

## Senior Honors Literature/ Spring 2024

**Dr. Thaller (she/her)**

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### Who?

Dr. Thaller



### What?

This will be a college-style lit course based around critical analysis using various theoretical lenses.

### Why?

To empower you as part of the discourse community and help form connections between life and literature.

## Through the Lens

This particular course is designed to not only expose students to some of the literature and texts that are frequently referenced in academic circles, but also to function as an exercise in shifting perspectives. Perspective can literally shift the foundations of understanding in literature.

In this course, we will familiarize ourselves with several critical theoretical lenses and then utilize those disparate frameworks to build and complicate our understanding of texts. Literature is, in so many ways, a subjective medium and experience. Each reader comes to the text with individual experiences that shape their understanding of a story and its nuances. Being asked to abandon this and instead look from a completely different angle can mean that a text goes from being a simple, sweet romance to a commentary on gender roles in contemporary society, or perhaps a symbol for class divides occurring at the time it was written, or maybe it is an allusion to some other classic tale.

The lenses offer vantage points and questions we may not have considered otherwise.

As a class, we will position ourselves around each text from these varied positions as we interpret, analyze, and share.

We will explore novels, novellas, short stories, film, and poetry.

Where many high school literature courses aim to teach students what to think about books and how to understand them, this course is much more layered. The fact of the matter is that literature does not exist in absolutes.

There is no absolute correct or incorrect way to understand, analyze, or interpret literature. It is a personal process that involves our own experiences of the world, our own willingness to be challenged and open, and our ability to truly consider how perspective and lens shift the view entirely. Your peers might not agree with you, you might not have considered what they are saying, you might have entirely different frames of reference. Listen with an open mind. This is where true learning takes place in a literature course.

By the end of this class, the goal is that you feel comfortable expressing your experience with texts and understand the connections between literature and the world around you. My aim is that you understand the value of your unique interpretations and analysis, and realize that the entire class benefits from hearing new perspectives and dissenting opinions. It opens our eyes and minds, and makes us better readers, thinkers, and scholars.

Open communication is important to me. Please feel free to contact me with any concerns, questions, or helpful information—I'm here to help guide you through this year. The following information addresses class expectations, select school policies, and reading selections for the year.

~ Dr. Thaller

## Major Texts

*The Complete Persepolis*- by Marjane Satrapi  
*Swallow Me Whole*- by Nate Powell  
*The Road*- by Cormac McCarthy  
*Metamorphosis*- by Franz Kafka  
*Hour of the Star*- by Clarice Lispector

And many films, short stories, and poems.

## Course Structure

As Grossmont Middle College students, this will not be your typical high school honors literature course. This course will be formatted and will function much like a college literature course. In many ways, these courses feel like book clubs where the focus is on YOUR interpretation, experience, and interaction with the text, rather than a prescribed notion of what is right or

wrong. There will not be quizzes, as I am not concerned with memorization, but there will be extensive discussion, reflection, and analysis.

As always, this also demands that:

You are  
**ACCOUNTABLE**  
You are in charge of your  
destiny and performance.  
Take ownership.

You are  
**SELF-SUFFICIENT**  
If you need something,  
seek it out.

You  
**SELF-ADVOCATE**  
Note: advocating and  
being entitled are NOT  
the same thing so be  
careful not to cross the  
line.

### Late Work Policy

In many college courses, late work is not accepted.

However, life happens. Stress happens. Mental health happens. If you know you will miss a deadline, it is important that you prearrange an extension with me to receive full credit for your assignments or contact me as soon as possible.

In general, without an approved extension, you will have 72 hours (three days) after the deadline to submit work for credit. Each day after the deadline results in a 10% deduction.

If you do miss class, remember that it is your responsibility to get any assigned work to me, find out the assignments, etc. The best way to go about finding out what you missed is by contacting a peer.

It is important that you do this before the start of the next class. Being absent is no excuse for coming unprepared when you return to class!

**Technology glitches or lost e-mails do not constitute valid excuses for late work.**

- Frequently save your work
- Back it up on a cloud or thumb drive
- Email it to yourself



## Attendance

Attendance is essential to success in class!

