

# ENG 104: INTRODUCTION TO FICTION

*MWF 12-12.50 in 360 Condon*

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office hours: MW 1.30-3  
course website: on Canvas*

## 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 – what the philosopher Plato memorably called “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 focus on 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:**

Notebook Portfolio	30%	Daily Notebooks*	20%
Essays	20%	Participation	10%
Final Exam	20%		*In lieu of midterm.

### **Required Texts.**

On Canvas:

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)

Ross Murfin and Supryia M. Ray, *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2009. ISBN 978-0-312-46788-1.

T.H. White, *The Once and Future King*. New York: Ace Publishing, 1996. ISBN 978-0-441-62740-0. This is the required edition. Please make sure the ISBN matches to make sure you got the right edition.

### **Recommended:**

Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers*, 6<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>1</sup>

### **Week 1**

- M Jan. 4 Introduction: The Lies of the Poets.  
W Jan. 6 The Role of Literature in Education  
Readings: Louis Menand, “Live and Learn” (Canvas)  
Andrew Delbanco, “College at Risk” (Canvas)  
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. 8 Close Reading  
Readings: “How to Do a Close Reading” (Canvas)  
Continue reading Crowley, *Engine Summer*, pp. 392-428.

### **Week 2**

- M Jan. 11 Reading: Crowley, *Engine Summer*, pp. 349-466.  
Bedford Glossary, “Motif,” “Theme,” “Plot.”  
W Jan. 13 Reading: Crowley, *Engine Summer*, pp. 469-510  
F Jan. 15 Reading: Crowley, *Engine Summer*, pp. 511-48.

### **Week 3**

- M Jan. 18 NO CLASS: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
W Jan. 20 Structure: Climax  
Readings: Guy de Maupassant, “The Signal.”  
Bedford Glossary, “Freytag’s Pyramid,” “Conflict,” “Climax,”  
“Crisis,” “Protagonist,” “Antagonist.”  
DUE: Essay 1: Review of *Engine Summer*  
F Jan. 22 Structure: Frame Story / Inset Narratives  
Reading: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, “A Case of Identity.”  
Bedford Glossary: “Frame Story.”

### **Week 4**

- M Jan. 25 Structure: Constituent vs. Supplementary Events  
Readings: The Sacrifice of Isaac, 5 (short!) versions.  
Genesis 22:1-14  
Søren Kierkegaard, 3 versions from *Fear and Trembling*.  
Bedford Glossary, “Myth.”  
W Jan. 27 Narration: Reliable Narrators  
Readings: Willa Cather, “Paul’s Case.”

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<sup>1</sup> Sermo CCXXV, *PL* 38, col. 1097.

- Bedford Glossary, “Narrator,” “Omniscient Point of View,”  
“Intrusive,” “Unintrusive.”
- F Jan. 29      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. 1      Narration: Unreliable Narrators  
Readings:      Edgar Allan Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart.”  
Bedford Glossary, “Unreliable Narrator.”
- W Feb. 3      Characterization: Direct vs. Indirect  
Readings:      Willa Cather, “The Enchanted Bluff.”  
Bedford Glossary, “Characterization.”
- F Feb. 5      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. 8      Characterization  
Reading:      Flannery O’Connor, “Parker’s Back.”
- W Feb. 10      Genre Fiction  
Readings:      Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Speckled Band.”  
Bedford Glossary, “Genre,” “Mystery Fiction,” “Detective  
Fiction,” “Gothic, Gothic Literature.”
- F Feb. 12      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)
- Week 7**
- M Feb. 15      Genre  
Reading:      Kelly Link, “Stone Animals.”  
NOTE: 92 pages of “The Sword in the Stone” are assigned for next  
Monday. You might read ahead as you’re able.
- W Feb. 17      Style  
Reading:      Ernest Hemingway, “Soldier’s Home.”  
Bedford Glossary, “Style.”
- F Feb. 19      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. 22      Style, cont.  
Reading:      T.H. White, “The Sword in the Stone,” pp. 1-92, chs. 1-9 (82pp.).

- W Feb. 24 Reading: White, "The Sword in the Stone," pp. 93-136, chs. 10-14 (41pp.).  
 F Feb. 26 Reading: White, "The Sword in the Stone," pp. 136-177, chs. 15-19 (41pp.).

**Week 9**

- M Feb. 29 Reading: Finish White, "The Sword in the Stone," pp. 177-209, chs. 20-24 (32pp.).  
 W Mar. 2 Reading Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, pp. 3-21 (through "... that were marvelous knights as any was then living.")  
 F Mar. 4 Reading: Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, pp. 21-32.  
 DUE: Final Portfolio of Reading Notebooks  
*Read the directions carefully for turning these in*

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

- M Mar. 7 Reading: Reread *Engine Summer*: Narrative Structure, Narrator  
 W Mar. 9 Reading: Reread *Engine Summer*: Characterization  
 Bedford Glossary, "Motif"  
 F Mar. 11 Reading: Reread *Engine Summer*: Motif, Themes, Style  
 DUE: Essay 2: Analysis of *Engine Summer*

**Finals Week**

Final Exam (take-home) Due by Friday, March 18 at 10.15am

## Learning Outcomes

**Main Goals:** To better understand and more accurately represent the main ideas and narratological techniques of literary texts, and to recognize how these techniques contribute to the meaning of the texts.

**Read/Analyze.** Your careful reading of the assigned texts in preparation for class should give you greater awareness of the particular characteristics of narrative-based or literary ways of knowing about the world. Lectures will orient you to the formal characteristics of narrative. Class discussion will give you opportunity to practice these skills.

**Contextualize.** The Reading Notebooks written in preparation for class and class lectures will introduce major terminologies and methodologies necessary for the study of narrative technique. In addition, the Notebook prompts help situate the texts read within their cultural, historical, and literary contexts. Both class discussion and the written assignments will give opportunity to practice and to try out your ideas.

**Write.** The written assignments are structured to train you in crafting persuasive and logical arguments from textual evidence. To gain greatest benefit, you must allow yourself adequate time for writing and revising. You should therefore gain skill in writing focused literary analysis in clear grammatical prose that advance an original argument. There are various resources on campus to help you; my office hours are one of them.