Individual Research Essay: *Ulysses* in 2009

Due Tuesday, March 10

For your individual research essay, I am asking you to write a research essay in which you make an argument about some aspect of *Ulysses* relating to contemporary society. This is the closest to a traditional essay that you will write for this course, and I am looking for 5-7 pages (1250-1500 words), with at least 4 outside sources (not used in class, and not your primary texts). Your possible topics are below:

- Using a contemporary text (novel, movie, album, TV show, graphic novel, art), argue that *Ulysses* is still relevant today – in other words, demonstrate that writers/filmmakers/etc. are still interested in conveying the fragmented nature of reality and/or the universal elements of humanity in ways similar to Joyce’s in *Ulysses*.

- Consider either the construction of the novel or the construction of the city presented within it – think about how Joyce pieces things together for his audience to figure out. Think about the role of the modernist artist as engineer. Think of the city as both a literary and a physical construction. (This topic is particularly aimed at engineering majors, though each student is free to choose either topic.)

I encourage creativity both in your topic selection and in the visual presentation/formatting of your essay. You might include visuals to enhance your project, and feel free to play with the formatting (don’t be bound by TNR 12 point, 1 inch margin…). Keep in mind that this is your biggest individual grade for the course, so be sure to spend significant time conceptualizing, researching, and executing your project.

When I grade your individual research essay, I will ask myself the following questions:

- Did this project present a clear argument in a logical manner? Was there a clear thesis?
- Did the author take his or her audience into account when constructing the argument?
- Did the physical presentation enhance the argument in some way?
- Was research used effectively to support the central argument, and was it cited correctly?
- Is the writing grammatically correct and stylistically interesting?
Final Group Project: Mapping *Ulysses* in 2009

This group project is the largest assignment in the class, encompassing 45% of your grade (it is broken into three distinct parts – the proposal, the project, and the presentation). Except for extreme circumstances, all members of each group will receive the same grades for this project. This means that, at least to some extent, your grade is out of your direct control – if this presents a problem for you, I would encourage you to consider dropping the class.

Still here? Okay.

Broadly speaking, these group projects ask you to “map” *Ulysses* for a contemporary audience. This is obviously a very open assignment, and that is deliberate. I encourage you to take this in whatever direction suits you. Some possibilities: building a website mapping different parts of Dublin (real or fictional; 1904/2009 or both), translating all or part of *Ulysses* into a contemporary pop culture context, presenting all or part of *Ulysses* on the web. Honestly, I am most excited by what you will bring to this project from your engineering and technical backgrounds. My idea for this class is that you are capable of approaching this text from perspectives to which literary scholars do not have access, and I expect you to tailor your projects toward your majors and your interests, hopefully creating something that you might be able to build upon later in another class.

The group projects begin with the formation of groups. This will occur on **Tuesday, March 10**. For this class period, you are encouraged to bring to class an idea (or list of ideas) of possible final projects. We will brainstorm these as a class, and then I will leave you to form your groups.

On **Tuesday, March 24** your first graded part of the project will be due. You will submit a formal proposal, worth 100 points, that must contain a number of items:

- Your group name / group members
- Your presentation / due date (I will assign these)
- Your class meeting time
- An abstract that provides an extremely brief description of your project (2-4 sentence)
- An introduction that begins to articulate the idea; be sure to address specifically what importance/relevance the project has
- A list of project goals – things that you will accomplish within the project and/or different parts of the project
- A thorough description of the research project and its methodology
- A breakdown of responsibilities of your group members
- A paragraph discussing where/how you will research or a list of sources with 1-2 sentences annotations
When I grade your proposal, I will ask myself the following questions:

- Is this a potentially successful, contemporary, and innovative approach to *Ulysses*?
- Has the group met the requirements listed on the assignment sheet?
- Is the writing grammatically correct and stylistically interesting?