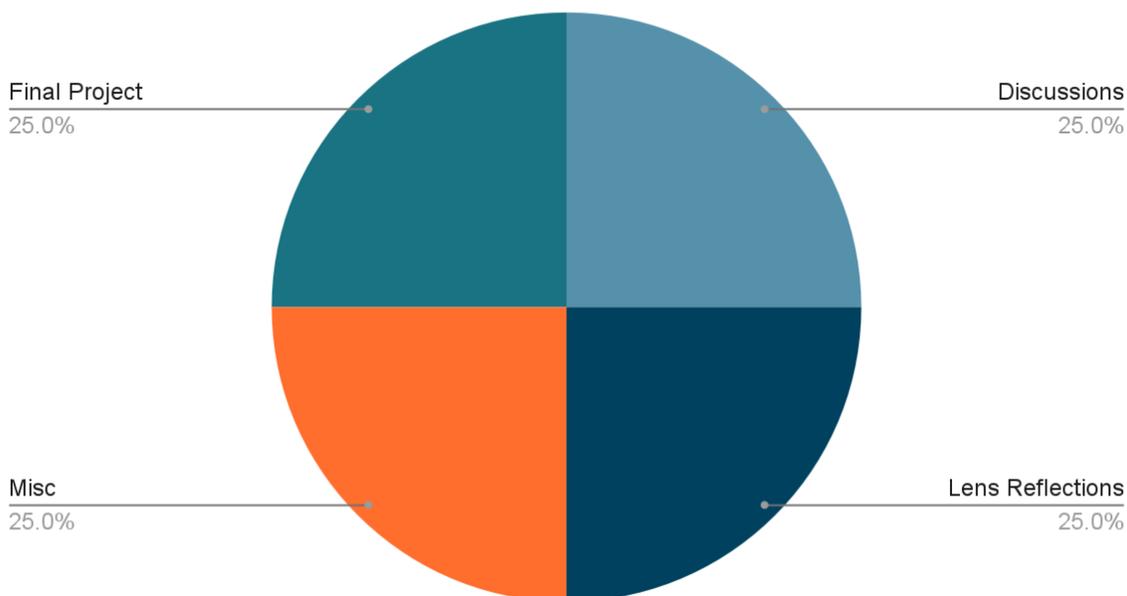
I understand that emergencies may happen but missing class means that you are missing important information, explanations, discussions, and activities.

Tardies may result in warnings, detention, or referrals.

## Grading Breakdown and Scale

We will go over all assignments in-depth, with plenty of time for questions and clarification. This semester, each category weight will be by points rather than percentages. Be mindful of the larger assignments.

### Grade Breakdown



100-90%= A, 89-80%= B, 79-70%= C, 69-60%= D, 59% and below= F



## Classroom Community

### Inclusion

This is an inclusive learning community, respecting those of differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all citizens in this class, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender expression or identity, physical or mental ability, language-levels, and sexual orientation. We are all here together and we all matter.



### Pronouns

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you identify with a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Appreciating and Valuing Diversity:** I strive to create a welcoming learning community for all. I encourage multiple perspectives and the free exchange of unbiased and non-prejudicial ideas and experiences, which broaden our understanding of one another and the world around us. The expectation is that you will join us in this endeavor by contributing to an accessible, safe, and respectful classroom environment, free of discrimination and harassment. If you are offended, hurt or made to feel unsafe by something that another student does or says, please let me know. In the same way, please let me know if you are offended, hurt, or made to feel unsafe by something I say or do. It is my intention to ensure this classroom is a safe place for all.

Violating standard rules of conduct, in any form, will not be tolerated.

## Trigger Warnings and Sensitive Material

### Studying literature demands maturity.

We will be encountering highly sensitive topics, scenes, dialogue in the literature for this course.

It is critical that you compose yourself and handle yourself like an adult. I expect that you are able to encounter and discuss texts as an academic, and focus entirely on the deeper meanings, impact, and significance, particularly as they connect to the course themes.

I will try to provide trigger warnings for individual texts, but please keep in mind that nearly every text will dive into something sensitive.

As we discuss, I expect appropriate language and that you keep all conversations tied to issues of academic or textual significance.

Perhaps of most importance is that you are keenly aware of and sensitive to your peers. You have no idea what other people have experienced or may be in the middle of. Keep discussion focused on the text, but always maintain awareness of those around you. Avoid language that may cause harm.