

# UNIVERSITY OF MOUNT SAINT VINCENT

## ENGL 271: The Power of Enchantment: Poetry, Seduction & Witchcraft

Fall 2024

### Department of English

<b>INSTRUCTOR</b>	Professor Nalencz
<b>CLASS MEETING DAY AND TIMES</b>	TR 2:30- 3:55
<b>CLASS LOCATION</b>	FH 404
<b>OFFICE LOCATION</b>	Founders/Humanities Hall A321
<b>PHONE</b>	718 405 3311
<b>E-MAIL</b>	<a href="mailto:leonard.nalencz@umsv.edu">leonard.nalencz@umsv.edu</a>
<b>OFFICE HOURS</b>	Monday and Wednesday 4-5:30pm, and by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Language is powerful: love letters can charm and seduce, if they are well written. Witches chant to make something happen—their magic spells employ occult language and bewitching rhythms. This class will examine the power of language to enchant, bewitch, and seduce. We will read lyric poems, short stories, and a play; we will also consider song lyrics, films, and political speeches. Authors include Anne Sexton, Joy Harjo, Lynn Nottage, Pablo Neruda, Seph Rodney, RZA, and Wanda Coleman.

### REQUIRED TEXT AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

- 1.) Wanda Coleman, *Wicked Enchantment* ISBN: 9781574232462  
(You need to **buy this book**—a hard copy. No E-books are accepted unless you have a note from the administration.)
- 2.) You are required to **print out and bring to class** materials on our Canvas page.
- 3.) Bring a **notebook** and a pen everyday for class notes and in-class writing exercises.

***Additional policies***

1. All reading assignments must be completed **before** the class during which they are to be discussed. Voluntary class participation is expected and considered in the determination of your grade; obviously no meaningful insight into a given text can be shared if you are not thoroughly prepared.
2. You are responsible for bringing hard copies of the book(s) or reading assigned to every class. Take notes in the margin as you read and come prepared to listen to your classmates and to discuss the reading with them.
3. Individual conferences during office hours may be scheduled during the semester. You are encouraged to meet with the instructor at least once during the semester during office hours.
4. There is **no use of cellphones, laptops or similar electronic devices during class** (unless you have a letter from the administration). You may bring a beverage to class, but *please*, no food.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:**

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

DLO=Department Learning Outcome

Department Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate basic knowledge of literature in thematic context.
2. Develop a critical vocabulary enabling participation in literary discourse.
3. Identify and apply the theory of performative language and rhetoric.
4. Write a clear and convincing analysis of at least one primary literary text.

**GRADING POLICIES:**

Grading is based on written assignments, in-class writing assignments, quizzes (announced or unannounced), exercises, the frequency and quality of participation in class, degree of improvement, and

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attendance, as well as on exams. Participation includes participating in class discussions showing evidence that you have read and carefully considered the assigned material, and as writers/responders in small groups.

College Grades	Quality Points	% of Total Points in Course
A	4	93 to 100
A-	3.67	90 to 92
B+	3.33	87 to 89
B	3	83 to 86
B-	2.67	80 to 82
C+	2.33	77 to 79
C	2	73 to 76
C-	1.67	70 to 72
D+	1.33	67 to 69
D	1	60 to 66
F	0	0 to 59

### Grade Distribution:

Midterm Exam	20%
In class writing	20%
Class presentation	15%
Class participation	20%
Final Exam	25%

