
Fall 2013

ENGLISH 104 - INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE: FICTION (CRN 12991)

Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-3:20 p.m. – 260 Condon Hall

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Office Hours:

12:30-2:00 Tuesdays and Thursdays
and by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

“If one reads enough books one has a fighting chance. Or better, one’s chances of survival increase with each book one reads.” — Sherman Alexie

“There is no friend as loyal as a book.” – Ernest Hemingway

“You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or who had ever been alive.” — James Baldwin

“That’s the thing about books. They let you travel without moving your feet.” --Jhumpa Lahiri

These authors quoted above (whose stories we will read in this class) each believe that books have something particular to offer: “chances of survival”; a “loyal” friendship; a sense of connection with “all the people who were alive, or who had ever been alive”; an ability to “travel without moving your feet.” A recent study suggests that reading books of fiction—unlike consuming other forms of media—actually increases empathy in the reader. But is there a place for fiction in our media landscape where most of the stories we encounter are in movie, tv show, or video game format? In short, do written stories still have something meaningful to offer the contemporary reader?

In this class, we will ask questions about written stories and learn some of the machinations behind the good works of literary fiction we read. What is a story, and what role do stories play in our cultural and political lives? Is interpretation of a literary text a purely subjective process, or are some interpretations more valid than others? Narrative technique, point of view, and character development are some of the terms and concepts we will examine in our quest to discover if—and why—fiction *matters*.

This course satisfies the university’s Group Requirement in the Arts and Letters category. The information learned in this class will be applicable to any sort of future study of drama or literature, and will make you a better reader of any text you may encounter. Please note, however, that these credits do not count toward the English Major.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To read and respond to stories by a variety of authors
- To understand the historical and cultural frameworks of these stories
- To identify formal techniques and articulate how authors use them to create meaning
- To share and improve your ideas through reasoned critical thinking, in-class discussion, and careful writing

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- *Introduction to Literature*, Pearson Custom Library. Custom textbook available only from the Duck Store.
- *Tracks*, Louise Erdrich. You’ll want the newer paperback *Perennial* edition.
- Access to a college-level dictionary

COURSE WORK AND GRADING

Mini-Exams	50%
Writing 1: Story Kit	20%
Writing 2: Creative Retelling & Analysis	20%
Participation	10%

Mini-Exams (50% of Course Grade): You will be graded on five exams, given every other Thursday starting week two. The mini-exams will test reading comprehension, vocabulary, and the information and ideas discussed in class. They will include a multiple-choice component that will be completed in class and a take-home short essay portion that will be turned in the following Tuesday via electronic submission.

I will automatically drop your lowest grade, so each exam will be worth 12.5% of your grade. There are no make-ups for exams; please note the dates on the syllabus to be sure you'll be here for them. The exams will be cumulative: anything we have read up to the exam is fair game.

Writing (40% of Course Grade): There are two major writing assignments for the class, a Story Kit and a Creative Retelling & Analysis. Instructions for these assignments will be handed out in class and available on our class site; please see me with questions.

Participation: Your participation grade will be assessed based on your in-class written work; contributions to class discussions; and your group's leadership in class discussions.

Format for All Work: I do not accept work that does not follow the formatting guidelines. Papers must be typed and double-spaced in Times New Roman font with one-inch margins on all sides. Your name, date, and course number should be typed on the first page in the upper left hand corner. After page one, type last name and page number at upper right-hand corner of every page. All papers must be titled. You must proofread carefully; spelling, punctuation, and grammar count; papers that are not written in clear language will not receive grades above C. I will provide additional paper guidelines.

Electronic Submission: With the exception of the first part of the Story Kit, all papers will be handed in and graded electronically; this means that instead of handing in a paper copy, you will turn in your paper as a Google document. You may work in any format you prefer; when you are done, you should upload your document to Google Drive and hit the blue "SHARE" button in the upper right hand corner. Copy the long "link to share" and paste it into the box on the ASSIGNMENT HAND IN page (see below for the url).

This process provides a TIME STAMP of your submission, so please make sure you submit work on time. You will see my comments on your document (if applicable) and you will get an email or paper handout with your grade. See me in week one if you will not have concerns about these requirements.

ASSIGNMENT HAND IN PAGE - URL for submission of all class work (bookmark this on your computer!): <http://tinyurl.com/mt76rp4>

COURSE POLICIES

Absences: Your presence in class is important! I expect you to come to class prepared and ready to work. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. You are allowed *two absences* during the term (beginning the day you are enrolled) without a penalty. Each additional absence will lower your course grade by 1/3. For example, four absences will reduce a B- to a C+, five absences will reduce a B- to a C, and so on.

If you miss class, be sure to turn in any assignments due that day via email before class starts. You are responsible for the content covered in class, whether you attended or not. Please plan to get the information from someone in class; do not email me asking what you missed. Consult the schedule of assignments with questions.

