

English 102: Literature and Composition
Spring 2012
Room and Time: D-206, W, 6:00-8:45pm

Instructor: Andy Ploeg
Office and Hours: D-205; W, 4:00-6:00pm
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Course Description:

Students are taught how to read serious literature, how to develop an interpretation, and how to explain and support their ideas in writing. Through the study of selected works of fiction, poetry, and drama, students are expected to learn the traditional elements of textual analysis and become familiar with the ways in which other critical approaches affect interpretation. In addition to continued instruction in composition, students are required to read continually and write frequently in preparation for every class.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

Read and think critically

- Demonstrate an understanding of the connection between reading literature and critical thinking.
- Use the basic elements of formalist criticism to analyze a work of literature, including theme, tone, setting, point of view, characterization, plot, and figurative language.
- Recognize and use other critical strategies beyond formalism to analyze literature, including some of the following: psychological, feminist, new historical, cultural, Marxist, post-colonial, reader response.
- Distinguish how different critical theories affect interpretation and levels of meaning; recognize the validity of using different critical approaches in literary analysis.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of reading literature presenting diverse perspectives.
- Formulate and articulate their own perspectives about both meaning and structure in a work of literature supported with specifics from the text.

Write critically and analytically

- Write responses that articulate their perspectives about both meaning and structure in a work of literature supported with specifics from the text.
- Write formal academic essays that articulate their arguments about both meaning and structure in a work of literature supported with specifics from the text.

Demonstrate information literacy

Further develop research skills by demonstrating an ability to:

- Recognize when it is appropriate to use outside sources
- Evaluate sources for accuracy, validity, and academic relevance
- Cite sources using MLA citation format
- Employ strategies for avoiding plagiarism

Apply the foundations of strong academic skills

- Identify the literary genres of poetry, fiction, and drama, and some of the forms and structures within those genres.
- Recognize how reading literature aids in the understanding of the human condition.
- Produce academic documents that adhere to MLA formatting conventions.
- Work with others to analyze literature and develop valid interpretations.

- Formulate questions that encourage critical thinking and a deeper understanding of literature.

Attendance and Participation Policy:

Because your regular and informed contribution to our discussions is vital to your success and to the effectiveness of our class as a whole, weekly attendance will be essential. Thus, you should have no more than two unexcused absences throughout the semester. More than two absences will jeopardize your chances of passing the course, regardless of your grades in other areas. If extenuating circumstances are involved (i.e. emergencies, university-sanctioned events, religious holidays, etc), please let me know about them in advance, if possible. Remember that you are responsible for all information and assignments that you miss due to absences (whether excused and unexcused), so make sure to contact a classmate as soon as possible in order to find out what you missed and then email me with any questions that you may have. However, attendance in this class does not simply mean being physically present; it means coming to class prepared and actively participating throughout our time together. Your enthusiastic and informed involvement each week will demonstrate to me not only that you have read the material carefully but that you have thought about it critically as well. Additionally, active participation will better prepare you for weekly quizzes and essay assignments.

A Note on Cellphones: Please refrain from using your cellphones during our class sessions. It is disruptive to your own engagement with the material, and disrespectful to your fellow classmates and to me. Thanks!

Formal Essays:

You will write three formal essays this semester, though shorter, informal assignments will be required as well. The first formal essay will be 5 to 6 pages in length; the second essay will be 6 to 7 pages in length, and the third essay will be 7 to 8 pages in length. Each formal essay should be an argumentative analysis of a major theme that we have discussed this semester and will be dedicated to a single text within a single literary genre, including poetry, short fiction, and drama. The third essay must be independently researched and incorporate both primary and secondary sources. The purpose of the formal essays is to demonstrate your knowledge of literary genres and elements, as well as your ability to make and support effective literary analyses. The due dates for the semester paper are as follows:

FE#1 (Poetry): February 29th

FE#2 (Short Fiction): April 4th

FE#3 (Drama): May 9th

Late Paper Policy:

I will collect papers at the start of the class period on the days that they are due. Late papers will not be accepted via email and will be marked down ten percent per class period late.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the intentional use of someone else's words or ideas without crediting them correctly. It is a serious violation of academic standards that is subject to one or more of the following penalties: a failing grade for the paper; a failing grade for the course; a report to the administrative authorities for appropriate action (i.e. a notation on the student's permanent record, suspension, or expulsion). For more details, please familiarize yourself with the Academic Integrity policy in our on-line catalogue.

Exams:

Both the midterm and final exams will be comprehensive (i.e. they will cover ALL of the material we have studied up to that point in the course). In taking these exams, you will be responsible for having a strong command of all of the authors, texts, literary elements, as well as historical periods and literary movements that we have read about and/or discussed in class to that point. More details will follow throughout the semester (well in advance of the exams themselves) regarding specific exam content and study suggestions. The midterm exam will be given during our usual class period on Wednesday, March 14th, and will include short answer and essay questions. The final exam for our class will be held on Wednesday, May 16th, and will also include short answer and essay questions. Please make any travel plans for both Spring Break and for the end of the semester accordingly.

