



ENG 373
Literature and Social Justice in Chicago
Block 1-2019

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Course Description:

The city of Chicago has a harried history of inequality and a rich history of social and literary activism. The city has always been home to writers involved in social justice movements, and it produced the Chicago School of sociological thinking, some of the earliest social science research on the structures of urban life. Using Chicago as a backdrop, this course will question the relationship between literature and activism in the city: what it has been, what it is, and what it might be.

Many of our readings will focus on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America, the “Age of Reform.” Authors of this time period saw writing as a way to change the world, and texts themselves were believed to be agents of reform. The class will examine issues of race and socio-economic class, immigration, education, home, and labor in Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* – a harrowing novel about living and working conditions for immigrants in turn-of-the-century Chicago – and Jane Addams’s *Twenty Years at Hull House* – a memoir about the Chicago Settlement House movement, which developed in response to many of the issues Sinclair depicted.

These texts also offer us two ways to consider the relationship between literature and action: a novel that aimed to cause a revolution itself and a written retrospect by a social justice practitioner. Our readings, visits, events, and speakers in Chicago will offer us additional ways to think about the complex web among writers, writing, social issues, and social change:

- Writing/art as activism in and of itself
- Writing as part of a larger reform movement
- Building literary community and literary citizenship (showcasing writers and writing, providing training and outlets for expression, expanding literacies)
- Representation in writing about and from underrepresented communities
- Working on contemporary manifestations of the issues Sinclair and Addams addressed
- Communicating history to the public to foster social justice
- ...and more!

Course Objectives: students will:

- apply both literary criticism and the sociological imagination in analyses of texts and course experiences;
- synthesize multiple and sometimes competing understandings of the relationship between writing and activism, art and social change in both readings and experiential learning activities;
- investigate relationships between individual cases represented in literature and larger questions of social change and social justice;
- understand the importance of identity in the categories of writers/those written about, advocates/those advocated for, and teachers/students in course material and in their own work;
- develop critical thinking, oral communication, and writing skills which strengthen their ability to understand, integrate, analyze, and communicate complex ideas across diverse audiences;
- build an understanding of the many artistic and professional opportunities related to social justice.

This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on Inquiry, Communication, Intercultural Literacy, Citizenship, and Vocation.

Required Texts:

Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (any edition)

Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (Uncensored original edition, See Sharp Press)

Additional readings on Moodle marked with “(M).” You may want to print some materials before we leave campus.

Course Schedule:

- Because this schedule will change and be added to, I will share the schedule as a google doc; please refer to that document for final updates.
- Our class meets in the Van Etten-Lacey House on campus; locations while off campus are listed below.
- Readings should be completed *before* the time listed whether in preparation for class, a field trip, or a class visitor. Some additional contextualizing readings may be added throughout the block.

WEEK ONE: On campus

M 8/26

9:00-9:10 Opening convocation at King Chapel

Class meets 9:30-11:30

Introductions: literature and social justice, experiential learning and traveling off-campus, collaborative construction of final project

T 8/27 9-11

Mills, "The Promise of Sociology" (M)

Bracher, Preface to *Literature and Social Justice* (M)

W 8/28 9-11:30

Downs, excerpt from *Books that Changed the World* (M)

Claybaugh, excerpts from *Novel of Purpose* (M)

Stowe, excerpts from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (M)

Office hours 11:30-1

TH 8/29 9-11

Bracher, "How to Teach for Social Justice: Lessons from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Cognitive Science" (M)

Office hours 1-3

F 8/30 9-11:30

King, "What is Literary Activism?" (M)

Trip preparation (expectations, accommodations and transportation, etc.)

Office hours 11:30-1

Due to Moodle by 1:00 (optional): sample blog post based on week one readings if you would like feedback prior to starting your blog

Over the weekend: In addition to preparing for the trip, you should begin reading *The Jungle*.

WEEKS TWO AND THREE: in Chicago!

M 9/2 No class, but before we leave your blog should be set up, and you should have emailed me the link. You should also continue reading *The Jungle*.

