

Creative Project

Otherwise Known as the “Choose Your Own Adventure” Assignment

Proposal Due: T 4/10/18 (1 page is good)

Final Project Due: On or before T 5/1/18

1. Choose a text from the Course Calendar as the basis of your creative response. Your project will be a creative *interpretation* of this work.
2. Choose a project (see info and options below). Avoid projects that simply reproduce or summarize a story; your argument and point of view should show through in your work.
3. Write a proposal explaining what your project is, how long or involved it will be (I want to make sure that you are doing a reasonable amount of work-neither too little nor too much), the reason you chose this project (why is the medium/text of interest to you?), how it interprets your text of choice, and/or the rationale behind your interpretation. What kind of argument is your project going to make about the text? (*See the sample proposal below as a model*). Be sure to explain the interpretation and rationale behind your project (What idea are you trying to convey? Why? What decisions do you need to make in producing it and why? For example, if you paint a portrait of the character Envy from *Piers Plowman*, why will you make his nose look like that? What expression will you put on his face and why? Why are you choosing those colors and that composition? Etc.)

[Note: This assignment is designed to take advantage of any skills or hobbies (aside from academic writing) that you have. The other essays for this course require you to think critically in a more traditional way, but this project is meant to challenge you to interpret literature using a whole different set of skills, to think and to argue in new ways. Additionally, the project is intentionally left wide open in terms of what medium and format you choose. I want you to find a way to engage with the literature that genuinely interests you, and I want you to enjoy the process.]

4. Put your project together, always keeping your argument/interpretation of the text in focus. You will get feedback on your proposal as you move forward with this stage. You may also see me in office hours for help and to answer questions.
5. When you turn your project in, you will do a quick, 2-minute presentation of your work. This part of the assignment is *not* overly formal. We will go around the room, and each student will have the opportunity to share their project with the class.

Guide to Choosing a Project:

You may choose a media-based or a low-tech medium for interpreting your chosen text. Some of the options below employ a written medium and some employ visual mediums, but all of them, in one way or another, require you to be creative and to use methods other than academic writing. Use this opportunity to apply any skills you already have, or wish to develop further, to the process of literary interpretation and close reading. You may choose any of the options listed below, or come up with your own. Make sure you have a clear focus, specific plan, and narrow topic. It needs to be manageable within the short amount of time you have this semester. Remember, you have other papers to write in addition to this assignment.

Some digital media options:

Write a series of blog posts in the voice of a character from your text (i.e.-Grendel's blog, 3 entries or so would be enough, depending on length), (See Geoffrey Chaucer Hath a Blog for an example, you would not have to write yours in Middle English, of course)

Make a personal or professional website for a character with an "About me" page and related content.

Make a movie trailer for your chosen text

Make a short film (like something you could upload to youtube, or an independent short for the Sundance Festival)

Digital Storytelling

Mini comic book

"I am from" poem, but for a character or author rather than yourself

Video essay or photo essay

Interactive poster

Audio Essay

Podcast (Think "Freakonomics" and "This American Life")

Curate an art and/or historical online gallery

Create an interactive, multimedia edition of a text/passage

Digital art

Animation

Invent a new internet meme (you would have to produce multiple iterations of your new meme; it's not really a meme if there's only one, and putting some words on a stock, cat image is probably not involved enough for this project)

VLOG entry as a character or author

Digital photograph and/or Photoshop project

Any digital art medium is welcome

Note: Many of you hold the technology required for some of these projects in your pockets, literally. You have video, audio, and photo capabilities on your phone. Used carefully and thoughtfully, this is fair game—You don't have to own a fancy digital camera with special lenses to do this, but if you do own one, and know how, by all means, use it.

Some low-tech options:

Written

Re-write the end of the story (best for longer, narrative texts, rather than short lyrics)
Imitate a poetic form and/or genre (i.e.- medieval alliterative poetry, dream vision, or romance)
Write a prequel or sequel to a story, or fill in a missing part in the middle of a narrative
Parody or satirical re-writing
Re-write a story, changing the setting to a modern context
Poetic response/interpretation to another text
Write a character's firsthand experiences in diary/journal form
Write a screen-play or play/Broadway/opera adaption of a narrative

Visual

Visual reconstruction of a setting in the text
Draw or paint a specific passage from the text
Portraits of characters (1 amazing one, or a series of 2-3 related portraits)
Dramatic performance (if you have drama experience, this can be fun)
Photography (not snapshots of your friends at lunch, but carefully composed pieces, this can be digital as well)
Collage
Cartoon/comic strip
Sculpture
Music (write and record a song)
Mini graphic novel or comic book
Any fine arts based visual interpretations are acceptable here
Reconstruct a manuscript page, or produce a modern version of a manuscript page

Grading: For the content of your project, I will pay special attention to execution, thoughtfulness, interpretation/argument, and evidence (which can be laid out in the proposal). The thoughtfulness and interpretation will weigh most heavily. However, in large part, this project is about the *learning experience* of responding to and thinking critically about literature in new mediums. Occasionally, I have had students develop a great plan and work really hard on it, only to have it not turn out exactly as they thought (sometimes this can lead to great results anyways!). Because of the sometimes-unpredictable nature of creative and also digital work, effort does matter a great deal for this assignment. Unlike your traditional essays, which can be evaluated on stricter criteria that don't necessarily involve the amount the effort you put into the assignment, this project demands a different approach.

Final Note: If you would be interested in publishing a blog post about your experience completing this assignment, I would gladly accept it and post it on the research blog.

[Former Student's Name]
Dr. Karrie Fuller
E301 Medieval Literature
16 October, 2015

Creative Project Proposal

“Intensely now
is my heart inflamed: Lord, fierce sorrow
Oppresses my soul. Prince of heaven:
Give me triumph and true belief; let me take this sword
and cleave this murder-monger!” (*Judith* 86-90)

The intense fierceness, heroic strength, and agency to subvert social hierarchy displayed by Judith establish her as a radical medieval female character. Combining traditionally valued feminine qualities, beauty and innocence, with a mastery of the masculine tools of war, Judith is a character more nuanced than many of the medieval women who have appeared in the texts we have read for class. While Judith exists in a similar social context to that of the women who briefly appear in *Beowulf*, acting as objects of exchange among men, Judith becomes an agent of exchange, bringing the head of Holofernes to her people and receiving gifts and treasure in return.

Because of Judith's radical, transgressive position in the text, I intend to represent her through a radical and transgressive medium: a collage in the Dadaist style. Dadaism was an eastern European art movement centered in Berlin in the early 20th Century, which challenged traditional social organization, especially class and gender hierarchies, and ignored the rules, traditions, and contextual intentions of high art.

Using the quote above to guide my composition, I will create an image that mirrors Judith's defeat of Holofernes. In representing the text, I will create Judith as a woman beautiful in her ability and strength and make her physical beauty secondary to her subversive action. I will also, as the author does by placing a biblical character in a medieval context, modernize Judith's resistance to patriarchal power. Placing Judith in an industrial setting, and depicting Holofernes as an official of modern capitalist patriarchy, a strategy which will further align my piece with the Dadaist collage tradition.

Creating this piece will require some additional research of Dadaist aesthetic technique, though I am relatively familiar with the work of Dadaists. It will also require careful selection of source images, some painting, and several hours of work in planning and executing the composition. My final product will combine the strategies of the text's author and Dadaist artists to create an interesting, aesthetically challenging image with a modern social connotation.