

ENG 2010 INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

Prof. Sheffer

Fall 2013

Course Hours:

Tu Th 11:30 am—12:45 pm

Olscamp 119

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 2-4 pm and

by appointment

East Hall 414

Contact Information:

You can reach me via email at jsheffe@bgsu.edu.

REQUIRED TEXTS (Available from the BGSU bookstore)

- Kelly Mays, ed., *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, shorter 11th ed.
- Janet E. Gardner, *Writing About Literature*
- Nella Larsen, *Passing*
- Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (Norton Critical Edition)
- Bruce Norris, *Clybourne Park*
- Additional material available on Canvas is indicated with an *.

All shorter readings not indicated with an * can be found in the *Norton*. You can find the appropriate page number by searching in the index by author.

Course Description

This course introduces the general education student and/or prospective English major to ways of understanding texts within the discipline of literary studies. The student will become proficient in the terminology of the field, developing a familiarity with critical approaches to the discipline. Through class discussion and written assignments, the student will focus on improving skills in thinking and writing about literary, cultural, and critical texts, and in crafting thoughtful arguments.

Policies and Expectations

Discussion and Participation: This is a discussion-based class and you should come to each session thoroughly prepared to contribute actively to discussion. In addition to reading and completing your assignments on time, you are required to participate daily with enthusiasm, engagement, and intelligence.

You must ALWAYS bring a copy of the readings to class (textbook, printed copy of readings on Canvas, etc.). If you do not have the readings with you, you will be marked absent. See policy on absences below.

Office Hours: I am happy to discuss papers and other issues in the course during office hours. This is your opportunity to receive one-on-one attention and feedback from me. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, please contact me so that we can arrange an alternative appointment time.

Absences: You are permitted three absences throughout the course of the semester, with no penalty. Use these for illness, participation in an athletic event, attendance at a family activity, religious observance, job interview, or other reasons. On days you are absent, it is your responsibility to get notes and assignment information from a classmate. For each additional absence beyond the three permitted, your final grade will go down 5 percentage points. Your attendance and participation are required in class, just as an employee is expected to consistently perform his/her duties at work. Students who frequently arrive late to class will be counted as absent. **If you miss eight or more classes, you will automatically fail the course.** If you will be absent on a day when an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to make prior arrangements with me regarding work that is due for that day. (If you have a medical condition or emergency that requires extensive absences, see me as early as possible to discuss your options.)

Assignments: These are due at the *beginning* of class in hard copy, unless otherwise instructed. Please pay close attention to all deadlines, as I will not accept late work. If you will be absent on a day something is due, it is your responsibility to speak with me ahead of time to arrange submission of assignments. If you have a serious emergency, you will need to contact me as soon as possible to discuss alternate submission method or the possibility of an extension.

Plagiarism & Cheating: Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances, even if it is inadvertent. Cheating of any kind (including taking extra times on exams,) will not be tolerated. Please review the honor code, the university's policy on plagiarism, and proper citation format (MLA style). Ignorance of the rules for proper citation is not a valid excuse. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, see me well in advance of deadlines for clarification.

I encourage you to use our email list for other class-related communication, such as local events or articles relevant to our class discussions. Be sure to check your e-mail regularly for messages related to readings and assignments.

Requirements

Essays:

- THREE times throughout the semester (see schedule), students will submit thoughtful, analytical essays responding to the assigned reading(s.) I will provide topics, prompts, or suggestions for these papers. These are short essays that demonstrate your in-depth understanding of the readings, and should go well beyond our class discussions or mere summary. These assignments should exhibit strong close reading skills in order to make analytical observations and craft an argument about (i.e., interpret) the work. Each essay should be carefully proof-read, spell-checked, and reviewed for accuracy.
- All essays must be typed and double-spaced, in 12-point Times font, with one-inch margins, using MLA style for works cited and in-text citations). Be sure to follow MLA citation rules for the appropriate genre (poetry, drama, fiction).
- Please include your name, course number, date, and a title for your paper. Always staple (do not paperclip or fold) pages together.