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Grading Scale:

Formal Essays (3)	45%			A	93%	C	73%
Midterm Exam	15%			A-	90%	C-	70%
Final Exam	25%			B+	88%	D+	68%
Attendance & Participation	10%			B	83%	D	63%
Assignments, Quizzes, etc	5%			B-	80%	D-	60%
				C+	78%	F	59

Office Hours and Additional Assistance:

I encourage you to come talk to me during my office hours at any point in the semester. My office hours, which will be held from 4:00 to 6:00pm on Wednesdays, are for you to discuss this class and get any help that you may need in regard to it. Beyond these office hours, I am also available via email, so feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns and I will get back to you as soon as I can. In addition, I encourage you to seek help at the Writing Center, which is located in the Tutoring and Academic Success Center (TASC) next to the library in C-117. It is open Mondays through Thursdays from 9am to 8pm, Fridays from 9am to 4pm, and Saturdays from 10am to 2pm, and is a very valuable academic resource to writers of all levels.

Students With Disabilities:

Any student with a disability that may require classroom or course modification should see me during the first week of class so that an appropriate plan to meet your needs may be arranged.

Required Textbook and Other Materials:

- *Literature for Composition*, 9th Edition (Barnet, Burto, and Cain)
- Hard copies of all required Blackboard materials (class documents, essays, etc)

Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

All assigned texts can be found in *Literature and Composition* (9th edition), unless otherwise noted, and must be read *actively* by the dates listed below. Supplemental material may be added.

Poetry Unit:

Week 1 (1/25):

Overview of syllabus; icebreaker activity; introduction to critical thinking; Ch. 10: “Critical Thinking: Arguing with Oneself, Asking Questions, and Making Comparisons” (323-330)

Week 2 (2/1):

Ch. 2: “The Writer as Reader” (11-21); Ch. 3: “The Reader as Writer” (45-63); Robert Hayden “Frederick Douglass” (1234-1235); Lorna Dee Cervantes “Refugee Ship” (1235-1236); Edwin Arlington Robinson “Richard Cory” (1236-1237); Allen Ginsberg “A Supermarket in California” (1238-1239)

Week 3 (2/8):

Ch. 11: “A Brief Guide: Writing About Literature” (334-338); Ch. 16: “Reading and Writing About Poems” (488-520); Yusef Komunyakaa “Facing It” (1241-1243); Billy Collins “The Names” (1243-1245); Gwendolyn Brooks “The Bean Eaters” (1245); Dorothy Parker “Resume” (1246)

Week 4 (2/15):

Ch. 5: “Reading Literature Closely: Explication” (101-114); Ch. 6: “Reading Literature Closely: Analysis” (120-157, 178-182); Joseph Bruchac III “Ellis Island” (1105-1107); Aurora Levins Morales “Child of the Americas” (1107-1108); Gloria Anzaldúa “To Live in the Borderlands Means You” (1108-1110); Jimmy Santiago Baca “So Mexicans Are Taking Jobs from Americans” (1110-1111)

Week 5 (2/22):

Ch. 7: “Arguing an Interpretation” (183-207); Langston Hughes “Theme for English B” (1112-1113); Pat Parker “For the White Person Who Wants to Know How to Be My Friend” (1113-1114); Mitsuye Yamada “To the Lady” (1114-1116); Nila NorthSun “Moving Camp Too Far” (1116-1117); **Essay #1 RDWS**

Short Story Unit:

Week 6 (2/29):

Kurt Vonnegut Jr. “Harrison Bergeron” (1199-1204); Langston Hughes “One Friday Morning” (1204-1210); **Essay #1 Due**

Week 7 (3/7):

Ch. 13: “Reading and Writing About Stories” (355-367); William Carlos Williams “The Use of Force” (1210-1213); Shirley Jackson “The Lottery” (1213-1219)

Week 8 (3/14):

Appendix A: “Writing About Literature: An Overview of Critical Strategies” (1347-1361); Grace Paley “A Man Told Me the Story of His Life” (1219-1220); Amy Tan “Two Kinds” (1079-1087); **Midterm Exam**

Week 9 (3/21):

Spring Break—No Class

Week 10 (3/28):

Alice Walker “Everyday Use” (1087-1093); Katherine Min “Courting a Monk” (1093-1103); **Essay #2 RDWS**

Drama Unit:

Week 11 (4/4):

Ch. 15: “Reading and Writing About Plays” (434-444, 448-449); Tennessee Williams *The Glass Menagerie* (1246-1254); **Essay #2 Due**

Week 12 (4/11):

Ch. 9: “Research Writing With Sources” (309-319); Tennessee Williams *The Glass Menagerie* (1254-1267)

Week 13 (4/18):

Tennessee Williams *The Glass Menagerie* (1267-1291)

Week 14 (4/25):

Lorraine Hansberry *A Raisin in the Sun* (1127-1151)

Week 15 (5/2):

Lorraine Hansberry *A Raisin in the Sun* (1151-1183); **Essay #3 RDWS**

Week 16 (5/9):

Final Exam Preparation; **Essay #3 Due**

Week 17 (5/16):

Final Exam