W 2019 ENG 104 "Introduction to Literature: American Short Fiction

Professor David Li

MW 14:00-15:20pm

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Esslinger 105

Office Hours: PLC 275 MW 11:00-12:00 and by appointments

Tel: 6-3940

Description:
This is an introductory class to literature. As such, it emphasizes the double meanings inherent in literature’s etymological origin, “literacy.” We shall develop the competency to “read” and “write” about the kind of texts that are considered “literary,” and more specifically about a type of literature called, “Short Fiction.” Instead of skimming for information, the class is designed to cultivate the ability to read slowly and write skillfully. It entails the kind of concentration that defies the contemporary culture of attention deficit disorder.

Required Texts:
Moore, Laurie and Heidi Pitlor, 100 years of Best American Short Stories

Policy Statement:

Reading: Reading is essential for your overall performance and the success of the class. Everyone is expected to finish the assigned readings prior to attending the class. There are an indefinite number of quizzes to ensure careful reading is done. They will test your objective knowledge of the text that includes facts about character, setting (time and place), and plot (the sequence of action). The quizzes also serve as an attendance record. For productive use of class time, there will be no roll call.

Papers: Two 5pp critical essays, for which you are not required to consult outside scholarship (Any external sources used in your paper should be properly acknowledged). A critical essay is one that interprets a literary work with a particular argument. Your grade will depend upon the quality of your ideas, organization, and prose style. All papers must be typed and double-spaced in 12 pt fonts with sufficient margins. You are responsible for retaining a copy of any paper you submit.

1st is paper due 02-11 and 2nd due 03-21 (I'll give detailed writing guidance sufficiently prior to the due dates). In both cases, your essay is due at the beginning of the class hour. No electronic or late submission will be accepted. All late papers will receive an "F" except in cases of serious medical incapacity with appropriate documentation.

Exams: Mid-term and Final:
Mid-term is on 02-11 and Final on 03-21 (I'll give detailed explanation of the format sufficiently prior to the exams). In both cases, no rescheduling will be
accommodated but make-up is possible in cases of serious medical incapacity with appropriate documentation).

**Semester Grades:** The scaled numerical sum of all essays, exams and quizzes will determine your final grade. I reserve the right, though, to take into account absenteeism. 2 critical essays (1st, 10%; 2nd, 20%), a mid-term (20%) and a final (25%). Indefinite number of in-class quizzes; No make-up quizzes for any absentees except for serious illness with appropriate documentation (25%).

95-100=A+; 85-95=A; 75-84=B; 68-74=C; 60-67=D; below 60=F

**Plagiarism** (i.e. the misrepresentation of another person's ideas or words as your own): automatic flunk of the class.

**Accommodations for Disability:** If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this class, please provide me with a letter from Disability Services, verifying your disability and stating needed accommodations.

**Subject Appropriateness:** Reading and writing about literary texts are the essential means of developing critical thinking and feeling skills. However, should any student enrolled in this class feel that they ought not to be exposed to materials that may trigger unwanted responses, please provide me with a written list so that we could determine together from the very beginning if this class is fit for your needs.

**Academic Courtesy:** There will be no use of electronic devices allowed in class. I will slow down for your note taking and you are welcome to signal me if you feel the speed of my delivery is unconducive for the task. In case you have to bring your cellphone, make sure you silence them.

I reserve the right to adjust the syllabus when necessary.

**Syllabus**

01-07 Introduction
* * * * *
01-09 (1931) Fitzgerald, “Babylon Revisited”
01-14 (1988) Stone, “Helping” * * * * *
01-16 (1964) Carver, “Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?” * * * *
01-21 MLK observed
01-23 (1993) Caitskill, “The Girl on the Plane” * * * * *
01-28 (1957) Olsen, “I Stand Here Ironing”
02-04 (1991) Munro, “Friend of My Youth”
02-06 (1995) Kincaid, “Xuela”

02-11 Mid-term Exam and First Paper Due

02-13 (1959) Roth, “The Conversion of Jews”
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02-20 (1958) Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”
02-25 (1962) O’Connor, “Everything That Rises Must Converge”
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03-04 (1969) Oates, “By the River”
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03-21 Final and Second Paper due 14:45