Essays (cont'd):

- You are to write about aspects of the text that we did not discuss in class. You should focus your analysis on ONE text (one story, one play, one poem, etc.), unless otherwise advised.
- Creative options are allowed and encouraged for up to TWO of these essays. See me for suggestions or to propose your own idea for an alternative topic or non-traditional format (short story, poetry, dramatic performance, etc.). You must get my approval in advance for all creative options.
 - In addition, any creative response must be accompanied by a one-page (minimum) rationale and analysis that:
 - explains what you were trying to accomplish with your creative application
 - connects your work to course readings, topics, and/or themes
 - thoughtfully analyzes your own work in the same ways we close read and interpret assigned readings (using terms such as symbolism, setting, language, form, etc.).
- To improve your writing, you have the option to thoroughly revise ONE of the first two required essays; see schedule for “Optional Revision” deadlines if you wish to take advantage of this opportunity. You may not use the optional revision to substitute for an essay that you failed to complete on time. The revision must be thorough and substantive, adding deeper analysis, reorganizing paragraphs, and rewriting vague or confusing sentences. Any submission that merely corrects line edits will not improve your grade.
- I encourage you to see me in office hours to discuss your papers, and to utilize the Writing Center tutors to improve your writing.

Final Examination:

- There will be a final examination, given on the last day of the class. This exam will cover key terms and concepts from the Norton and our in-class discussions, as well as essay question(s) showing your comprehension of and ability to synthesize the readings.

Short assignments:

- Short assignments include detailed response papers (approximately 2 pages, double-spaced, formatted according to standards listed above for Essays, and stapled), quizzes, as well as additional homework assignments I give in-class or over e-mail. These are due at the beginning of class in hard copy. Some assignments will be staggered, so that half the class submits the work one day, and the other half on the following class period. There will be between 8 and 12 short assignments, and I will drop the lowest two scores. Pay close attention to my instructions in class and over email about these assignments!

Class Participation:

- You are expected to be an active participant in the class discussion. You will be evaluated for the quantity and quality of that participation. For full credit, expect to speak at least twice PER class period. Participation includes volunteering to read out loud, answering and asking questions, working productively with a partner when assigned to a small group, and generally being congenial, well-prepared, and willing to share ideas.

Extra Credit:

- You will have several opportunities to do extra credit assignments to improve your “short assignment” portion of your grade. You may do up to TWO of these.
 - Option one: Go to Prout Chapel for a Thursday evening MFA reading and write a response paper about the experience of hearing poetry or short fiction read aloud by the author. Use handout on Canvas to guide your response for events like this.
 - Option two: Memorize and perform ONE SONNET for the class. You may choose one of our assigned readings, or another sonnet of your choice. You must confer with me first about the poem and date on which you will perform it.
 - Option three: Memorize and perform ONE SCENE from a play for the class (with a partner or partners, as the scene requires). You may choose one of our assigned dramas or something from another play entirely. You must confer with me first about the scene and the date on which you will perform it. If you need suggestions, talk with me after class or in office hours.
 - Option four: Attend a live theatrical performance (on campus or in Toledo) and write a response paper discussing the event. Use handout on Canvas to guide your response for events like this.

Grading:

1 st paper (4-5 pp. on poetry)	= 15%
2 st paper (5 pp. on the novel)	= 15%
3 th paper (5 pp. on drama)	= 15%
Final examination	= 20%
Short assignments (response papers + homework)	= 20%
Class participation	= 15%

COMPLETE SCHEDULE

Week 1

8/27 Introduction to the course: methods and principles of close reading.
 Close reading vs. summary; analysis vs. paraphrase
 Short poem, William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow"
 Short story: Margaret Atwood, "Happy Endings"
 Short scene: Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

8/29

Introduction to Reading Fiction

Read introduction to "Fiction: Reading, Responding, Writing" (pp. 12-31 of the *Norton*). Read for and discuss in class:
 Marjane Satrapi, "The Shabbat" from *Persepolis* (19-28)
 Sherman Alexie, "Because My Father Was..."*
Due: Response Paper: paraphrase vs. close-reading of Alexie's story

Week 2

9/3 James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues" (95-118)

9/5

Introduction to Reading Poetry

Read pages 670-697 of the *Norton*.
 Howard Nemerov, "The Vacuum"
 W. H. Auden, "[Stop all the Clocks...]"
 Edna St. Vincent Millay, "[What lips my lips have kissed...]"
 Alexander Pope, "Sound and Sense"

Week 3

9/10 Read pp. 699-706, 707-721.
 Adrienne Rich, "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers"
 Robert Hayden, "Those Winter Sundays"
 Emily Grosholz, "Eden"
 Langston Hughes, "Harlem"
Due: response paper (2 double-spaced pages)

9/12

Introduction to Reading Drama

Read pp. 1122-1125
 Susan Glaspell, *Trifles*

Week 4

9/17 Read pp. 1180-1189.
 Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (through scene 5)

