

## SERIALIZING FICTION

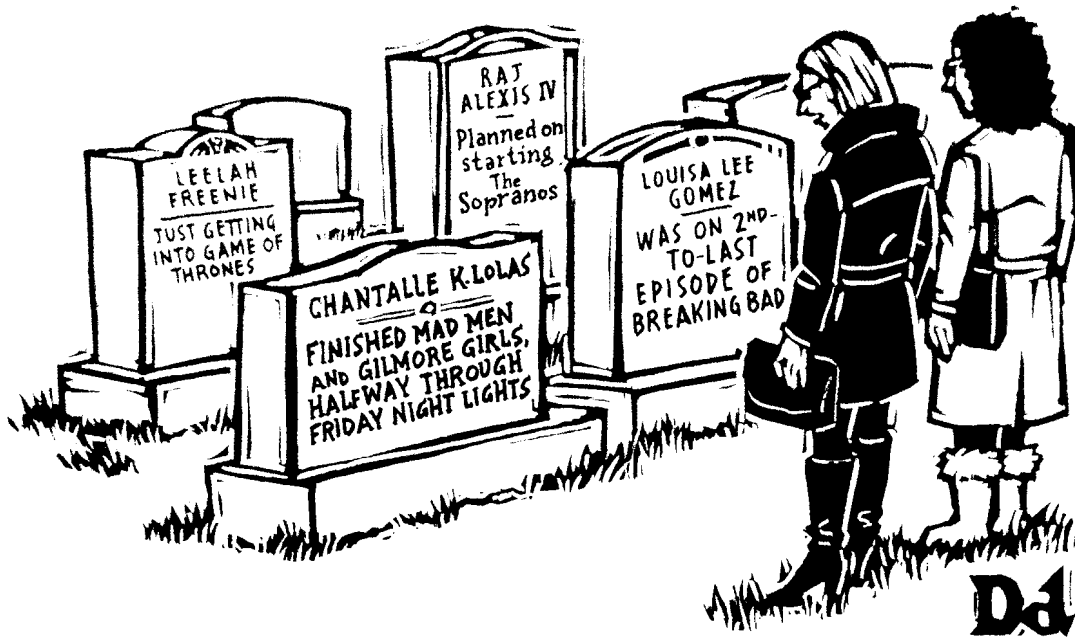
ENG 106  
Law Hall 321  
9:30–11:00 am/1:30–3:00 pm  
Block 6  
February/March 2024

Dr. Adam Abraham  
Office: South Hall 209  
Hours by appointment via Zoom  
email: [aabraham@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:aabraham@cornellcollege.edu)  
[adamabraham.info](http://adamabraham.info)

Long before *The Sopranos*, *Game of Thrones*, and *Breaking Bad*, nineteenth-century writers perfected the art of serial publication—issuing their novels in weekly or monthly installments. Charles Dickens, famously, published all fifteen of his novels in one serial format or another. His friend Wilkie Collins offered this memorable recipe: “Make ’em cry, make ’em laugh, make ’em wait.”

This writing course will consider what it means to narrate in *time*. What is the relationship between narrative time and lived experience, the days and the years? We will begin with that great forerunner of serial narrative, Scheherazade, whose perpetual tale-telling in *The Arabian Nights* literally saved her life. Then we will read an archetype of Victorian serialization and bring the story up-to-date with examples drawn from film and television.

Assignments include a creative-writing project, a close reading, and a proposal for a research essay on the TV show of your choice.



*“They still had so much TV ahead of them.”*

**REQUIRED READING:**

Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist; or, The Parish Boy's Progress*. 1837–1839. London: Penguin Books, 2003.

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *“They Say/I Say”: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. 5th ed. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2021.

Please use these editions so that we are all on the same page. New and/or used copies are available at the college bookstore. All other readings will be made available online.

Each student will also be required to purchase a Roaring Spring one-subject notebook (or equivalent paper product) for in-class and at-home note-taking.

