Reading is inevitably a complex, comparative process. A novel in particular, if it is not to be read reductively as an item of socio-political evidence, involves the reader with itself not only because of its writer’s skill but also because of other novels. All novels belong to a family, and any reader of novels is a reader of this complex family to which they all belong. Edward Said, “Arabic Prose and Fiction After 1948,” in Reflections on Exile and Other Essays Harvard University Press 2002

The primary aim of this course is to help students develop and improve the critical reading, writing, and thinking skills needed for success in upper-division courses in English and other disciplines. They will also gain practice in using the Oxford English Dictionary and other online research tools and print resources that support studies in the humanities. Students will learn basic information literacy skills and models for approaching literature with various historical, generic, and cultural contexts in mind.

To Kill a Mockingbird (United States 1960) and 117 Days (South Africa 1965) have been the subject/object of banning orders in their respective contexts (the US and South Africa). Written by internationally acclaimed women writers, and dealing with issues of race, class, and gender, each narrative also dramatizes the generational differences identified by parent/child relationships (Atticus and Scout, Ruth and her three daughters) – and each work’s protagonists and antagonists continue to inspire and inflame debate over the relevance of their specific historical and socio-political contexts to contemporary circumstances and cultural crises. These continuities and their disconnections will focus our readings of these “banned books” and their “novel ideas.”

**SCHEDULE**

January 19    T    introductions
January 21    Th    Jonathan Swift – “A Modest Proposal”
January 26    T    To Kill a Mockingbird (Chapters 1-14)
January 28    Th    To Kill a Mockingbird (Chapters 15-end)
February 2    T    discussion
February 11   Th    discussion

*Mockingbird: Contexts*

*Mockingbird: Characters – Atticus*

FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE (argument)

Mockingbird: Characters -- Scout


March 1  T  select reviews of Go Set a Watchman

March 3  Th  presentations

March 8  T  presentations

March 10  Th  discussion of final paper proposal

March 14-18  Spring Break

March 22  T  117 Days  
FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE

March 24  Th  117 Days

March 29  T  discussion  
REACTION PAPER DUE

Political Detention
March 31  Th  Joe Slovo, Albie Sachs, Angela Davis – introductions to 117 Days


April 12  T  discussion  
REACTION PAPER DUE

April 14  Th  Shawn Slovo – A World Apart (film)

April 19  T  Shawn Slovo – introduction and extracts from a diary (1987)

Ruth First: here and there, then and now

April 28    Th    Leo Zeilig. “From exile to the thick of the struggle: Ruth First and problems of national liberation, international sanctions and revolutionary agency,” Review of African Political Economy 41, 139 (2014)

May 3       T     discussion of final paper topics

May 5       Th    conclusions

FINAL PAPERS DUE

Readings:
Harper Lee. To Kill a Mockingbird
Ruth First. 117 Days
+ critical essays and articles

Requirements & Grading: The class will be conducted as much as possible as a seminar and discussion and attendance will be emphasized. To that end, bring the reading assignment to class. In addition to readings and occasional quizzes (as/if required), writing assignments will include:

2 response papers (500 wds, 10% each)
1 short paper (15%)
1 final paper proposal (500 wds, 20%)
1 final paper (25%)
1 presentation (15%)
+ attendance and participation

For all papers, specific assignment sheets will be distributed in class. All papers are due in class (hard copy) on the date indicated on the syllabus.

**attendance** means presence for the entire class period. Interim exits will be counted as an absence. If you have medical needs, please let me know. Otherwise, if you choose to take a break mid-class, take your belongings with you (see screen free class policy below).

NB: For all writing assignments, students should be aware – and observant – of UT’s policy on plagiarism. There are negative and positive reasons for this admonition: negative – you get in trouble if you don’t observe the policy; positive – by citing your sources, you join a community of scholars who share their work.

Other Notices:
Undergraduate Writing Center, FAC 211, 471-6222: http://uwc.utexas.edu/home). The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Any undergraduate enrolled in a course at UT can visit the UWC for assistance with any writing project. They work with students from every department on campus, for both academic and non-academic writing. Whether you are writing a lab report, a resume, a term paper, a statement for an application, or your own poetry, UWC consultants will be happy to work with you. Their services are not just for writing with "problems." Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance they provide is intended to foster independence. Each student determines how to use the consultant’s advice. The consultants are trained to help you work on your writing in ways that preserve the integrity of your work.
University policy is to respect religious holidays – and we will respect them as well. If, however, you will be absent for reason of religious observance and would like to share information about your respective traditions, these contributions will be welcome.

*Students with disabilities* may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

*Screen Free Classroom:* Finally, no cell-phones or computers are allowed in class – turn them off and put them away. In other words, this course has a **no screens policy.** The only exception will be the classroom console for the shared use of the entire class. Personal computers are not allowed in class unless you have a note from the Office of Services for Students With Disabilities that says you need a computer to take notes. If you want to sleep, read the newspaper, talk or text to a friend, use wi-fi or your Blackberry or iPhone or iPad or a piece of equivalent technology to check your e-mail or Facebook or eBay auction, or do anything else not explicitly related to the class, please do not come to class that day. **Any of these activities constitutes non-participation in the course and will influence your grade accordingly.** So, please turn off your cell phones etc before class begins. (Adapted from Cox, E316K, Spring 2013)

This course contains a **writing flag.** The writing assignments in this course are arranged procedurally with a focus on invention, development through instructor and peer feedback, and revision; they will comprise a major part of the final grade.