

Fall 2019 Course Descriptions

Instructor: Michael Collins

Course: 481.903

Title: Law and Literature

Description: Crime, detection, trial, punishment, rehabilitation, freedom: This is the familiar cycle of justice in the United States and many other nations. The whole of this cycle, as well as the legal framework in which the cycle unfolds, is the subject matter of the interdisciplinary subfield of literary criticism and legal studies that is known as "Law and Literature." As a way of introducing "Law and Literature," and its subfield, "Law as Literature," this class will explore works that represent, theorize, or condemn all or part of this cycle as the authors explore the intricacies of injustice and its opposite. At a larger level, this class will explore the impact of legal systems on societies like that of the United States, where, as the Law and Literature scholar Robert A. Ferguson has written, "Legal formulation both created and capped the conservative American Revolution: it provided the rationale for rebellion even as it [shaped] the continuum of revolution with the archetypical patterns of a new order."

Proposed Readings: Possible readings include books such as Jean Genet's *Thief's Journal*, Dante's *Inferno*, Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*, Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, Alan Dershowitz's *Reasonable Doubts: The Criminal Justice System and the O.J. Simpson Case*, Edgar Allan Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, and Joyce Carol Oates' *The Female of the Species*. However, this list is subject to change between now and the fall.