**ASSESSMENT:**

- I. Attendance: 10 points
- II. Preparation and participation: 10 points
- III. Unannounced quizzes: 10 points
- IV. Creative essay: 10 points
- V. Conference: 10 points
- VI. Close reading: 10 points
- VII. Literature review: 10 points
- VIII. Prospectus: 30 points

TOTAL = 100 points

**EXPECTATIONS:***Attendance*

Marshall Brickman once told a reporter that 80 percent of success is showing up. In this course, attendance will count for 10 percent of your final grade. But attendance means more than just showing up. You must be fully *present*: awake, alert, attentive, engaged. Each student is allowed to miss up to four class meetings (morning or afternoon). There is no need to tell me your reasons: it's four for free, no questions asked. If, however, you miss five classes (21 percent of the course), you will earn zero points for attendance. If you miss more, then you are at risk of receiving a failing grade. Any student who misses ten classes will fail automatically.

*Preparation*

You should read each assignment in its entirety before the class meeting listed. Be an *active* reader: underline words, scribble in the margins, write down questions, and make note of passages that confused you. Bring the relevant text (paper or electronic copy) to each class meeting.

### *Participation*

We learn by articulating ideas and refining those ideas in conversation with others. Try to be a lively participant in each class discussion. Raise points, ask questions. Listen carefully and respectfully to what others are saying. It is okay to disagree with one another: disagreement does not mean disrespect.

### *Notebook*

Each student is required to purchase a Roaring Spring one-subject notebook (or equivalent). You should take notes during lectures and when reading all assignments. Studies show that students who take notes *by hand with a pen or pencil* perform better on examinations than those who take notes on a laptop. Bring the notebook to each and every class. There may be some in-class writing exercises as well.

### *Electronic Devices*

Because paying attention is one of the goals of this course, I ask that all phones and electronic devices are turned off and placed out of sight. Students texting in class will be marked absent for that class meeting. If there is a genuine life crisis, please pretend that it is 1977 and that you have to go outside to use a payphone *before* texting or making that urgent call.

### *Quizzes*

In order to assess that you are reading the assigned material and listening to the lectures, there will be four unannounced quizzes over the block. These will be rather easy if you have completed the assignments. I will drop the lowest score. Because the element of surprise is essential, you will *not* be able to make up these quizzes under any circumstances.

### *Group Work*

During the first week, everyone will be assigned to a group. This will be your group for the *entire block*. In many class meetings, you will work with your group: discussing course material and solving problems. In order to perform well in this group, you have to read the assignments before the class session begins. You will help one another to learn the course material.

### *Essays*

Deleuze says that we write “at the frontiers of our knowledge,” and college writing assignments are designed to push those frontiers, to expand our knowledge. Students will write two short essays: a creative essay and a close reading. The close reading will require two drafts. For the first draft, each student will meet with the instructor for a thirty-minute conference on Zoom. The student will then incorporate the feedback into the final draft. Details for the assignments will be provided when the dates draw closer.

### *Final Project*

At the end of the block, each student will create a prospectus for an essay on any serialized television show. This is a research project in which students draw on published criticism to mount an original argument about the TV show. In its final form, the prospectus will have four parts: an argument, a literature review, a conclusion, and a works cited list. The literature review will be generated first, during Week Three. Class meetings on research and citation skills will help the students prepare for this project.

### *Late Work*

The block schedule moves quickly. To succeed, you should complete all readings and write all assignments by the designated dates. Do not fall behind. Any assignment submitted late will lose 10 percent and lose the benefit of the instructor's feedback. Note that any work submitted after 6 March will receive a score of zero.

### *Learning Needs*

You are welcome to schedule a one-on-one meeting (via Zoom) to discuss anything related to the course. If you require accommodation for a diagnosed disability, please notify me privately at the beginning of the block.

### *Academic Integrity*

It is the assumption that the work you present in this course will be your own. If you incorporate someone else's words or ideas, you must cite that person, text, or source. If you do not know how to cite sources, read chapter 14 of *The Chicago Manual of Style* or ask me for guidance. If you submit someone else's work as your own, in whole or in part, you will receive a failing grade for that assignment.

### **SCHEDULE:**

Reading assignments must be completed by the start of the class period mentioned. Items marked with an infinity sign ( $\infty$ ) will be found on the website [adamabraham.info](http://adamabraham.info).

