

## INTRODUCTION to SECOND LIFE

### **PRIMARY GOAL of Final Project:**

Second Life allows visitors to interact with objects and physically negotiate a space so that they can get a better understanding of an environment. How could you present some of the material from the novel you've chosen in the virtual space of Second Life in order to give readers/SL-visitors a better sense of the environment depicted by the author?

Think about "environment" not only as the physical space (a yard, a house, a sidewalk, a pond), but also:

*--the cultural environment*

Note that "culture" does not refer to the narrow definition of superior pieces of Art, but rather to the beliefs, values, norms and standards, and practices of a particular group of people (religious, ethnic, age, social, or lifestyle group)

*--the historical moment in which the novel is set*

During the months and years depicted in the writing, what other events are going on in that town? the country? the world? How might these affect the occurrences in the novel, and the dynamics between the protagonist and others?

*--the emotional feelings and/or thoughts/psychological space of the individual*

As you conceptualize your Second Life space, consider how you might translate Morrison's words and themes into visual terms that profit from Second Life technology.

Keeping the following question in mind might facilitate this task:

**How can you teach other readers/visitors the crucial lessons of the novel in a more creative way than through the conventional analytical essay?**

## DAY ONE—

1. Create an account on Second Life (if you have not already done so).
  - a) Pick an avatar from the given choices (you'll just select a general form [human, robot, or animal; if human, then male or female, etc.], which you'll be able to customize later).
  - b) Provide a username (e.g. "jsmith" or "JaneDoe42")
  - c) Fill out your email address, date of birth, and password, etc.

2. Create an avatar (15 min).

Try to cover just the basics: name, gender, general appearance. You can fine-tune the details later. The SL program will remain on these computers for the whole semester, or you can download it on your personal computer (it's free).

3. Figure out how to negotiate your space. Practice walking and flying.

Over the course of the semester, I would like you to explore the virtual world of Second Life to get a sense of what it is possible for your avatar to do/experience.

**ASSIGNMENT:** *Visit at least 5 SL spaces on your own* (not including those listed below), and keep a record of the specific locations that you visit (names and URLs). Include these in your Final Project Portfolio, along with the answers to the following questions (for each site):

- a) What were the most interesting things that you saw on this island, or at particular sites on the island?
- b) How and why did they capture your attention?
- c) Did you interact with the environment, or just look/observe/wander around?
- d) What did you see and do that you might apply to your creation of a Morrison space?

4. Teleport to the following locations:

- a) Macbeth – Foul Whisperings, Strange Matters [literature]
- b) Teleport to Exploratorium site [science]  
Must wear mask & helmet to enter.  
Can ask questions of Patio Plasma.
- c) Eduisland, Arctic Live Wild Sanctuary [science]
- d) Sedig–Virtual Hallucinations site created by UC Davis [health/medicine]  
Experience what it feels like to have schizophrenia.
- e) Teleport to Kalepa–DaVinci Gardens [art/science]  
Take a ride on the magic bat.

5. Teleport to Johnson County Community College – patio  
Class meeting: 6:40 pm

English 334: Major Authors – Toni Morrison  
Professor Giselle Anatol  
Fall 2011  
Second Life Final Project

## **DAY TWO—EVALUATION PROCESS**

The process of thought, reflection, drafting, and revision is key to the Second Life project—it is a technique that should remain useful as you craft conventional essays in other classes, and/or pieces of writing outside of the academic environment. Teams/Individuals will therefore be rewarded for process and not just product (and hopefully this will also relieve some of the performance anxiety over not feeling competent with the technology!).

The following exercise is designed to further familiarize you with the virtual worlds of Second Life, but also to serve as a "norming session" for identifying and evaluating effective "educational" sites. You will visit 3 SL sites, interact with the environments, and assess them. I would like you to apply the knowledge gained from this assessment to your own final project (i.e. find ways to use the most effective tools when designing your own site).

### Assignment

1. Visit the following Second Life sites:

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE – Imagination Island, Rachelville

GOTHIC LITERATURE – Village of Nyght, Dunwich

SHAKESPEARE – Globe Theatre, East Tower

2. Rank the sites: which one is best? Why do the other 2 sites not work as well for teaching a visitor about the ideas at hand?

3. Write up your findings and submit at the end of the session. Please write legibly! Make sure your name is on your paper.

Note: Although that while it might not be evident at first, you are engaged in "textual analysis." Each site—although not the traditional short story, poem, novel, or scholarly article—serves as a "text," written/created by an artist.