Students may "make up" missed classes by turning in a 4-page paper that describes, in detail, what was discussed in class during the missed day. This requires obtaining the notes of *at least 2* classmates and piecing together the missed lecture/class discussion from these notes and from discussions with classmates (i.e., NOT me). The paper should discuss the missed reading *and* the discussions from class. This paper **MUST** be turned in within 2 weeks of the missed class. This is the **ONLY** way to "make up" a missed class. You must take care of obtaining notes from

classmates on your own. After 2 weeks, the absence will be counted. You may submit no more than 2 of these papers per term. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY.

Policies & Professional Behavior: The research is in: you are terrible at multitasking. (So am I!) The best way to get the most out of this class is to stay focused on what is happening in our classroom. Our time together is brief and valuable; I expect your full attention during class time. Class time spent texting or checking Facebook, reading outside material, chatting, or sleeping does not constitute attendance. If I see you have your phone out during class time (or if you insist on peeking at it in your coat pocket/backpack/etc.), you will be counted absent for that class period (fair warning: I will not always shout “AHA I CAUGHT YOU!” during class—I will just mark you absent). If for some reason you must be reachable, please talk to me before class.

Due Dates and Late Work: Your work is due at the beginning of class. Work that is turned in any other time is late. For up to one week after the assignment is due, you may turn in a late assignment; it will receive half of the credit you would have earned for the assignment (an 80% would be graded as a 40%, for example). Assignments turned in one week after the due date (or later) will not be accepted and will receive a grade of 0.

If you are absent from class, you do not need to email me to let me know, but please be sure to submit your work by the time class regularly begins. I do grant extensions (of a few days) on major assignments *as long as you contact me at least 48 hours ahead of time.*

Email Policy: I will respond to your email within 48 hours during the week. If you email me and two days (weekends *do not count*) pass with no reply, please email me again with a friendly reminder that you have yet to receive a reply to your message. If your emails do not contain a salutation, clear message, and closing (with your full name), I will ignore them. ***Communication:*** I may send important information to the class via email; you are responsible for checking your university email regularly.

Access: If you have a disability (physical, psychological, or learning) that you think may affect your ability to succeed in this class, please see me during the first week of the term so we can make arrangements, if necessary, for your full access to all classroom activities.

Academic Honesty: All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please consult *The Little Seagull Handbook* for a definition of plagiarism and information on documentation, and refer to the Student Conduct Code on the [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website](#). In cases where academic dishonesty has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is the standard practice. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

Incompletes: Incompletes will only be granted in rare cases of serious documented illness or injury; all incompletes will be arranged through the Office of the Dean or the Office of Academic Advising.

CLASS CALENDAR

I may change, add, or substitute assignments. It's important not only that you are present in class, but also that you stay aware of when and what assignments are due.

DATE	READINGS DUE	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 1		
Tues. 10/1	Course Introduction	
Thurs. 10/3	Fiction: Overview (62-67); Walker, "Everyday Use" (5-13),	
Week 2 – Fiction, an Overview		
Tues. 10/ 8	Bierce, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" (83-88); Cisneros, "Mericans" (88-90); Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" (91-96)	
Thurs. 10/10	O'Brien, "The Things They Carried" (96-106)	Exam 1
Week 3 – Point of View		
Tues. 10/15	Point of View (119-128); Alexie, "This Is What It Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona" (128-136)	Exam 1 questions due
Thurs. 10/17	Carver, "Neighbors" (136-140); Jackson, "The Lottery" (140-145); Kincaid, "What I Have Been Doing Lately" (145-147)	
Week 4 – Characters		
Tues. 10/22	Characters (162-169); Boyle, "Greasy Lake" (170-176)	
Thurs. 10/24	Glaspell, "A Jury of Her Peers" (176-189)	Exam 2
Week 5 – Setting		
Tues. 10/29	Setting (220-224); Joyce, "Araby" (242-245); Mishima "Swaddling Clothes" (246-49)	Exam 2 questions due
Thurs. 10/31	Crane, "The Blue Hotel" (224-241)	Writing 1: Story Kit due
Week 6 – Structure		
Tues. 11/7	Structure (261-264); Ellison, "Battle Royal" (264-273)	
Thurs. 11/9	Lahiri, "Interpreter of Maladies" (280-293)	Exam 3
Week 7 – Tone and Style		
Tues. 11/12	Tone and Style (322-329); Chopin, "The Story of an Hour" (329-331); Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants" (342-345)	Exam 3 questions due
Thurs. 11/14	Faulkner, "Barn Burning" (331-341); Updike, "A&P" (351-355)	Writing 2: Creative Project due (first draft)
Week 8 – Idea or Theme		
Tues. 11/19	Idea or Theme (365-370); Bambara, "The Lesson" (390-394); Lawrence, (404-414)	
Thurs. 11/21	<i>Tracks</i> (Chapters 1-3, pages 1-61)	Exam 4
Week 9		
Tues. 11/26	<i>Tracks</i> (Chapters 4-5, pages 62-130)	Exam 4 questions due
Thurs. 11/28	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – NO CLASS	
Week 10		
Tues. 12/3	<i>Tracks</i> (Chapters 6-7, pages 131-191)	Writing 2: Creative Project and Essay due
Thurs. 12/5	<i>Tracks</i> (Chapters 8-9, pages 192-226)	Exam 5