The remainder of your final project will be due on the day that you present. On **March 12**, I will assign groups the due date for their projects – these dates are **April 14, 16, and 21**. Be aware that Tuesday, April 21 is during Dead Week, and one group will be presenting on that date. The other four groups will present the week before.

All groups will have at least five weekends (including Spring Break) from conception to completion of the project; please keep this in mind when designing your projects. While I encourage you to strive for big, bold, innovative approaches to *Ulysses*, I also must remind you to be realistic. Bite off an amount that you are able to handle with these projects, however you decide to approach them. At the same time, remember that you have five people in each group, and you should create enough work to keep everyone busy.

With this project – as well as your individual project earlier in the semester – my best advice in terms of brainstorming is that, if there’s something you’d like to try, ask me. I am happy to help you brainstorm or try to figure out how to adapt a particular idea into a successful project. At any time during either of these projects, just let me know and I’ll happily have an individual or group conference with you during my office hours (or some other time that works for both of us).

When I grade your final project, worth 250 points, I will ask myself the following questions:

- Does this project successfully “map” *Ulysses*, in some way, for a contemporary audience?
- Does the physical presentation contribute to the success of the mapping project?
- Does the project present a fresh perspective on the concept of mapping Joyce’s Dublin?
- Is the writing grammatically correct and stylistically interesting?

### In-Class Group Presentation

Over the final two weeks of the class, you will present your argument and research to the class in a thirty-minute group in-class presentation. Be sure to have enough material to fill the 30-35 minute timeframe. I strongly encourage you to engage your audience with these presentations, rather than simply talking at us. The primary goal of this presentation is to effectively present your idea and garner the interest of your classmates.

I will provide you with a detailed rubric for your presentation later in the semester.
Ulysses Response Sheet General Instructions

Each response sheet asks you to list three questions you had while reading that particular episode. These questions can be specific, factual questions (though do check Gifford and Blamires to see if they address them) or open-ended, rhetorical ones. Be sure that you provide enough information for me to determine where the question comes from (page and line number) and for you to ask it coherently in class.

An example:

-- The mysterious man in the mackintosh is driving me crazy. Why does he keep appearing? What does it mean? What are we supposed to do with it?

Each response sheet also asks you to list three observations you had about the episode. You should use these observations to make insights either about the episode as a whole or about smaller pieces of it (sections, paragraphs, sentences, or even individual words). I would encourage you to flesh out your observations over several sentences, when necessary, and you can also incorporate direct quotes (or provide page and line numbers).

An example:

-- I noticed a number of instances in this episode where Joyce drew direct parallels between Bloom and Stephen, including (#1), (#2), (#3), and (#4). The most interesting one, though, was on #5, where Bloom and Stephen are seen witnessing the same phenomenon from different perspectives, drawing attention to the theme of parallax to which Joyce keeps returning throughout the first six episodes.

I would encourage you to try different things in both your questions and your responses. Try asking both specific and rhetorical questions; try making both large- and small-scale insights. In addition, feel free to direct your questions and observations toward aspects of the novel that you are interested in, whatever those may be. Ideally, these response sheets will help you begin to formulate ideas for both your individual and group projects.

The final part of each response sheet asks you to write a topic that you want to be sure to tackle in the discussion of that episode. It is your job to be sure that the class discusses this topic, whether or not I specifically ask you to read your response in class.

An example:

-- I definitely want to talk about Joyce’s use of adjectives, particularly “snotgreen.”

The main point of these response sheets is to provoke compelling discussions. In addition to the response sheets (which I would suggest using even on the days when you don’t have to), I strongly encourage taking notes throughout the reading process of particular passages that you might want to use in your larger projects for the course. It is easy to lose passages (though fairly easy to find them on the web) and even easier to forget about them.
Ulysses Response Sheet

Name:

Response #:

Class Meeting Time:

Episode:

Three questions I had while reading this episode:

1.

2.

3.

Three observations/insights I had while reading this episode:

1.

2.

3.

One topic I want to make sure to discuss in class today: