



- Account
- Dashboard
- Courses
- Calendar
- Inbox
- History
- Zoom
- monS
- Help

Course Syllabus

Jump to Today Edit

August 2021						
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

Assignments are weighted by group:

Group	Weight
Yellowdig	30%
Quizzes	0%
Essay 1	15%
Essay 2	20%
Weekly Analyses	35%
Total	100%



Two women speaking with face masks on during the 1918 flu pandemic

READING NOVELS: PLAGUES & PANDEMICS

Fall 2021; 21:350:242, sections 60 & 61

Professor
 Dr. Kristian Kahn
 khahn@newark.rutgers.edu

Office Hours: By appointment, via Zoom

Course Description

READING NOVELS: PLAGUES & PANDEMICS FALL 2021

In this course, we will look at some fictional representations of plagues and pandemics along with critical pieces on society, culture, and illness. In doing so, we will consider how authors make use of pandemics in fiction to examine wider questions about humanity's present and future—especially with regard to our individual and collective responses to trauma; the role of art, science, philosophy, and religion in our daily lives; and what unites and/or divides us when facing the unknown.

Prerequisites: All students must have taken and passed English Composition 102, offered by the Writing Program (21:355). This is a literature course, not a composition course.

Course Goals + Learning Objectives

- The course is designed to achieve the following outcomes:
- Students will analyze and evaluate literary works using appropriate critical vocabulary via individual formal assignments, group work, and in-class and/or online discussion;
 - Students will hone their skills in close reading, textual analysis, different modes of interpretation, and independent research;
 - Students will practice critical thinking and reading skills, as well as critical communication skills in class with their peers during discussions on literary texts; students will also apply fundamentals of critical thinking to reading, writing, and communicating;
 - Students will develop and demonstrate an awareness of the significance of literature and of literary form, and of the roles they play in larger society and culture;
 - Students will demonstrate their respect for differences (class, race, gender, sexualities, etc.) in their knowledge of the impacts that literature has had—and continues to have—on cultural/historical, social/psychological, and political change.

N.B.: This is an asynchronous online course and will stress Canvas as an online learning environment and Yellowdig as a discussion platform. Please see this page for the difference between synchronous and asynchronous online learning environments. An asynchronous course means that the professor's presence is in the background, and students are expected to be self-led, self-disciplined, self-motivated, and keep up with readings and work with minimal prompting from the professor.

Course Materials

Available at the [Rutgers-Newark bookstore](#):

REQUIRED (listed in the order in which we'll be reading them; you're required to have these for the first week of classes):

- Susan Sontag's *Illness and Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors* (Picador; ISBN 978-0312420130)
- Rebecca Makkai's *The Great Believers* (Knopf; ISBN 978-0735223530)
- Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* (Knopf; ISBN 978-0804172448)
- Albert Camus's *The Plague* (Knopf; ISBN 978-0679720218)
- Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (Anchor; ISBN 978-0385721677)
- Subscript to [Yellowdig](#)
- Other readings/films provided on or linked to via Canvas

RECOMMENDED:

- The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 8th edition (MLA, 2016)

