

Course Expectations  
ENGLISH: Fiction as Virtual Reality  
Instructor: Richard Grant

1. Overview. We'll approach literature as the deliberate, artistic creation of alternate realities. During the semester we'll read approximately six to eight short works of fiction -- novellas, plays, stories, screenplays, short novels, graphic novels, or portions of longer works. All will be of high artistic quality, but they'll range from contemporary to "classic" works. Titles **may** include Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Nancy Farmer's *House of the Scorpion*, Neil Gaimon's "Sandman" graphic novels, Homer's *Odyssey*, Orwell's *1984*, Philip K. Dick's *A Scanner Darkly*, Dante's *Inferno*, Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, or other works.

During class meetings, we'll discuss the works, the techniques used to create them, and readers' responses. Students will be asked to present personal written responses, the nature of which will vary as the course progresses. Students will also have the option of presenting original creative work as an alternative form of response to the readings.

Our emphasis will be on continual participation, reading and writing, not upon major papers or essays, or upon tests. The written exercises and responses will, however, increase in depth and complexity as the term progresses.

2. Earning credit. Credit will be given for active participation in class activities and assignments, which includes reading, writing, and sincere involvement in class discussions. Each student will be challenged to respond at his or her own level of experience and ability.

Credit won't be earned if a student has clearly chosen not to fully participate in the class, as shown by such things as:

- 5 or more unexcused absences.
- Unwillingness or unpreparedness to join in class discussion.
- Failure to complete 2 or more writing assignments.

3. Deadlines. There will be numerous "small" deadlines as the semester progresses, rather than one or two "big" ones at the middle and end. These will generally align with the time allowed for students to finish the reading assignments.