

English 498

Banned Books in America

Fall 2023

Prof. Walsh

"Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever
remains, however improbable, must be the truth. -
Arthur Conan Doyle

Class Time: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Lawson Building: George Scarbrough Room

August 13, 2023 through November 21, 2023

Final Exam: None

Final Project: November 30, 2023 @ 3:00 p.m.

Office: Lawson 124-B

Office Hours: T-T 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m./3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Office Hours: M/W/F by appointment

Texts

- *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*—Anne Frank
- *The Call of the Wild*—Jack London
- *Go Ask Alice*—Anonymous
- *Howl*—Allen Ginsberg (provided)
- *Howl* (the film)
- *Maus*—Art Spiegelman
- *Of Mice and Men*—John Steinbeck
- *The Sun Also Rises*—Ernest Hemingway
- *Where the Wild Things Are*—Maurice Sendak

Each student *MUST* have a physical copy of these books for class.

Grades

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Class Participation/Attendance | 20% |
| Writing Assignments | 30% |
| 2 Power Point Presentations | 50% |

*** PLEASE NOTE: **This syllabus is *subject to change*** as a result of various factors such as availability of the texts to arrive on time; how quickly each text is discussed; rate of speed during class; as well as other unforeseen issues. All attempts will be made to adhere to the schedule; however, if a change occurs, ***it will be noted during the class***. It is each student's responsibility to update the syllabus at that time. No electronic versions are allowed in class, as well as no electronics of any kind. There is a tactile necessity to touching and feeling the *made thing* that cannot be substituted by electronics.

Course Objectives

1. Learn and understand the process of censorship and leading to banning books—the WHY and HOW this occurs.
2. Understand the legality of Free Speech and the Constitutionality of Freedom of the Press.
3. Understand the power struggle among the seemingly powerless and how and why banning books is an avenue for obtaining power.
4. Reading and analyzing specific books, films, songs, and text as to why they are banned.
5. Understand the avenues for preventing the censorship and banning of books in the United States

Attendance, Tardiness and Late Work Policies

Don't miss class. Don't be late. That's fairly easy. Show up ready to learn. I do not accept assigned work that is late. Everyone has a 24-hour day so manage your time wisely. Turn in your work. . . on time.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

If you plagiarize any work for this class, I will fail you for the class, and I may choose to refer you to Judicial for punishment. Plagiarism is defined as presenting as your own any work that is not your own, whether it is work written by another student or parent or work copied from a written source or the Internet. Even if you reword it, it will be obvious to me.

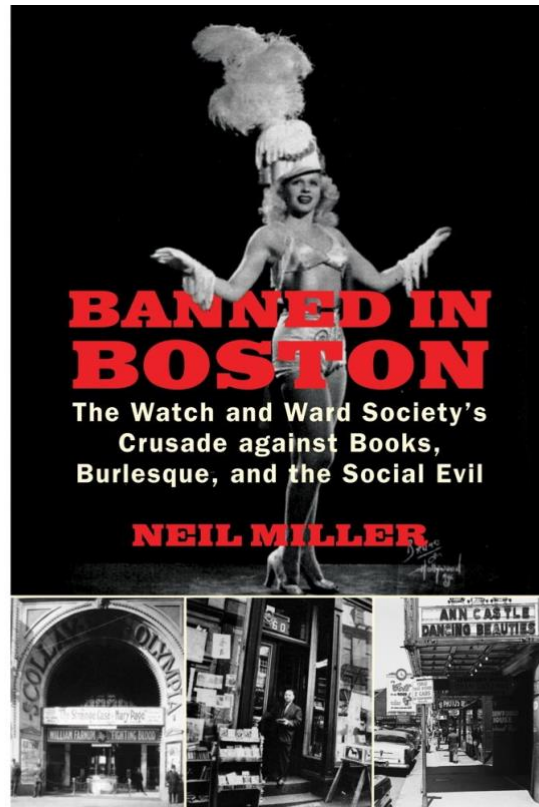
Grading Criteria for All Assignments:

- **RULE #1 -- Do not be late with your assignment!**
- In all things you write for class: no misspelled words—watch your grammar.
- Use intelligence, candor, and goodwill when discussing other students' creative work.
- Each student **MUST** have a copy of the books. Be prepared to discuss the books in detail