9/19

Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (finish play)

Due: response paper (2 double-spaced pages)**Week 5**

9/24

Fiction: Plot (82-89)

Edith Wharton, "Roman Fever"

Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths"

Herman Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener"

9/26

Coming-of-Age Narratives

James Joyce, "Araby"

Toni Cade Bambara, "Gorilla, My Love"

Week 6

10/1

Fiction: Narration, Point of View, Character**Narration and Point of View (160-163)**

Edgar Allan Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado"

Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl"

Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"

Due (students A-G): response paper

10/3

Fiction: Character (180-186)

William Faulkner, "Barn Burning"

Toni Morrison, "Recitatif"

Jhumpa Lahiri, "Interpreter of Maladies"

Due (students H-Z): response paper**Week 7****Fiction: Setting and Symbol & Figurative Language (read pp. 245-246; 285-289)**

10/8

Anton Chekhov, "The Lady with the Dog" and sample writing (280-284)

Ralph Ellison, excerpts from *Invisible Man**

10/10

Fall Break**Week 8****Fiction: Cultural and Historical Contexts (read all stories and contexts; pp. 471-513)**

10/15

Kate Chopin, "The Story of an Hour"

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"

Susan Glaspell, "A Jury of Her Peers"

- 10/17 **Poetry: Situation & Setting, Theme & Tone** (read pp. 735-755, 765-779, including all poems)
 Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken"
 Li-Young Lee, "Persimmons"
 Agha Shahid-Ali, "Postcard from Kashmir"
Due: response paper

Week 9

- 10/22 **Poetry: Language, Visual Imagery & Syntax, Symbol** (read pp. 788-801; 802-812, 813-824)
 Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro"
 Theodore Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz"
 Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Spring and Fall" (also listen to audio CD)
 Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool" (also listen to audio CD)
 Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods..."
 Emily Dickinson, "[My life had stood—a Loaded Gun—]"

- 10/24 **Poetry: Sound, Internal Structure, External Form** (read pp. 825-845, 857-874, 875-887; 889-901).
 Pay special attention to the following poems (pp. 891-901):
 William Shakespeare, all sonnets
 Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "How Do I Love Thee"
 Edna St. Vincent Millay, all sonnets
 Gwendolyn Brooks, "First Fight. Then Fiddle."
 June Jordan, "Something Like a Sonnet for Phillis Miracle Wheatley"
 Billy Collins, "Sonnet"

- 10/27 Sunday, October 27 by 5 pm: Essay 1 (on poetry, 3-5 pp.) due via Canvas**
Analyze ONE of the assigned sonnets, discussing how it follows and/or diverges from the traditional sonnet form. Be sure to first SCAN the poem and to discuss its meter and rhyme scheme in your essay.

Week 10

- 10/29 **Poetry: Tradition and Contexts** (read pp. 979-995, 1007-1042)
 Countee Cullen, "Yet Do I Marvel"
 Langston Hughes, all selections
 Claude McKay, all selections
- 10/31 **The Novel: Analyzing Longer Texts**
 Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (through Book I, Chapter VII; page 68)

Week 11

11/5 Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (through Book I, Chapter XV; page 143)

11/7 Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (through Book II, Chapter VII; page 203)
Due: response paper

Week 12 The Novel: Convention, Tradition, Context

11/12 Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (finish book)

11/14 Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth*

Contexts: from Norton edition

Due: response paper that applies ONE key context from the Norton Critical Edition and explains how it deepens your understanding of Wharton's novel.

11/17 Sunday, November 17 by 5 pm: deadline to submit Optional Revision of Essay 1 via Canvas.

Week 13

11/19 Nella Larsen, *Passing* (through Part II)

11/21 *Passing* (finish book)

11/24 Sunday, November 24 by 5 pm: Essay 2 (on fiction, 5 pp.) due via Canvas

Week 14 Drama: Cultural & Historical Context (read pp. 1460-1470)

11/26 Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

11/28 **Thanksgiving Holiday**

Week 15

12/3 Film adaptation: *A Raisin in the Sun*

12/5 Drama: Literary and Historical Contexts

Bruce Norris, *Clybourne Park*

Clybourne Park Playbill materials*

12/8 Sunday, December 8 by 5 pm: deadline to submit Optional Revision of Essay 2 via Canvas.

Week 16 Drama

12/10 Bruce Norris, *Clybourne Park*

12/12 **Final Exam**

12/15 Sunday, December 15 by 5 pm: Essay 3 (on drama, 4-5 pp.) due via Canvas