3:15 Vans depart Commons Circle (Drivers: Anna Butz and Sam Hebel)

4:45 Megabus departs Coralville, arrives Chicago 9:00 p.m.

Our hotel: <https://freehandhotels.com/chicago/>

Notes on the schedule in Chicago:

- Destination times are listed as when our tours and meetings *begin*. I will be letting you know what time we need to leave the hotel when travel time is required. A lot of busy people are making time for us during their work days or their free time; we will respect their time by staying on schedule.
- All full-class activities and sessions are required. If you are too sick to attend, I need to hear from you ahead of time so we can discuss potential medical care.
- If a situation arises in which you aren't traveling with the group but instead meeting us somewhere, I need to know ahead of time.
- For various reasons we'll discuss, this schedule may change. Please make note of any changes and be responsible about meeting and departure times.
- Class meals (included in the course budget) will be listed on this schedule; other meals will be on your own, both in terms of planning and payment, unless we discuss other arrangements.
- We'll discuss my "office hours" day to day, though of course contact me outside of these hours with any emergencies(!).

T 9/3

9:30-11:00 Meet in Den area of the Freehand lobby: begin discussing *The Jungle* (chs. 1-22)

Neighborhood mini-orientation and time for lunch

1:00 [American Writers Museum](#) (180 N. Michigan Ave., 2nd floor)

Millennium Park

(See optional events list; events begin tonight.)

Don't forget: finish *The Jungle* by tomorrow.

W 9/4

10:30-11:30 Tour of [Stony Island Arts Bank](#) (6760 Stony Island Avenue)

4:00-5:30 [Heather Byrd](#), poet and [Young Chicago Authors](#) Senior Education Program Manager

Reading, workshop, and Q&A (location TBA)

Read: Byrd (M)

5:30-6:30 Discussion of *The Jungle* (chs. 23-Conclusion)

Th 9/5

Class time and location TBA: discuss DeGrave introduction to *The Jungle* and Bracher on Sinclair (M)

2:00 Todd Van Luling, Managing Editor of [Chicago Review of Books](#) and Fiction Editor of [Arcturus Magazine](#) (in the Den)

Read: selections from *Chicago Review of Books* (M)

5:30 Haymarket Riot Walking Tour with Paul Durica, [Illinois Humanities Council](#) Director of Programs (Haymarket Monument, corner of Randolph and Desplaines)

7:30 Dinner with Paul Durica at [Haymarket Pub and Brewery](#)

F 9/6

10:30 [Chicago History Museum](#) with Peter Alter, Head Curator (1601 N. Clark)

Time for lunch in Wicker Park (on your own)

2:00-3:00 [826CHI](#) with David Pintor, Volunteer Manager (1276 N. Milwaukee)

4:00 [Semicolon Bookstore and Gallery](#) with Danielle Mullen, Owner (515 N. Halsted)

Sat 9/7

Free day/work day

Due: at least 3 blog posts by noon.

Sun 9/8

12:00 Lunch with writer Randy Santiago ('18) at [La Bruquena](#)

Walking Tour of [Paseo Boricua](#) and Humboldt Park Boathouse

Read: Santiago (M)

M 9/9

10:00-12:00 Christine Maul Rice, Editor, [Hypertext Magazine Studios](#) and Laura Popovics, Director of Education, [St. Leonard's Ministries](#) (in the Den)

Browse: www.hypertextmag.com and www.hypertextmagazinestudio.org

2:00-4:00 *Twenty Years at Hull House* discussion and chapter presentations (in the Den)

Read: Addams, *Twenty Years* (specific chapters TBA)

T 9/10

10:00 Dan Duster, writer and great-grandson of Ida B. Wells (Location TBA)

Read: Wells et al, *Why the Colored American is not in the World's Columbian Exposition: The Afro-American's Contribution to Columbian Literature* (Preface; Ch. I by F. Douglass; Ch. IV by Wells) (M)

1:00-2:30 [Hull House Museum](#) (800 S. Halsted)