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## Course Schedule

Class date	Reading and Writing Due
8/27	The history of the liberal arts and the power of performative language.
8/29	J.L. Austin, <i>How To Do Things With Words</i> (Canvas)
9/3	Homework: identify the performative language in each passage (six passages) in complete sentences. Be specific! Please print out the doc with your answers and bring it to class. (Canvas).
9/5	Lynne Nottage, "Poof!" (Canvas )
9/10	Anne Sexton, "Cinderella", "Snow White"; Cinderella, Grimm's Fairy Tales (Canvas). "Blood Money" (Theranos documentary, <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgNfrDXr7uA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgNfrDXr7uA</a> )
9/12	from <i>Salem Book of Witches</i> ; "Witchcraft and Language in the Fairy Tale" (Canvas)
9/17	Thomas Wyatt, "They Flee From Me"; Anne Sexton, "Her Kind"; Wanda Coleman, "Her Poem" (Canvas)
9/19	Pablo Neruda, <i>Twenty Love Songs and a Poem of Despair</i> 1-10 (Canvas)
9/24	Pablo Neruda, <i>Twenty Love Songs and a Poem of Despair</i> 11-21 (Canvas)
9/26	The Last Archive Season Two Episode Three: The Inner Front: <a href="https://www.thelastarchive.com/season-2/episode-3-the-inner-front">https://www.thelastarchive.com/season-2/episode-3-the-inner-front</a>
10/1	The power of disinformation: Sandy Hook and InfoWars. (Canvas)
10/3	W.S. Merwin, "Losing a Language"; Cyranoid (Canvas)
10/8	<b>Midterm!</b>
10/10	Wanda Coleman, <i>Wicked Enchantment</i> (Wanda in Worryland; The Woman and Her Thang; I Live for My Car; When My Time Comes; Woman on Sand; Wanda Why Aren't You Dead; Notes of a Cultural Terrorist)
10/17	Wanda Coleman, <i>Wicked Enchantment</i> (American Sonnet 1, 2, 3, 6; we could've made it if; Aptitude Test; To the Other Wanda Coleman; Want Ads.)
10/22	Wanda Coleman, <i>Wicked Enchantment</i> (Neruda; For Me When I Am Myself; American Sonnet 9, 12, 15, 18, 23, 24)
10/24	Wanda Coleman, <i>Wicked Enchantment</i> (American Sonnet 34, 43, 54, 61, 95; I Imagine the Angels of Race; Things No One Knows; Essay On Language 6)
10/29	RZA, from <i>The Tao of Wu</i> ; Seph Rodney, "What Growing Into Manhood Sounded Like" (Canvas)
10/31	Dana Johnson, "Markers"; Kincaid, "Girl"; Cathy Park Hong, from <i>Dance Dance Revolution</i> (Canvas)

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11/7	Natasha Trethewey, “Graveyard Blues”; Osip Mandelstam, “We Live”; January 6 and political rhetoric (CR)
11/12	Christian Bok, <i>Eunoia</i> (Canvas)
11/14	Class Presentations
11/19	Class Presentations
11/21	Class Presentations
11/26	Class Presentations
12/3	Class Presentations
12/5	Class Presentations

### COURSE POLICIES:

#### *Academic Honesty:*

Students are expected to familiarize themselves and comply with all College policies and procedures, including but not limited to the College policies on Academic Honesty and Student Conduct as described here: <http://www.mountsaintvincent.edu/5162.htm> as well as all College policies and procedures described in the Student Handbook and Undergraduate Catalogue.

If students are unsure whether a specific course of action would constitute plagiarism or cheating, it is their responsibility to consult with their instructor in advance. The College of Mount Saint Vincent is committed to helping students to uphold the ethical standards of academic integrity in all areas of study.

#### *Academic Support Services*

The College of Mount Saint Vincent offers a range of academic support services that might be helpful to students in this course; these services are described at <http://www.mountsaintvincent.edu/385.htm>

#### *Attendance*

Students are expected to attend every class. **Any student missing the equivalent of more than two weeks of classes (5 absences) risks failing the course.** It is each student’s responsibility to

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make up all work if absent from class. For prolonged absences, students must notify the Office of Academic Advisement. *Please arrive on time! It is very disruptive to enter class late.* Three instances of lateness constitute one absence. I keep attendance on Canvas so you can check your record.

### ***Disabilities***

Students who need special accommodations or services at the College of Mount Saint Vincent must provide the College up-to-date documentation verifying their specific diagnosed disability. For more information, please see <http://www.mountsaintvincent.edu/1311.htm>.

### **Writing Guidelines**

**In class writing:** Please designate a notebook for use in this class, and do not lose it. Bring it **every day**, *with a pen*, and be prepared to share your writing, or excerpts of your in-class writing, with the rest of the class. You will also be asked to upload writing exercises onto Canvas. This writing notebook will be a significant part of your final grade: **20%**.

### **Class Presentation:**

Each of you will be required to make a presentation on some aspect of the class that interests you and something in popular culture that you can “read” through the ideas we discuss in class. What this means to you will become clearer over the course of the semester, but keep in mind that *you will need to apply what we are learning to something that you bring in from your own cultural interests—from movies, current events, social media, music, or anything else that is relevant.* You will be given 15 minutes to present your ideas to the class and then answer questions from me and your classmates after your presentation. This will determine **20% of your final grade.**