ENG 104: Introduction to Fiction

Syllabus for Winter 2014

MWF 11:00-11:50 a.m. CRN 23342 191 Anstett Hall
MWF 1:00-1:50 p.m. CRN 23343 102 Deady Hall

Instructor: Dr. Kathleen O’Fallon Office: 256 PLC
Phone: 541-346-0994 Hours: MWF 9:00-10:00 a.m.
Email: kofallon@uoregon.edu and by appointment

Required Textbook

The Broadview Anthology of Short Fiction (3rd Edition)
Edited by Sara Levine, Don LePan, and Marjorie Mather

Course Description

Of the three great literary genres—poetry, drama, and fiction—fiction was the last to develop, but today it is the genre that dominates most people’s reading. Fiction writers continue to spin fresh stories in classic forms, as well as to create new forms that challenge our understanding of what narrative can do for and to the reader. This course will focus on the key elements of fictional representation through the study of a wide variety of short stories. Students will learn a set of literary “tools” to use in analyzing those stories. In addition, students will analyze works from popular fictional subgenres.

Written Assignments

Three short essays (maximum of three double-spaced pages)

Essay 1  Comparison of two stories discussed in class
Essay 2 Analysis of a story from the textbook that has not been assigned for class discussion

Essay 3 Analysis of a novel chosen from a popular fiction subgenre

One midterm exam covering terms in the textbook’s “Glossary”

Details on these assignments will be distributed in class handouts.

Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:

All work submitted in this course must be your own and must be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, and paraphrases) must be properly documented using the MLA in-text format. Refer to the summary of the Code of Student Conduct in the Schedule of Classes. In cases where plagiarism has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is my standard practice. It is simple to discover if a paper has been “borrowed” from the internet, so don’t underestimate my ability to spot plagiarism. Please talk to me if you have any questions about your use of sources before you turn in something that might be questionable.

Policy on Late Assignments and “Incompletes”:

If exigent circumstances cause problems with the due date for the essays, students must discuss this with the instructor BEFORE the deadline so that arrangements can be made. Late work which is not cleared with the instructor prior to the due date will not be accepted. Exceptions will not be made for any assignments which specify that they must be submitted in class on the due date.

A final grade of “incomplete” can only be granted if a student has turned in at least 50% of the required work when he/she requests this option. Students requesting an “incomplete” must come to the instructor with a written proposal detailing when and how they intend to complete all required work
for the course—including a plan for fulfilling the class participation component of the course.

**Policy on Disabilities:**

Students with physical or learning disabilities should consult the instructor as soon as possible so accommodations can be made.

**Grades:**

Each of the following requirements has weight in determining your grade:

- Essays (60%)
- Midterm examination (20%)
- Attendance and Participation (20%)

Note: This grade includes group presentation

Questions regarding grades should be addressed during office hours, NOT through email. Expressing concerns as a desire to learn rather than to obtain what you “deserved” or “expected” will set a productive tone for such discussions. Please understand that an instructor cannot assign grades based on how hard a student thinks he/she has worked on an assignment—only on the written results of that effort. However, writing multiple drafts of essays and careful revising of those drafts should lead to more polished work that makes a positive impression on the reader.

**Attendance and Participation:**

Students are expected to be in class, on time, having read the materials assigned for that day and having done any required writing. Assignments are due when class begins.

Attendance will be taken every day. It is your responsibility to sign in on the attendance sheet for yourself only. More than three absences will result in a one-half grade penalty in the final course grade. Attending class is a choice
you have to make on your own, and that means you have to accept the consequences of that choice.

I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, except in two cases:

1. Illness so severe and prolonged that a doctor officially excuses you.

2. You are involved in a university-sanctioned activity. Written proof of these excuses is required, but there is no need to explain your reasons for other absences. Emailing me that you are going to miss does not excuse you from class.

If you know you are going to miss a class, make advance arrangements with me to turn in any work that is due and/or to pick up handouts. Ask a classmate to catch you up on discussion that you will miss.

If you have an unplanned absence, see me as soon as you return to pick up missed handouts, and ask a classmate for any missed notes. If you have questions about material discussed while you were gone, come to my office hours. We will have carried on in your absence, so please don’t be arrogant enough to ask if you missed anything. Of course, you did.

STUDENTS MUST ALWAYS BRING TEXTS TO CLASS WHEN THEY ARE BEING DISCUSSED. IT SHOULD GO WITHOUT SAYING THAT WRITING IMPLEMENTS ARE ALSO REQUIRED.

Students are expected to contribute significantly to discussion, and to do so in a way that shows respect for classmates. Listening carefully is as important as speaking thoughtfully, so please do not interrupt or wave your hand insistently while someone else is speaking. All ideas are welcome in this class, but they should be backed up by evidence from the texts.

To be fully present in the class, you must be focused on the reading and the discussion at hand. THEREFORE, please turn off and put away all electronic devices before class begins. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE THE ROOM DURING CLASS UNLESS YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY.
Schedule of Assignments:
On the day a reading appears on the schedule, come to class having read the story and prepared to summarize its plot and discuss the key elements the author has used to shape the narrative and provoke reader response.

Week One: January 6-10
M  Introductions  What are the limits of fiction?
W  Developing analytical vocabulary
    Reading: Glossary (453-462)
F  Poe, “The Black Cat” and “The Cask of Amontillado”

Week Two: January 13-17
M  O’Brien, “The Things They Carried”
W  Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephants”
F  Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper”

Week Three: January 20-24
M  Martin Luther King Holiday: NO CLASS MEETING
W  Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”
F  Faulkner, “Dry September”

Week Four: January 27-31
M  Midterm Exam
W  Mansfield, “The Doll’s House”
F  O’Connor, “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”

Week Five: February 3-7
M  ESSAY #1 DUE
    Oral presentations explained/Groups assigned
W  LeGuin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”
F  Munro, “Miles City, Montana”
Week Six: February 10-14
M  Gish Jen, “The Third Dumpster”
W  Moore, “You’re Ugly, Too”
F  Yamamoto, “Seventeen Syllables”

Week Seven: February 17-21
M  Carver, “Cathedral”
W  Kincaid, “Girl” and Cisneros, “My Lucy Friend Who Smells Like Corn”
F  Atwood, “Happy Endings”

Week Eight: February 24-28
M  Alexie, “Do You Know Where I Am?”
W  Wolff, “Bullet in the Brain”
F  Tan, “Grandpa’s Story”
ESSAY #2 DUE

Week Nine: March 3-7
M  GROUP MEETINGS
W  GROUP MEETINGS
F  GROUP MEETINGS

Week Ten: March 10-14
M  GROUP PRESENTATIONS
W  GROUP PRESENTATIONS
F  GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Final Exam Period: ESSAY #3 DUE
11:00 class—Monday, March 17, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
1:00 class—Thursday, March 20, 3:15-5:15 p.m.