**ENG 104: INTRODUCTION TO FICTION**  
* MWF 2-3 in 307 VOL

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**Part One: Course Description and Goals**

**fiction, n.**

3a. The action of “feigning” or inventing imaginary incidents, existences, states of things, etc., whether for the purpose of deception or otherwise.

3b. That which, or something that, is imaginatively invented; feigned existence, event, or state of things; invention as opposed to fact.

4a. The species of literature which is concerned with the narration of imaginary events and the portraiture of imaginary characters; fictitious composition. Now usually, prose novels and stories collectively; the composition of works of this class.  

(Oxford English Dictionary)

Most academic subjects of study are oriented toward learning and discovering facts. The study of literature, on the other hand, is largely concerned with fictions – in Plato’s memorable phrase, “the lies of the poets.” This course will consider the larger question of why we study these “lies” within an academic environment. Most of the course, however, will be taken up with detailed study of the technical elements of narrative such as plot structure, narrative voice, characterization, etc. We will further consider how each of these elements opens up methods of interpreting and understanding narrative in ways that should deepen students’ understanding of literature and enhance their enjoyment of it.

**Grading Breakdown:**

- **Daily Notebooks** 30%  
- **Daily Quizzes** 20%  
- **Essays** 20%  
- **Participation** 10%  
- **Final Exam** 20%

*In lieu of midterm.

**Required Texts.**

On Blackboard:

- John Crowley, *Engine Summer*. You are **required** to print this out, full size, and bring to class. If you do this in the library, the cost to you will be about $8.40. I also recommend getting it spiral bound (basement of EMU), which costs a couple dollars.

The following texts are at the Duck Store:

- Course packet (contains readings for the course)

**Recommended:**

- Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers*, 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2010. (If you do not currently own a style book, you should buy this. Earlier editions won’t have the latest word on citing electronic sources, but they’ll do for most things.)
Part Two: Syllabus

All readings and assignments are listed on the day they are due.
All readings except those from the Bedford Glossary are in the course packet unless otherwise noted.

“Cogitation makes us expand, expansion stretches us out, stretching makes us roomier.”
– Augustine of Hippo

Week 1
M Jan. 6  Introduction: The Lies of the Poets.
W Jan. 8  The Role of Literature in Education
   Readings:  Louis Menand, “Live and Learn” (Blackboard)
              Andrew Delbanco, “College at Risk” (Blackboard)
              Begin reading John Crowley, *Engine Summer*, pp. 349-91 for next week. On Friday, questions on *Engine Summer* will appear on the quizzes.
F Jan. 10 Close Reading
   Readings:  “How to Do a Close Reading” (Blackboard)

Week 2
              Bedford Glossary, “Plot.”

Week 3
M Jan. 20  NO CLASS: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
W Jan. 22  Structure: Climax
   Readings:  Guy de Maupassant, “The Signal.”
   DUE: Essay 1
F Jan. 24  Structure: Frame Story / Inset Narratives
   Reading:  Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, “A Case of Mistaken Identity.”
              Bedford Glossary: “Frame Story.”

Week 4
M Jan. 27  Structure: Constituent vs. Supplementary Events, Narrative Gaps
   Readings:  The Sacrifice of Isaac, 5 (short!) versions.
              Genesis 22:1-14
              Søren Kierkegaard, 3 versions from *Fear and Trembling*.
              Franz Kafka, “Abraham.”
              Bedford Glossary, “Gap,” “Myth.”

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1 Sermo CCXXV, *PL* 38, col. 1097.
W Jan. 29  
Narration: Reliable Narrators  
Readings: Willa Cather, “Paul’s Case.”  

F Jan. 31  
Narration: Point of View / Focalization  
Readings: F. Scott Fitzgerald, “Bernice Bobs Her Hair.”  
Bedford Glossary, “Point of View,” “Free Indirect Discourse.”

Week 5  
M Feb. 3  
Narration: Unreliable Narrators  
Readings: Toni Cade Bambara, “The Lesson.”  
Bedford Glossary, “Unreliable Narrator.”

M Feb. 5  
Characterization: Direct vs. Indirect  
Readings: Willa Cather, “The Enchanted Bluff.”  
Bedford Glossary, “Characterization.”

W Feb. 7  
Characterization: Flat and Round Characters  
Readings: Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, “Cinderella.”  
Angela Carter, “Ashputtle, or The Mother’s Ghost.”  
Bedford Glossary, “Flat and Round Characters,” “Stock Characters.”

Week 6  
M Feb. 10  
Characterization  
Reading: Flannery O’Connor, “Parker’s Back.”

W Feb. 12  
Genre Fiction  
Bedford Glossary, “Genre,” “Mystery Fiction,” “Detective Fiction,” “Gothic, Gothic Literature.”  
Portis, True Grit, pp. 11-32 (21 pp.). See Reading Notebook Entry 18.  
Note: True Grit is 250 pages long. We are not focusing on it until Week 8, but you’ll be responsible for it on Monday quizzes.

F Feb. 14  
Playing with Genre  
Reading: Susanna Clarke, “The Ladies of Grace Adieu.”  
Bedford Glossary, “Fantasy Fiction” (read this if you want; I don’t think it’s very helpful)  
Portis, True Grit, pp. 33-48 “It is all in the history books” (15 pp.)

Week 7  
M Feb. 17  
Genre  
Reading: Kelly Link, “Stone Animals.”  
Portis, True Grit, catch up or get ahead.

M Feb. 19  
Style  
Reading: Ernest Hemingway, “Soldier’s Home.”  
Bedford Glossary, “Style.”  
Portis, True Grit, pp. 48 “Now I will introduce Rooster” -73 (25).
W Feb. 21  Style  
Reading:  Henry James, “The Jolly Corner.”  
*Note:* James’s style is very dense, and you will need to set aside several hours to get through this story. 

**Week 8**

M Feb. 24  Style  
Reading:  Class discussion continues with “The Jolly Corner.”

*Note:* We begin discussing *True Grit* today. Today’s class will contain plot spoilers if you are not caught up.

F Feb. 28  Reading:  Portis, *True Grit*, pp. 168 “Rooster whispered to me …” -199 (31 pp.)

**Week 9**

M Mar. 3  Reading:  Finish Portis, *True Grit*, pp. 201-256 (55 pp.)

W Mar. 5  Class discussion continues with Portis, *True Grit*.

F Mar. 7  Reading:  Reread *Engine Summer*: Narrative Structure, Narrator  
DUE: Reading Notebook Entry 19

**Week 10: *Engine Summer* redux, cont.**

M Mar. 10  Reading:  Reread *Engine Summer*: Characterization

W Mar. 12  Reading:  Reread *Engine Summer*: Motif, Themes, Style  
Bedford Glossary, “Motif.”

F Mar. 14  Last day of class  
DUE: Final Portfolio of Reading Notebooks.  
*Read the directions for turning these in.*

**Finals Week**

Final:  Monday, March 17 at 3.15  
Final Essay Due