him, smiling. And slowly, Harry looked into the faces of the other people in the mirror and saw other pairs of green eyes like his, other noses like his, even a little old man who looked as though he had Harry’s knobbly knees – Harry was looking at his family, for the first time in his life. (153)

At the end of the essay, list all the works you have discussed or used in the preparation of your paper. Staple the top left hand corner.

**Works Cited**
Essay Topics – English 2092F

Introductory Paragraph (250 words) – Due Oct. 13, 2015
Complete Essay (2500 words) – Due Nov. 24, 2015

For this essay, you are required to compare ONE Harry Potter book to ONE of the other novels or short stories on the course. You are expected to develop a specific thesis, along with several supporting arguments. Because this is a comparative essay, you should use these supporting arguments as opportunities to compare the texts you’ve chosen in relation to a series of ideas related to your thesis. Do not treat this as two separate mini-essays with each book discussed in turn; instead develop a thesis based on the relationship between the two texts and include both texts in each of your supporting arguments. Your purpose is not to describe how similar or different the texts are in terms of plot or character; instead it is to identify some area of agreement or disagreement as you explore what the texts have to say about an issue.

The introductory paragraph, due on October 13, should be submitted in MLA format (see guide in syllabus), including a proper title, thesis statement, and indication of your supporting arguments (a Works Cited list is optional). You will have the opportunity to revise these elements as needed before submitting the final essay (including changing your topic and/or swapping out texts if necessary).

You should focus your analysis on ONE of the following topics:

(a) MEMORY: Acts of remembrance are central to several texts on this course. Examine the significance attached to memories by individuals and/or whole societies. You may wish to consider how and why memories are repressed as well as their significance when they are acknowledged.

(b) CLOTHING: Uniforms, costumes, ball gowns and other forms of attire play a significant role in several texts on this course. Examine the meaning attached to clothing, considering its significance to issues of personal identity, gender, social class, group affiliations, and/or the conflict between good and evil.

(c) ROMANCE: Several novels on this course depict romantic relationships against a backdrop of war. Those relationships may be postponed, performed, denied, or concealed due to the political context in which they occur. Examine the significance these novels assign to romantic love as more than merely a comic sub-plot. You may wish to consider love triangles, dating, jealousy, sexual maturation, and/or the boundaries between public and private life.