COURSE DESCRIPTION

*It is not on any map. True places never are.*
– Herman Melville

Do windows and a roof make a home? Does a family? What is “home”? What represents and defines it, and what can it represent and define? This course will explore the idea of “home” as a space that is lived, perceived, and conceived. In seeing how other writers can call displacement, full-body casts, memory, and subway systems (among many others) “home,” students will be guided to also redefine the concept through personal, critical, and creative writings.

REQUIRED TEXTS

* Supplemental texts made available on Canvas that you are required to print and bring to class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Humanities General Education Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of diverse philosophical, communicative, linguistic, and literary traditions, as well as of key themes, concepts, issues, terminology, and ethical standards in humanities disciplines.
2. Students will analyze cultural artifacts within a given discipline, and, when appropriate, across disciplines, time periods, and cultures.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate their understanding of humanities materials in written, oral, or graphic forms.

Honors Program Learning Outcomes:

1. Clear and compelling written expression
2. Critical thinking that is open-minded, objective, and as free as possible from prejudice and presupposition
3. The comprehension of abstract arguments and the ability to move between the general and the particular
4. An appreciation for the variety of human experience, exploring both its universality and its diversity
5. An understanding of and appreciation for the various modes of artistic expression
6. Collaboration on group projects or activities
ASSIGNMENTS

Important: You are required to produce new and original work for this class. All assigned work must be typed and turned in on time. Should you need to email your work in case of an absence, you need to do so via Canvas or directly to our email accounts by the time class starts to be counted on time. You are responsible for saving copies of any work turned in for grading.

* Defining ‘Home’ (20%): Before we can begin re-defining the notion of ‘home,’ we must first establish and understand our current definitions for/of it. Twice this semester, you will need to compose a short, reflective essay in which you define what ‘home’ means and represents to you. What does the ‘home’ space look like? How have you come to understand this domestic location and its meaning(s)? While your first essay should rely heavily on your personal experiences as a way of defining ‘home,’ your second essay will need to engage with the ideas and historical background provided in Home: A Short History of an Idea. Finally, as you compose, be mindful of how we often come to know and remember our homes—via our five senses—and strive to provide compelling and specific imagery in your writing. Your essay must adhere to current MLA guidelines and standards.

* Presentation (10%): You will be required to present on a chapter from our course text, Home: A Short History of an Idea. In addition to providing a foundation for our class discussion, your presentation should discuss and provide an example of how the chapter’s guiding theme/idea manifests itself in our current era. Your presentation should last no more than 20 minutes.

* Ghazal (10%): Following our discussion of the ghazal form, you will need to compose an original ghazal on the theme of ‘home.’

* Invisible Cities (30%): In the style of Italo Calvino’s Invisible Cities, you will need to compose and illustrate the descriptions for two original, imagined invisible cities. More details about this assignment will be provided later in the semester.

* Re-defining ‘Home’ (30%): Using the essays in Open House: Writers Redefine Home as models, you will need to compose a creative nonfiction essay in which you re-define your meaning of home—a place that is a blend of geographical, cerebral, and emotional associations. This longer essay should be heavily informed by our class discussions and readings, and I expect that you will use the texts as source material to deepen your essay. This piece may build on an earlier assignment or in-class exercise, but it is not a requirement. Your essay must adhere to current MLA guidelines and standards.

Extra Credit Options
In an effort to encourage students to be active participants in the writing community here at WSU, you can gain extra credit points by attending or participating in a literary event. I will announce these events during the semester. If you have any questions about whether an event “counts,” just ask! To earn credit, you will need to write a 1-2 page, double-spaced review of the event and what you experienced or learned from it. One credit per event. You may only earn up to five extra credit points for the semester.

COURSE POLICIES
Attendance
You are expected to attend class and attend it on time. You are permitted 3 absences (aka: one whole week of class) without any effect on your overall attendance grade. Every additional absence will reduce your course grade by half a letter grade. At your 6th absence, you will fail the course. Please note that all absences are treated equally, meaning there are no “excused” or “unexcused” absences. If you anticipate that you will be missing multiple classes because of extenuating circumstances beyond your control, your best recourse—in this class and others—is to communicate with me as soon as possible, preferably before you are absent.

Please note: Every day at the beginning of class an attendance sign-in sheet will be passed around the room. Make sure you sign in or you will be marked absent for that day.

Core Beliefs
According to PPM 6-22 IV, students are to “[d]etermine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with a student's core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class. A student who finds this solution impracticable may request a resolution from the instructor. This policy does not oblige the instructor to grant the request, except in those cases when a denial would be arbitrary and capricious or illegal. This request must be made to the instructor in writing and the student must deliver a copy of the request to the office of the department head. The student's request must articulate the burden the requirement would place on the student's beliefs.”

* Please note that the course texts may include material that may be offensive. I aim to teach with the most relevant models, and it is not unusual for writing to include profanity, depictions of sexual encounters, violence, and political or religious content. I welcome all forms of writing and music here, provided that they aspire towards excellent craftsmanship.

A Note Academic Dishonesty (Plagiarism)
Students are expected to do their own work. As specified in PPM 6-22 IV D, cheating and plagiarism violate the Student Code. Plagiarism is “the unacknowledged (un cited) use of any other person’s or group’s ideas or work.” Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism are subject to failure of a specific assignment, or, in more serious cases, failure of the entire course.

Disability Accommodation
PPM 3-34 notes: “When students seek accommodation in a regularly scheduled course, they have the responsibility to make such requests at the Center for Students with Disabilities before the beginning of the quarter [semester] in which the accommodation is being requested. When a student fails to make such arrangements, interim accommodations can be made by the instructor, pending the determination of the request for a permanent accommodation.”

Counseling Center
Being in college can add a whole new set of challenges to balancing family, work, friendships, and other responsibilities. If you’re feeling overwhelmed, anxious or even just a little down, please take advantage of the FREE, confidential services at the counseling center. Contact them at 801-626-6406; Student Services 280; weber.edu/CounselingCenter.

Emergency Closure
If for any reason the university is forced to close for an extended period of time, we will conduct our class via Canvas. Look for announcements through your Weber email and on our Canvas page.