W 9/11

10:00-12:00 Special Collections, [Newberry Library](#) (60 W. Walton)

6:00-8:00 (doors open at 5:00) [Justice Sonia Sotomayor presents Just Ask](#) (Senn High School Auditorium, 5900 N. Glenwood)

Th 9/12

10:30-12:30 [Northern Illinois Justice For Our Neighbors](#) with Rev. Paula Cripps-Vallejo and guests Presentation, discussion, and lunch (United Methodist Church, 2122 N. Mozart)

4:00 [Haymarket Books](#) with Dana Blanchard, Publicity and Community Programming Manager (4015 N. Rockwell)

F 9/13

10:00-12:00 Theodore Richards, writer and founder of [Chicago Wisdom Project](#) (Chicago Bee CPL Branch, 3647 S. State)

Read: Richards, two excerpts (M)

Keep the afternoon and evening free for now – class meal and additional event TBA

Sat 9/14

Free day/work day to complete optional events, blog posts, and blog reflections (as well as any Chicago bucket-list items you may have).

Due: all blog posts complete by noon.

Sun 9/15

11:00 Megabus departs Chicago; arrives Coralville 3:15

- *If you want feedback on your blog analysis before your final project is due, your blog analysis is **due** to Moodle before we leave Chicago (so I can use the travel time to begin responding).*
- *If you would like to use Sunday to continue working, your blog analysis is **due** to Moodle by 9 a.m. Monday morning; I may not be able to give you feedback before the end of the block (though I will try).*

WEEK FOUR: on campus

M 9/16 and T 9/17 Class and office hours schedule TBA

W 9/18 Presentation of final projects in morning class and **final work due to Moodle by 1:00**

Optional Events in Chicago: this list will be updated on the google doc as well.

- Each of you needs to attend at least one (but attending more is encouraged).
- Your optional event should be discussed in a blog post.
- All of these events are free unless otherwise noted.
- For evening events, please travel with at least one other person. If you need any advice on best routes to your destination, check in with me or the Freehand front desk staff. (I'll be attending some of these as well, so we may be able to travel together.)
- I may be adding to this list when new opportunities arise. If you discover other relevant events during our trip, please check with me about whether it should be added.

Readings/book talks/open mics:

Sept. 3rd <https://www.volumesbooks.com/event/anthony-mccann-shadowlands>

Sept. 10th: <https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/events/5d1396e56070164500f48f41>

Sept. 10th: <https://youngchicagoauthors.org/programs/open-mics/wordplay>

Sept. 12th: <https://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/book-launch-party-these-are-loved-letters-ames-hawkins>

Sept. 13th: <https://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/author-reading-shut-it-down-lisa-fithian>

Poetry Foundation events calendar: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/events>

Live Lit/Storytelling performances:

Calendar of events in various locations (read the details for each event: some of these take place in 21 and over venues, and some have requested donation amounts):

<http://www.storyclubchicago.com/live-lit.html>

Festivals/Fairs:

Sept. 7th and 8th: <https://www.renegadecraft.com/fair/chicago-fall>

Sept. 14th: <http://ravenswoodartwalk.org/> (including: <http://ravenswoodartwalk.org/big-teeth-60-second-film-festival/>)

Exhibits:

https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/landmarks.html

<https://envisioningjustice.org/programming/envisioning-justice-exhibition/>

Miscellaneous:

Sept. 4th: <https://chipublib.bibliocommons.com/events/5d237cbb2fc7d2325144b219>

Sept. 12th: <https://www.citylitbooks.com/event/city-late-nite-games-reading-and-music>

Sept. 4th: **Sunset Yoga in the Park (Freehand hotel event):**

<https://freehandhotels.com/chicago/events-activities/?tribe-bar-date=2019-09>

Chicago Cultural Center events calendar:

https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/ccc_calendar.html

Assignment and Assessment Overview: additional information about assignments is posted on Moodle.

Your work in the course and how I will assess that work will be driven by the course objectives.