12–18 February

WEEK 1

Beginnings

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Mon. 9:30 Prologue

Tue. 9:30 • *The Arabian Nights*, part 1  $\infty$   
1:30 The Sentence

Wed. 9:30 • *The Arabian Nights*, part 2  $\infty$   
1:30 Adapting *The Arabian Nights*

12–18 February

[continued]

Beginnings

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Thu. 9:30 Drafting in Class  
 • Bring Creative Essay Work-in-Progress

... **CREATIVE ESSAY DUE** 15 February by 4:30 pm

Fri. 9:30 • *Oliver Twist*, pp. 3–44  
 Introduction to Dickens  
 1:30 Types of Sentences

19–25 February

WEEK 2

Victorians

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Mon. 9:30 • *Oliver Twist*, pp. 45–170  
 1:30 • Paragraphs (good) ∞

Tue. 9:30 • *Oliver Twist*, pp. 170–203  
 1:30 • Paragraphs (bad) ∞

Wed. 9:30 • *Oliver Twist*, pp. 204–244  
 The History of Plagiarism  
 1:30 Drafting in Class  
 • Bring Close Reading Review Work-in-Progress

Thu. NO CLASS (Conferences)

... **CLOSE READING FIRST DRAFT DUE** at your conference

Fri. 9:30 • *Oliver Twist*, pp. 244–327  
 Television in America  
 1:30 Library Day (NOTE: Meet at Cole Library, room 212)

... **CLOSE READING DUE** 23 February by 4:30 pm

26 February–3 March

WEEK 3

Television

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 Mon. NO CLASS

Tue. 9:30 • *Oliver Twist*, pp. 328–455  
 IN-CLASS SCREENING: *Dallas*, 2.15 (“For Love or Money”)  
 1:30 • “*They Say/I Say*,” preface (pp. xiv–xxiv)  
 Television Studies

Wed. 9:30 IN-CLASS SCREENING: *The Sopranos*, 1.5 (“College”)  
 1:30 • “*They Say/I Say*,” introduction, chapters 1–2 (pp. 1–46)

Thu. 9:30 IN-CLASS SCREENING: *Breaking Bad*, 1.1 (“Pilot”)  
 1:30 • “*They Say/I Say*,” chapters 3–4, chapters 6–7 (pp. 47–71, 82–106)

Fri. NO CLASS

... **LITERATURE REVIEW DUE** 1 March by 4:30 pm

4–6 March

WEEK 4

In Conclusion

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Mon. 9:30 Peer Review Day  
 • Bring one HARD COPY of Prospectus First Draft

Tue. 9:30 Drafting in Class  
 • Bring Prospectus Work-in-Progress

... **PROSPECTUS DUE**  
 Wednesday 6 March by 4:30 pm



## **COLLEGE BOILERPLATE:**

### Academic Honesty

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is their work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading "Academic Honesty."

### AI Policy

The beta release of Dall-E-Mini in July 2022 and ChatGPT in November 2022 are among many tools using artificial intelligence. There is a good possibility that using tools like these are going to become an important skill for careers in the not distant future (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jan/07/chatgpt-bot-excel-ai-chatbot-tech>). In the meantime though, it's going to take a while for society to figure out when using these tools is/isn't acceptable.

- Work created by AI tools may not be considered original work and, instead, considered automated plagiarism. It is derived from previously created texts from other sources that the models were trained on, yet doesn't cite sources.
- AI models have built-in biases (ie, they are trained on limited underlying sources; they reproduce, rather than challenge, errors in the sources).
- AI tools have limitations (ie, they lack critical thinking to evaluate and reflect on criteria; they lack abductive reasoning to make judgments with incomplete information at hand; they make up or use inaccurate information and may "hallucinate" sources that do not exist).

### Disability Statement

Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Disability Services and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see <https://www.cornellcollege.edu/student-success-center/disabilities/index.shtml>.

### Masking Policy

The Safe Repopulation Task Force reviewed and significantly revised COVID-19 campus protocols. All mitigation strategies ceased as of May 15, 2023. No mask requirements are in place at this time. However, as a mask-friendly campus, mask-wearing remains accepted in all situations without question. A contagious illness monitoring group will replace the Safe Repopulation Task Force and will meet when needed.