Class Behavior

My expectations for appropriate and acceptable classroom behavior are as follows:

1. Be prepared
2. Be on time
3. Come to class with the appropriate books and written assignments
4. *Turn off cellphones and put them away. No text messaging. If I see you on your phone, I will ask you to leave the class. I will not tolerate cellphones in class.*
5. Be courteous and respectful of others during class discussion



The Use of Artificial Intelligence

All machines invented by *mankind* are some forms of artificial intelligence (AI)—even the most basic abacus. However, it is and should not ever be a substitute for human brilliance. It is a device to assist in the process of life and a person's pursuit of greater knowledge. Therefore, any use of artificial intelligence, whether it is Chat GPT or other platforms is permissible in my classes; however, the RU student must adhere to the rules of citation as we understand them at this time. Otherwise, plagiarism is likely to occur, which can result in a failing grade, dismissal from the class, and/or dismissal from the university. Be prudent in your use of artificial intelligence. College students are scholars in training, and a portion of your education is the understanding of secondary sources. In most cases, as it stands, artificial intelligence cannot provide adequate documentation; thus, it is quite likely that the use of artificial intelligence will result in the student's inability to properly document their research. The result is likely a failing grade. Use artificial intelligence with the upmost caution. Regarding creative writing in classes taught by Professor Walsh, it is highly advised that the RU student refrain from all use of artificial intelligence when generating creative work. The incarnation of creative work is an individual process which creates a nuance identifiable to the specific writer; therefore, artificial intelligence is likely to subvert that process as it pertains to the individual student writer.

“I am not afraid that the book will be controversial, I'm afraid it will not be controversial.”

Flannery O'Connor

Week 1

Tuesday, August 15:

- Introduction, syllabus, my teaching philosophy
- Discuss (learn and understand) the process of censorship and leading to banning books—the WHY and HOW this occurs.
- Discuss the Watch and Ward Society and Banned in Boston

Assignment: Read *Maus*.

Thursday, August 17:

- Discuss (learn and understand) the process of censorship and leading to banning books—the WHY and HOW this occurs.
- Discuss the Watch and Ward Society and Banned in Boston

Assignment: Research and bring to class three examples of censorship/banning of books – (1) distance past (100+ years), (2) recent past (up to 1940), and (3) contemporary issues. Be prepared to discuss these, as well as turned in a one-page reflective write-up with your ideas on censorship of these books.

Week 2

Tuesday, August 22

- Discuss the three examples of censorship:
 - Distance past (100+ years)
 - Recent past (up to 1940)
 - Contemporary issues
- Discuss the legality of Free Speech and the Constitutionality of Freedom of the Press.
- Begin discussing *Maus* and the reasons for its censorship

Assignment: Continue reading *Maus*. Research and bring to class some talking points on *Maus* that pertains to censorship, being banned, the how and why of those persisting to remove the book. The key is to understand the WHY.

Thursday, August 24:

- Discuss the three examples of censorship:
 - Distance past (100+ years)
 - Recent past (up to 1940)
 - Contemporary issues
- Discuss the legality of Free Speech and the Constitutionality of Freedom of the Press.
- Begin discussing *Maus* and the reasons for its censorship

Assignment: Continue reading *Maus*. Research and bring to class some talking points on *Maus* that pertain to censorship, being banned, the how and why of those persisting to remove the book. The key is to understand the WHY.

Week 3

Tuesday, August 29:

- Continue the discussion on *Maus*, locating within the text issues of complaint against the book.
- Discuss your perspective on *Maus* that pertain to censorship, being banned, the how and why of those persisting to remove the book.
- Provide your understanding of the WHY.

Assignment: Read *Go Ask Alice* by Anonymous – research and bring to class information on *Go Ask Alice* that pertain to censorship, being banned, the how and why of those persisting to remove the book. The key is to understand the why. After 50+ years, has this perspective changed. Why or why not?

Thursday, August 31:

- Begin a discussion on *Go Ask Alice*, locating within the text issues of complaint against the book.
- Discuss your perspective on *Go Ask Alice* that pertain to censorship, being banned, the how and why of those persisting to remove the book.
- Provide your understanding of the WHY.

