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:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Notebook Portfolio</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essays</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Daily Notebooks*</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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*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)

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 Hippo¹

Week 1
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.
W Jan. 13 Reading: Crowley, Engine Summer, pp. 469-510

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.”

¹ Sermo CCXXV, PL 38, col. 1097.

**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:**  
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:**  
### Week 9
- **M Feb. 29**

- **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**
  - 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.