

ENG 104
MWF 2:00-2:50, 204 Chapman
Fall 2013
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Office hours: WF 10:30-12:00
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INTRODUCTION TO FICTION: SYLLABUS

Welcome to the study of fiction!

The aims of this course are:

1. To read a variety of short fiction, practicing close reading and developing skill in interpretation.
2. To learn to write about fiction, including finding a thesis, structuring an argument, and employing the writing mechanics used in formal writing.
3. To learn to appreciate types of fiction you may not have discovered before, including literary fiction.
4. To find connections between the themes discussed in fiction and life as it's lived outside the classroom.

In this course we will work on reading, interpreting and appreciating a variety of stories. To this end, it is essential that you come to class having read the assignment for the day at least once (you may wish to read more complex assignments more than once), having noted points of interest or confusion, and ready to engage in discussion.

Grading:

first paper:

10% for the preparatory close-reading exercise

20% for the complete paper

second paper: 20%

average of 3 quizzes: 50% (each quiz = 16%)

consistent attendance and preparation are also required, and will push your grade up or down if you are borderline

There will be no final exam in this class.

If you have a documented disability, you're invited to let me know, and we'll discuss accommodations for this class in conjunction with Disability Services.

Ominous warning section!

Unless it has been cleared with me, failure to complete or turn in any of the papers will prevent you from passing the course. *Plagiarism* will also result in automatic failure of the course!

In addition, you should attend class regularly and come prepared to discuss the reading. If you think you may miss more than three classes, you should take this course at a better time, when you will be able to attend consistently.

I'm sorry that I won't be able to give make-up quizzes for any reason other than documented illness/emergency. Check the dates of quizzes: if you are scheduled to attend a wedding or take a trip or otherwise miss class on those days, please factor in that you will not be able to make up that quiz when deciding whether to enroll in this course.

Please be on time for class, barring emergencies.

Texts:

Richard Basuch and R. V. Cassill, *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*, Shorter Seventh Edition or previous editions (see below).

I encourage you to look for used copies from Half.com or Amazon.com. Amazon.com sells used copies of older editions for as little as 50 cents! However, note that if you buy an older edition, it *may* be missing a few of the stories, which you will have to borrow and photocopy from classmates. Unfortunately the Knight Library does not own any copies of this anthology.

On Blackboard or in packets (as announced):

Frederick Busch, "Ralph the Duck"

Terry Bisson, "They're Made out of Meat"

Bruce Holland Rogers, "Dinosaur"

Chris Gavalier, "A Working Theory of Everything"

You will also need access to a good dictionary.

Note that stories in the textbook are in alphabetical order by the last name of the author.

Schedule:

September

M 30: Introduction. Ron Carlson, "Bigfoot Stole My Wife" (to be read in class)

October

W 2: Varieties of fiction and approaches to interpretation. For today, read
F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Babylon Revisited"

F 4: Continued discussion of Fitzgerald, "Babylon Revisited"

M 7: Raymond Carver, "Cathedral"

W 9: Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants."

F 11: Frederick Busch, "Ralph the Duck" (on Blackboard). Close-reading exercise
instructions handed out.

M 14: Bobbie Ann Mason, "Shiloh"

W 16: **First quiz.**

F 18: Katherine Mansfield, "Bliss"

M 21: Grammar Workshop — no preparation necessary. **Close-reading exercise due.**

W 23: Flannery O'Connor, "Everything That Rises Must Converge"

F 25: Eudora Welty, "A Worn Path"

M 28: Vladimir Nabokov, "Signs and Symbols"

W 30: Truman Capote, "Miriam"

November

F 1: **This class will not meet today.**

M 4: **Second quiz.**

W 6: Gabriel Garcia Marquez, "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World."

November

F 8: Ambrose Bierce, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge."

M 11: Chris Gavaler, "A Working Theory of Everything" (on Blackboard)
Final draft of first paper due.

W 13: James Joyce, "The Dead"

F 15: Continue discussion of "The Dead."

M 18: Continue discussion of "The Dead."

W 20: In-class film: Hitchcock's *The Birds*

F 22: *The Birds* continued

M 25: Discussion of *The Birds*.

W 27: Story to be announced.

F 29: No class — Thanksgiving vacation

M 2: Two short-shorts: Terry Bisson, "They're Made Out of Meat" and Bruce Holland Rogers, "Dinosaur," — on Blackboard

W 4: Ron Carlson, "I Am Bigfoot" (to be passed out in class; no need to read ahead). **Second paper due.**

F 6: **Third quiz.**

"My story is important not because it is mine. . . but because if I tell it anything like right, the chances are you will recognize that in many ways it is yours."— Frederick Buehner

"Good books don't give up all their secrets at once." — Stephen King