

English 299:
Literary Interpretation
Spring 2015

Instructor Kate Lechler
Classroom: Isom 303
Classtime: T/Th 11:00am-12:15pm
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Texts Mays, Kelly J. *Norton Introduction to Literature (Portable Eleventh Edition)*
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Description and Goals, or My Hopes for Your Education

English 299 is designed to prepare students for upper-division coursework in English. Using three major literary genres—fiction, poetry, and drama—students will build their critical vocabularies and practice close reading and textual analysis. We will also examine the aims and conventions of the literary critical essay. The two associated paper assignments will develop the writing and research skills required of literary studies. Our goal is to better understand the nature and function of literature as well as the types of questions that literary criticism seeks to answer. Along the way, we will become more creative and critical thinkers, more effective writers, and more resourceful scholars.

Objectives, or Your Hopes for An A

After successfully completing this course, the student should be able to:

- a. read and understand literature in English with sensitivity and nuance;
- b. comment effectively on the major themes and authorial techniques of particular passages of selected literary works;
- c. locate and evaluate source materials in relation to relevant critical frameworks
- d. Respond to literary texts with writing that analyzes, synthesizes, interprets, and assesses meaning and significance.
- e. Produce finished papers which conform to the guidelines of a documentation style manual (MLA) and which conform to standard written American English.

Feedback designed to foster students' writing proficiency will be provided.

Grading

Quizzes/Discussion Board (at least one every week): 30%

Essays: 50% (2 x 25%)

Final Exam: 20%

Quizzes/Discussion Board: 30%

Each week of the semester, you will have one quiz and one discussion board post.

On Tuesdays, quizzes will consist of two questions in the form of a short writing prompt. One will be about the previous lecture, and the other about the day's reading. If you skip class, you cannot make up a quiz. If you skip the previous class, you are still responsible for getting notes on the lecture from a classmate so that you can take the next day's quiz. Please note: Several questions on the final exam are guaranteed to be taken from the quizzes.

On Thursdays, you will be asked to respond to a discussion board post on Blackboard. These are designed to get you thinking more deeply about the texts, and to give you a space to utilize the new literary vocabulary we will discuss in class. They should also be springboards for in-class discussion.

Essays: 25% each (x2)

You will write two short (~1200 word) essays for this class. These will consist of literary analysis and interpretation of a segment of a text in the Norton Anthology A-C. Your paper will rely heavily on close reading and two appropriate secondary sources.

Final versions of all essays due must be typed (double spaced), with one-inch margins, using Times New Roman 12 point font. Resist the urge to include a cover page; simply follow MLA essay format.

Final Exam: 20%

The final exam will consist of matching section testing you for titles and authors; a quote identification section asking for authors, stories, and significance of important quotes; a short-answer section asking factual short answer questions about characters and plots of stories we read; and a short essay section asking for sustained analysis, interpretations, and application of major themes and literary critical viewpoints we cover during the semester.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

Poetry

T 1/26 Syllabus, "What is literature, and how to read it"

Th 1/28 Poetry: Reading, Writing, Responding 450-473

T 2/2 Music (selected), "The Raven" 601, and sample writing 476

Th 2/4 Sounds 586-600, Hopkins "God's Grandeur" 688

T 2/9 Language 548-554, sample writing 544

Th 2/11 Imagery 560-568, Tennyson "Lady of Shalott" (online)

T 2/16 Symbol 573-579, sample writing 479

Th 2/18 Internal Structure 611-621, Shelley "Ozymandius" 710

T 2/23 External Form 632-640, sample writing 657

Th 2/25 Sonnet: Shakespeare, Browning, Millay ("i, being born"), Harwood, Collins

Fiction

T 3/1 Plot 57-65, "The Jewelry" 66

Th 3/3 "The Rocking-Horse Winner" (online), "If You Were a Dinosaur My Love" (online)

Paper 1 Due (Monday 3/7 by midnight)

T 3/8 Character 122-130, "Sonny's Blues" 73

Th 3/10 Narration and P.O.V. 102-106, "Recitatif" 131, "Girl" 119

Spring Break

T 3/2 Setting 157-163 "A Pair of Tickets" 179

Th 3/24 "Cask of Amontillado" 107, How to find sources

T 3/29 Symbol 205-210, "The Birth Mark" 211

Th 3/31 "The Yellow Wallpaper" 307, academic article (online)

T 4/5 Theme 241-244 "Bartleby the Scrivener" 372

Th 4/7 "Everyday Use" (online), academic article (online)

Drama

T 4/12 Drama: Reading, Writing, Responding 740-768

Th 4/14 "Trifles" 743

T 4/19 Antigone 1191

Th 4/21 Antigone 1191

Paper 2 Due (Monday 4/25 by midnight)

T 4/26 A Midsummer Night's Dream (online)

Th 4/28 A Midsummer Night's Dream (online)

T 5/3 A Raisin in the Sun 918

Th 5/5 A Raisin in the Sun 918

Final: Tuesday May 10, 12 noon