Course Expectations + Schedule

- This course expects you to read about 100-120 pages per week; this is very doable if you read 14-17 pages per day, and don't leave the reading until the last minute. Budget your time accordingly.
- University courses are modeled on the [Carnegie credit unit](#); to see approximately how much time you will need to allocate weekly on readings, discussion, and work for a 3-credit course such as this one, that link is a useful one—as well as for your other courses. Since we're entirely online, the majority of those hours—about 9 hours per week is the norm (again, see the link)—will be time you'll spend on your own doing each week's reading, writing and responding to discussion boards, taking quizzes, conducting independent research, and working toward the two research essays. For F2F/remote live courses, the hours in the classroom get factored into the total weekly time amount.
- You are expected to keep up with the reading schedule. Failure to do so will mean failing the course.
- This is an asynchronous online course. This type of learning environment is not for everyone, and if students log on only sporadically to Canvas, participate in discussions only once in a while, and/or do not keep up with the course schedule, assignments, quizzes, &c., then they will not fare well. It works best for self-motivated, self-disciplined students who can be responsible for their own learning and participation with minimal prompting from the professor.
- Zoom check-in:** we'll aim for a weekly Zoom check-in; through Friday, 9/10 by 5pm, [please cast a vote on which day/time works best for you](#). If you can't make the Zoom meetings, they'll be recorded and available to you on Canvas afterward; I would strongly suggest everyone attend or watch, as this will be the primary way that I lecture on the material, answer questions, address issues or confusions I see pop up on the Yellowdig discussion board, &c. The Zoom check-ins will prove very useful for the weekly analytical papers and for the more formal essays as well.
- A working knowledge of computers, the Internet, and Canvas as learning environments and discussion platforms is essential to perform well in this course. You will need a laptop to access all the technology requirements in this course.
- You are expected to check your Rutgers email *daily* as this is the only way I have to get in touch with everyone quickly about any changes to the reading schedule, assignment due dates, reminders, &c.
- Make contingency plans for technological issues such as computer crashes, loss of Internet connection, and so on. These types of issues do not excuse you from your course responsibilities. The online component of the course can be accessed from any computer that has a connection to the Internet. Be sure to have a well thought-out contingency plan for accessing the course and continuing your work in the course should any of the above issues occur to you over summer session.
- This course will occupy several hours of your week, because of the weekly readings and the weekly discussions, not to mention the research essays required for the course.
- Late assignments are not accepted.
- You must complete all assignments in order to pass the course.
- Any late registrants are required to email me to catch up, and be on track at the start of the next full week of class.

Please See:

- [Detailed Weekly Reading Schedule](#)

Communication

I aim to reply to all emails from Monday through Friday within 24 hours, barring the weekend, any holidays, and any unforeseen circumstances. (I usually reply much quicker, but life in the current world is unpredictable, as I'm sure you can all sympathize with!)

I tend to sign off email around 5pm on weekdays, and reply early the next morning; if I haven't replied in more than 24 hours over a weekday, check that you spelled my last name correctly (it's Kahn, not Khan). If not, forward it to me again, please. Over weekends, I don't usually check email or Canvas, but this doesn't prevent you from posting discussions and replying to peers: I can catch up.

Campus email is preferred over Canvas messaging; sometimes Canvas messages don't come through or else there can be lags. Email me from your Rutgers email address, not a personal one.

Email is usually sufficient for most matters, but, if you want to meet via Zoom, we can do that, too. Email me with a few days and times that work for you.

Please See:

- [How to Email a Professor](#)

Assessment + Grading

In short, **weeks begin on Mondays at 12am and end on Sundays at 11:59pm. Please note the exceptions: Week 1** (we begin on a Wednesday); **Week 2** (we begin on Tuesday, due to Labor Day on the Monday); and **Week 13** (we are on Thanksgiving break from Wednesday, 11/24 until Monday, 11/29).

YELLOWDIG (30%)

- We're piloting [Yellowdig](#) over this course for the university. Yellowdig is a social community platform that aims to make discussion boards less tedious and more like an actual conversation. Please see [the Yellowdig information page](#) for more info; **there are no prompts**. Essentially, you're posting there and engaging with both me and your peers there; posts that exceed the word count, that make use of quotations from the readings, and that prove to me that you not only did the reading but that you've reflected on them critically and analytically will score higher points—this is due to the accolade function. **Your point value weekly is 1,000, so that's what you should minimally aim for; there's also a buffer (1,300 points weekly), to allow you to gain extra weekly points which is what I would encourage everyone to do.** Again, see [the Yellowdig page](#) for more information on this. That platform will be our touchstone for the majority of this course. You'll see a Yellowdig link on the left-hand sidebar for the course.