Assignment: Read *Go Ask Alice* by Anonymous

Week 4

Tuesday, September 5:

- Discuss *Go Ask Alice*, locating within the text issues of complaint against the book.
- Discuss your perspective on *Go Ask Alice* that pertain to censorship, being banned, the how and why of those persisting to remove the book.

- Discuss the idea that *Go Ask Alice* is most likely a fraudulent memoir and instead a work of fiction, not a teenage diary.
- Discuss the first Power Point Presentation on a **school board banning books**. This will be due on Thursday, September 21
- Provide your understanding of the WHY.

Assignment: Continue reading *Go Ask Alice*

Thursday, September 7:

- Conclude the discussion on *Go Ask Alice*

Assignment: Read *The Call of the Wild*—Jack London—and research and bring to class information on *The Call of the Wild* that pertains to censorship, being banned, the how and why of those persisting to remove the book. The key is to understand the why. Since its publication in 1903, has this perspective changed. Why or why not? Why did they recently make a film? Is there a difference in the film and the novel in regard to pressure to be banned?

Find a novel, books of poems, or non-fiction book (not on our list) and begin researching the WHY and HOW it has been banned by a school board and/or another organization. Write a two-to-three-page write-up discussing the book. It can serve as the topic of your Power Point presentation due on Thursday, September 21st. Reading and analyze specific books, films, songs, and text as to why they are banned. This is due at the time of your Power Point.

Week 5

Tuesday, September 12:

- Discuss *The Call of the Wild*, locating within the text issues of complaint against the book.
- Discuss your perspective on *The Call of the Wild* that pertains to censorship, being banned, the how and why of those persisting to remove the book.
- Provide your understanding of the WHY.

Assignment: Continue reading and working on the Power Point

Thursday, September 14:

- Discuss *The Call of the Wild*, locating within the text issues of complaint against the book.
- Discuss your perspective on *The Call of the Wild* that pertains to censorship, being banned, the how and why of those persisting to remove the book.
- Provide your understanding of the WHY.

Assignment: Continue reading and working on the Power Point

Week 6

Tuesday, September 19:

- Conclude the discussion on *The Call of the Wild*.
- Discuss your Power Points Presentations

Thursday, September 21:

- Power Point Presentation – 20 minutes in length.
Student #1
Student #2
Student #3

Week 7

Tuesday, September 26:

- Power Point Presentation – 20 minutes in length.
Student #4
Student #5
- Discuss *Howl*
Discuss the 5 facts of information on the lawsuit against City Lights Books
- Discuss the possible outcome if the trial had occurred in Boston
- Discuss the upcoming Power Point Presentation

Assignment: Read *Howl*—Allen Ginsberg (provided) and watch the film, *Howl*
Develop 5 facts of information on the lawsuit against City Lights Books

Assignment: Prepare/Fine-tune the Power Point Presentation
Read *Of Mice and Men*—John Steinbeck

Thursday, September 28:

- Begin watching the film, *Howl*

Week 8

Tuesday, October 3:

- Conclude watching the film, *Howl*

Assignment:

Read *Of Mice and Men*—John Steinbeck

Read *Where the Wild Things Are*—Maurice Sendak

NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

October 4th-8th

Week 9

Tuesday, October 10

- Discuss *Of Mice and Men*
- Discuss Steinbeck's reputation
- Discuss *Where the Wild Things Are*
- *Where the Wild Things Are* – discuss being banned, the how and why of those persisting to remove the book—especially the historical significance of the text. The key is to understand the why. Since its publication, has this perspective changed. Why or why not?? Why is the story so popular with children, yet has the wrath of certain organizations?

Thursday, October 12

- Discuss *Of Mice and Men*
- Discuss Steinbeck's reputation

Special Event: October 12th

Poetry Reading

Visiting Poet: **Jocelyn Heath**

7:00 p.m.

