

WRLD 399E – Sean Lawrence

The Covid-19 pandemic now (hopefully) coming to an end left many people searching for explanations, or at least precedents for their experiences. Fortunately, literature abounds in fictional or semi-fictional plagues. On the other hand, these are understood within the writer's own belief system, historical context, or simply fictional exigency.

In this course, we'll read several works, most of them from what's usually referred to as the western tradition, to examine how they understand and respond to pandemic disease from within their world views, but also how they use pandemics as metaphors and plot devices.

Texts:

Albert Camus, *The Plague*  
Tony Kushner, *Angels in America*

Excerpts from the following:

The Bible  
Ovid's *Metamorphoses*  
Boccaccio's *Decameron*  
*The Broken Spears* (an account of the conquest of Mexico)  
28 (a collection of African AIDS memoirs)