

English 104: Introduction to Fiction
Spring 2014
CRN: 34634
TR 8:30-9:50 a.m.
Room: 360 Condon

Instructor: Anna Carroll
Office: 104 PLC
Office Phone: 541-346-1518
Email: acarroll@uoregon.edu
Office Hours: TR 10:00-11:30 a.m. and gladly by appointment

Welcome to Introduction to Fiction! In this class, we will be reading a blend of novels and short fiction that will help us interrogate the art of storytelling. As Alan Rickman, a.k.a. Professor Snape, has said, it is an ancient need to be told stories. We will discuss the techniques and themes common to narrative literature, and we will work toward some understanding of why and how stories remain such an important part of cultural practice. As part of this inquiry, you will engage texts through critical writing. We will diligently practice close reading of passages, drawing evidence from them that points to larger critical claims that might be made for the cultural work these texts perform. This will be your opportunity to try your hand at the time-honored tradition of literary interpretation. As such, your written grapplings with the works we read here will need to be thoughtful, well planned, and carefully polished.

One of the central questions of any course in literary studies is how (and, indeed, whether or not) this kind of art matters for and functions in our society. It's my hope that this class will afford you the opportunity to examine your own beliefs and opinions about the importance of fiction, but, more than that, to learn to identify a range of stories that we tell ourselves to support our modes of living in the world.

**Please note: This course satisfies credits toward the Arts & Letters category general education requirement. However, these credits do not count toward the English major.

Required Texts:

Haroun and the Sea of Stories, Salman Rushdie
Neverwhere, Neil Gaiman
Regular access to Blackboard (abbreviated on Course Schedule as "BB")

Learning Outcomes for the English Department:

1. Read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;
2. Draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts;
3. Perform critical, formal analyses of literary, cinematic, and other cultural texts;
4. Write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose;
5. Employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments;

6. Employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay's thesis.

Course Work and Grading

Grading Breakdown:

Close Reading Paragraphs: 25 %

Quizzes: 20 %

Midterm: 20%

Essay: 25%

Participation: 10%

Close Reading Paragraphs: You will submit three close reading paragraphs in the course of the term, each dedicated to analysis of a class text. One paragraph per one text, three times per term. These paragraphs should be 6-8 sentences and approximately 250 words each. You decide which texts you will evaluate (though you may only submit one paragraph novel), and you will hand these paragraphs in on the corresponding class discussion day for your chosen text. The goal here is to make an inventive critical claim and defend it concisely. These paragraphs should all include a) a clear topic sentence, b) quote(s) from the text as evidence for your claim, and c) analysis of your evidence to substantiate your claim. These paragraphs are an opportunity to practice the basic skill of close reading, which will be an essential component of your final paper. I advise you to plan carefully which readings you will interpret so that you don't arrive at the end of the term with a backlog of unwritten paragraphs.

Midterm Exam: This exam will be a mix of multiple choice, true/false, and short essay-style questions. The questions will address the readings and information raised in class. You will need to bring a green book to class on exam day.

Quizzes: You will take 5 quizzes throughout the term. The quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class period. If you miss a quiz due to absence or tardiness, it cannot be made up. The quizzes may be fact-based questions about or written responses to the day's readings. Regardless, they will bear out whether or not you have read carefully.

Essay: Your final essay, which you will submit on Tuesday of Finals Week, will be a five-page analysis of 1-2 texts we read for class this term. You will not do any outside research for this paper; you will, instead, explore a critical claim independent to your own insights into the text(s). You are invited to develop an idea from one of your close reading paragraphs; you are also invited (and encouraged!) to come see me in office hours to discuss possible topics. This paper should be formatted according to MLA Style Guidelines (double-spaced, one inch margins all the way around, proper citation of your primary texts, and Times New Roman font). These essays must be written in polished, academic prose.

Participation: Because this is a discussion-based class, your contributions are essential to productive exploration of the class readings. What's more, thoughtful, intelligent, and respectful participation is an important skill for all of us to practice continually. While I appreciate that not everyone finds speaking up in class natural or comfortable, I expect that you will all do your

utmost to rise to the challenge and share your insights for the benefit of the group as a whole. This is *your* class, and I look forward to hearing your ideas. You are responsible for seeing me after class to be sure that I have your participation for the day recorded.

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance is required. Your regular attendance is vital to your success and the success of the class as a whole. Class discussions play a major role in the development of your essays, and it is important that you contribute to, and learn from, these discussions. You are permitted two absences in the course of the term for any reason; I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. For every absence beyond the second, your grade will be reduced by 1/3 (an A will become an A-, a B- will become a C+, and so on). Leaving class early will result in an absence. If you must leave early, make arrangements with me ahead of time. If you are late to class, it's your responsibility to see me after class to verify that your attendance accurately reflects a late mark versus an absence.

Late Policy: All assignments are due at the beginning of class. I do not accept late work. If you are unable to attend class on the day an assignment is due, you should have someone deliver it for you or make arrangements with me before class.

“Arrangements with me”—This means an agreement with me, either verbally or through email. Leaving me a message or writing an e-mail informing me of your situation does not count as an arrangement. You and I must actually exchange information for the arrangement to be approved.

Spelling and Grammar: This is not a spelling and grammar course, but I do expect to see thoughtfulness in your writing, and evidence of careful proofreading. Evidence that you have neglected to proofread your work, may be reflected on your essay grade.

Computers/Cell Phones/Electronic Devices: I will not permit the use of any of these devices in class without contact from Disability Services. The use of such devices may be permitted in rare circumstances, but is, on the whole, distracting and, as such, prohibited.

Access: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in **week one** if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Academic Integrity: 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 refer to the Student Conduct Code on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. In cases where plagiarism has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is the standard practice of the English Department.

When you claim authorship of an assignment, you are claiming everything in it as your own, and you will be held accountable for it. Therefore: always see me before you turn in an essay for a grade if you have any doubt about your citation practices. I am happy to help you better

understand MLA formatting rules. Please be aware: I take issues of plagiarism and academic integrity very seriously. Plagiarism is cheating, and I will treat it as such.

Course Schedule

***Readings and scheduling are both subject to change depending on the class's development. If and when I make changes to the schedule, you will be notified in class and on Blackboard.

ALL SHORT STORIES CAN BE FOUND ON BLACKBOARD UNDER "COURSE DOCUMENTS."

Week 1

T: Introduction

R: Angela Carter, "The Snow Child" and "The Werewolf"

Week 2

T: *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (pages 13-60)

R: *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (pages 61-110)

Week 3

T: *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (pages 111-156)

R: *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (pages 157-216)

Week 4

T: Franz Kafka, "A Hunger Artist"; Gabriel Garcia Marquez, "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"

R: Jorge Luis Borges, "The South"

Week 5

T: Ursula Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"

R: Midterm Exam

Week 6

T: Italo Calvino, "The Distance of the Moon"

R: Angela Carter, "The Bloody Chamber"

Week 7

T: Angela Carter, "A Souvenir of Japan"

R: Jhumpa Lahiri, "Interpreter of Maladies"

Week 8

T: *Neverwhere* ("Prologue" through Chapter 3)

R: *Neverwhere* (Chapters 4 and 5)

Week 9

T: *Neverwhere* (Chapters 6-9)

R: *Neverwhere* (Chapters 10-12)

Week 10

T: *Neverwhere* (Chapters 13-16)

R: *Neverwhere* (Chapters 17-20)

Finals Week

Final essays are due in hard copy to my office or by email on Tuesday, June 10, by no later than 5:00 p.m.