Hill Freeman Library/Community Room

Q&A with students afterwards

Week 10

- Tuesday, October 17
- Conclude the discussion *Of Mice and Men*
- Discuss Steinbeck's reputation

Assignment: Read *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*

Research and bring to class information on *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* that pertains to censorship, being banned, the how and why of those persisting to remove the book—especially the historical significance of the text. The key is to understand the why. Since its publication, has this perspective changed. Why or why not?

Thursday, October 19

- Discuss your findings on *The Diary of a Young Girl*

Week 11

Tuesday, October 24

- Discuss *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*—Anne Frank

Assignment: Continue reading *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* and look for reasons within the text as to why it is banned. What is the justification for banning this book—could it be based on other factors other than obscenity?

Assignment:

Begin preparing second Power Point – Topic to be discussed in class

Thursday, October 26

- Continue the discussion on *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*—Anne Frank

Assignment: Continue reading *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*
Begin preparing second Power Point

Week 12

Tuesday, October 31

- Discuss *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*—Anne Frank

Assignment: Preparing the second Power Point

Thursday, November 2

- Presentation on legal matters for banning books

Assignment: Prepare your second Power Point

Week 13

Tuesday, November 7

- Power Point Presentation – 20 minutes in length.
Student #1
Student #2
Student #3

Thursday, November 9

- Power Point Presentation – 20 minutes in length.
Student #4
Student #5

Assignment: Begin reading *The Sun Also Rises*—Ernest Hemingway

Week 14

Tuesday, November 14

- Discuss *The Sun Also Rises*

Assignment: Continue reading *The Sun Also Rises*

Thursday, November 16

- Discuss *The Sun Also Rises*

Assignment: Continue reading *The Sun Also Rises*

Week 15

Tuesday, November 21 (LAST DAY of CLASS)

- Discuss *The Sun Also Rises*
- Wrap up loose ends/Answer questions

Final Assignment: Write a 3-to-5-page paper: Provide your opinion on the most significant obstacle(s) to the idea of Freedom of Speech, especially in regard to books, publishing, access to information, and being silenced by organizations opposed to a person's Constitutional Rights. For an Honors student, the paper should be 6-to-10 pages.

A Few Important Things Required on the Syllabus

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. This legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Reinhardt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Therefore, if you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with the Academic Support Office (ASO). ASO is located in the basement of Lawson Building. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper ASO letters.

Reinhardt University Credit Hour Policy

In defining a credit hour, Reinhardt University adopts the Federal Definition of a Credit Hour (described in 34 CFR 600.2, effective July 1, 2011) as follows:

For purposes of the application of this policy and in accord with federal regulations, a credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates:

1. Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time, or
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as outlined in item 1 above for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

This credit hour policy applies to all courses at all levels (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) that award academic credit on an official transcript regardless of the mode of delivery including, but not limited to, fully online, hybrid, lecture, seminar, laboratory, studio, directed study, or study abroad. Academic units are responsible for ensuring that credit hours are awarded only for work that meets the requirements outlined in this policy.

The expectation of contact time inside the classroom and student effort outside the classroom is the same in all formats of a course whether it be in online, a hybrid of face-to-face contact with some content delivered electronically, or one delivered in lecture or seminar format. Similarly, the expectation of contact time inside the classroom and student effort outside the classroom is the same for regular semesters and shortened sessions (i.e., Spring I or Spring II Sessions).

Courses that have less structured classroom schedules, such as research seminars, independent studies, directed studies, internships, practica, studio work, as well as courses offered in shortened sessions or in online or hybrid formats, at a minimum, should state clearly expected learning outcomes and workload expectations that meet the standards set forth above.

Covid 19

Important:

All students, faculty, staff and administration at Reinhardt University are subject to changes in policies if mandated by the State of Georgia. Current policies and procedures can be found at : <https://www.reinhardt.edu/back-to-campus>
If you have any questions, please refer to the website or contact Reinhardt University at the numbers below.

Campus Nurse within the Student Health Center

nurse@reinhardt.edu, 770-720-5542 or www.reinhardt.edu/nurse.

Public Safety

Non-Emergency Phone: 770.720.5789

Emergency Phone: 770.720.5911

publicsafety@reinhardt.edu

Dean of Students

deanofstudents@reinhardt.edu, 770-720-5540

Office of the Provost

provost@reinhardt.edu, 770-720-9102