

Honors 345: Reading and Writing the City

Spring 2017 • University of Washington

Instructor: Naomi Sokoloff

Overview

How has the literary imagination perceived and portrayed Seattle?

This course examines fiction, poetry, vignettes, essays, and song lyrics that explore the city, its history, its geography, and its diverse population.

In the past two decades, literature of Seattle has proliferated. At the same time, Seattle has emerged as one of America's most literate locales. Literary festivals, readings, bookstores, and special events abound. Students are encouraged to discover and experience some of that cultural vitality, and, for those interested in experiential learning, there will be opportunities to volunteer with community organizations that promote writing in and about Seattle.

Assignments:

Two essays, 1000-1250 words (4-5 pages) each

Midterm exam

Class participation

Portfolio

Service learning, term paper, or project

Role of Service-Learning in the Course

Service learning provides students an opportunity to discover community organizations that promote contemporary literary voices and/or to work with museums, historical societies, and other agencies engaged with recounting Seattle's past. Assignments for students might include serving as museum docents; creating narratives of Seattle through writing projects; tutoring younger students in reading and writing; or booking/supporting literary events;

Community groups will find in Honors Program students some highly capable individuals who care deeply about the Humanities. The course aims to help students engage with a public beyond the classroom and to see that caring about literature needn't stop after college or at the edges of campus. These students will bring enthusiasm for literature as well as knowledge of Seattle's history to their service learning assignments.

Assignments Related to Service-Learning

- #1. Essay: a close reading of a text: 1000-1250 words (15%)
- #2. Essay: a thematic analysis of a text or texts: 1000-1250 words (15%)
- #3. Midterm quiz: (15%)
- #4. Class participation and in-class writing (10%)
- #5. Portfolio (20%)
- #6. Service learning, group project, or term paper option (25%)

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171 Mary Gates Hall • (206) 616-2885 • <http://exp.washington.edu/carlson>