Because this course is an experiential learning experience, each of us will affect the experience of the group as a whole. Participation, engagement, and leadership from each member of the course is necessary and important, as is reflected in the grade weighting (25% for participation/engagement and 10% for your leadership activity). Careful analysis and synthesis of course content – making sure the course is more than the surface sum of its parts – is essential for you to get the most out of the block. Your blog (20%), blog analysis (20%), and final project (25%) will offer opportunities for reflection and synthesis.

All of your assignments encourage creativity and self-directed learning by giving you options for where and how you want to focus on our myriad course components. I am happy to provide more direction when it would be helpful.

Course Expectations: This seminar class is designed to promote interaction and exchange. I expect everyone to contribute, which requires that you read carefully and think about the assigned material before every class. No one – neither professor nor student – can participate effectively without having completed and contemplated the course readings. Be an informed participant; your

comments should be related to the course material and should add to the topic being discussed. I also expect people to listen to one another, which requires patience, empathy, and mutual respect. You should be willing to share your ideas and be open to opposing perspectives. It is possible to disagree and still interact respectfully. Listening carefully, asking questions, and responding to what people have said demonstrate respectful engagement. On the other hand, inattention, sleeping, talking to neighbors, being distracted by computers and cell phones, and rude or disconnected responses all show a lack of respect for the members of this class, our guests and hosts, and for your own intellect. Remember, each of you are responsible, not only for your own learning in this course, but also for the collective learning that will take place. I expect everyone to contribute to our site visits and class discussion. This requires you to read carefully and think critically and analytically about the information presented both in our readings and at our sites. Do your best to keep up with the reading and writing, while also exploring the city and really immersing yourself in experiences.

Off-Campus Component: Travel-seminar courses require a high level of self-directed learning. Class members are expected to complete all course readings, attend all class meetings and course activities, to arrive at meetings and destinations on time, honor the needs of the larger group, treat all class members with respect and consideration, and show respect for the individuals, organizations, and communities with whom we interact. Completing the readings for the day assigned provides you with background information for the visits. Students are expected to fully and actively participate in all scheduled activities (e.g., through being alert, attentive, and prepared, asking questions and making observations, facilitating interactions, illustrating leadership and teamwork skills). I need to know ahead of time if you are too sick to participate in a scheduled activity. Finally, you're also expected to abide by the educational policies and codes of conduct of Cornell College. Peer and self-assessments of participation may be requested. Failure to conduct yourself in a considerate, respectful manner at any point while we are off-campus or creating impediments for the course proceedings may result in earning a failing grade for the class and/or removal from the course.

Life in the City: Living in Chicago is quite different from life on campus. Please be responsible: use common sense when out and keep your room secure. Some general guidelines for life in Chicago: always let someone know where you are going; I encourage you to travel collectively when exploring beyond the immediate neighborhood at night.

Course Accommodations: College Policy regarding students with disabilities: Students who need accommodations for learning disabilities must provide documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose learning disabilities. For more information see: cornellcollege.edu/disabilities/documentation/index.shtml124

Students requesting services may schedule a meeting with the disabilities services coordinator as early as possible to discuss their needs and develop an individualized accommodation plan. Ideally, this meeting would take place well before the start of classes. At the beginning of each course, the student must notify the instructor within the first three days of the term of any accommodations needed for the duration of the course.

Because we will be off campus, away from college services, accommodations may take additional planning. If you would like to request course accommodations for any reason, please see me after the first class.

The Off-campus Study Office has shared with me pertinent information from your health and accommodations forms, and I have planned the course accordingly. If any other needs arise, please be in touch with me; I will do what I can to ensure our course works well for all of you.

Academic Integrity: Cornell College expects all members of the community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. Any student in this course who is involved in academic dishonesty (portraying another person's work or ideas as his or her own, submitting the same or similar papers in more than one course without permission from the course instructors, facilitating plagiarism, etc.) will not earn credit for the relevant assignments, may be formally charged with academic dishonesty, and may receive a failing grade for the course. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in *The Compass*, our student handbook, under the heading "Academic Policies – Honesty in Academic Work."