WEEKLY ANALYSES (35%)

- Each Sunday by 11:59pm, you will write about 200 words based on that week's readings(s). These should be analytical and critical, quoting from the readings and citing according to MLA style when you do quote ([the Purdue OWL](#) is helpful for how to do this). **For Week 1, you can just discuss *Contagion* within the current COVID world, if you like, so this will be the only weekly paper that can be self-reflective.** You'll see a rubric for the short weekly papers under each assignment to get a sense of what I'm looking for. You can also view this as an expansion of what you've been posting over that week on the Yellowdig discussion platform.
- If you're stuck on what to write about, think of the theme of the novel so far and how that specific section ties back to the theme. How do the characters relate to the theme the author is conveying in the novel? Etcetera.
- You can miss one weekly paper for each book (not applicable to *Contagion* or *AIDS and Its Metaphors*, but the books we'll be taking a bit longer with, and not the last week with those books, either, so just one missed beginning or middle). **However, you must post a comment on the assignment before the due date/time saying that's the one you want exempted or else I will mark it as missing.**

FORMAL ESSAYS (15%; 20%)

- The instructions and expectations for each of the two essays for this course can be found under each assignment; there's also a rubric there which you can see, to get a sense of what I'm looking for. Please also see [the paper expectations page](#).

[Essay 1](#)

[Essay 2](#)

University Policies

COPYRIGHT:

- All course materials including syllabi, quizzes, tests, Zoom videos, &c., are protected by U.S. copyright law and by Rutgers University policy. I am the exclusive copyright owner of all course-related materials that I create. You may not reproduce, distribute, or display (post/upload) lecture notes, photos, recordings, or any other course materials in any way—whether or not a fee is charged—without my express written consent. You also may not allow others to do so.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

- Please review [the Rutgers-Newark Academic Integrity Policy](#). Also, to ensure that you know what plagiarism is, in its many guises, and also how easily it can occur in many stages of the research process (even in the note-taking stage), refer to the relevant sections in the *MLA Handbook* (esp. section 2) and keep the checklist (2.8) in mind at all stages of research and writing. [The Purdue OWL](#) is also a good resource, both for information about plagiarism and also for MLA style guidelines. For some, not all, of the many kinds of plagiarism, [this page](#) is a good resource to keep in mind.

Plagiarism in any shape or form is not only grounds for an F on that assignment, but also in the entire course; plagiarism can also be enforced at the institutional level, with repercussions ranging from academic probation to possible expulsion. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the university's AI policy at the start of each term.

GRADING:

- Following the university's grading rubric, grades are assigned in the following way; note that for final course grades, minus grades are not allowed by the registrar—i.e., if your final grade is a low-A, then you will be assigned a B+, and so on. **There is a detailed rubric under the Canvas assignment slots for the research essays, detailing the components I'll be looking for and how they'll be graded.**

- A — Outstanding (92.5-100%+)
- B+ — Excellent (86.5-92.4+)
- B — Good (82.5-86.4%)
- C+ — Good/Satisfactory (76.5-82.4%+)
- C — Satisfactory (72-76.4%)
- D — Poor (65-71.9%+)
- F — Fail (below 65%)

Campus Resources

- [Rutgers Office of Disability Services](#)
- [Rutgers-Newark Academic Calendar for Fall 2021](#)
- [Rutgers-Newark Writing Center](#)
- [Resources for Rutgers-Newark Students](#)

Technical Support

- [Rutgers Canvas Support](#)
- [Rutgers Teaching & Learning with Technology](#)
- [Rutgers Office of Information Technology](#)
- [Yellowdig Support](#)

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Sun Sep 5, 2021	Canvas Profile Photo Up by 9/5	due by 11:59pm
	Weekly Analysis 1	due by 11:59pm
Tue Sep 7, 2021	Yellowdig FAQ/Intro: Reading Novels 21:350:242:61 + 62	3pm to 4pm
Sun Sep 12, 2021	Weekly Analysis 2	due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 19, 2021	Weekly Analysis 3	due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 26, 2021	Weekly Analysis 4	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 3, 2021	Weekly Analysis 5	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 10, 2021	Weekly Analysis 6	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 17, 2021	Weekly Analysis 7	due by 11:59pm
	Essay 1	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 24, 2021	Weekly Analysis 8	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 31, 2021	Weekly Analysis 9	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 7, 2021	Weekly Analysis 10	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 14, 2021	Weekly Analysis 11	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 21, 2021	Weekly Analysis 12	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 28, 2021	Weekly Analysis 13	due by 11:59pm
Sun Dec 5, 2021	Weekly Analysis 14	due by 11:59pm
Sun Dec 12, 2021	Weekly Analysis 15	due by 11:59pm
Fri Dec 17, 2021	Essay 2	due by 11:59pm
	Yellowdig + Participation	