**English 106: Reading Fiction/Spring 2016**

Dr. Patricia Gott

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Office Hours:

--Tuesdays: 3:30-4:15

--Wednesdays: Electronic Office Hour from 1-2 (I’m online then)

--Thursdays 11:30-12:15

--Other times by appointment

\*\**Make sure you check your campus email on a daily basis, as I regularly send out announcements via email. I do check phone messages, but not as frequently as email.*

**Course Description and Objectives**

English 106 is an opportunity to enhance your understanding and enjoyment in reading fiction by analyzing and discussing outstanding short stories from different cultures and historical periods. These stories describe a large variety of characters and themes and employ diverse literary techniques. In addition to covering various concepts in the study of fiction and its key elements (plot, character, setting, point of view, and theme), we will consider how fiction reflects and reacts to real-life issues, such as gender, class, race, sexuality, art, society, violence, and so on.

Designed to satisfy the General Education requirement in the Humanities, this course will enable you to grasp particular intellectual, cultural, and aesthetic concepts emerging in the texts under discussion, but also to relate these particulars to more universal and enduring issues significant in our lives today. You will be invited to make an imaginative leap outside of your own perspective and to understand experiences and positions different from your own. Finally, you will improve your ability to approach critically literary works and ideas they convey and to express your understanding and interpretation of them in a clear and supported manner.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this course, assuming you fulfill the criteria, you should be able to:

--analyze texts and reflectively write on them according to predetermined criteria;

-- expand your appreciation of literature written by writers in English;

-- recognize the broad spectrum of approaches authors take to represent that vast realm known as the “human condition”;

-- locate directions for future reading.

**Required Text and supplies: (rental)**

--Trimmer, Jennings, and Patterson (eds.), *eFictions*, Harcourt Inc. 2002.

--Paper folder with pockets and a notebook with letter or full sized writing paper.

--\*\*Possibly a second purchase text will be added that will be announced.

Cell phone/Laptop policy (PLEASE READ AND COMMIT TO MEMORY!): Use of cell phones, unless for a specific class purpose, IS PROHIBITED. I will deduct points from your final grade if I observe you texting during class. If you use a laptop to take notes, please sit near a wall so that others are not distracted by your screen; also please refrain from using your laptop during the discussion portion of the class.

Recording Policy: Students may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of lectures or other class activities without written permission from the instructor. Anyone violating this policy will be asked to turn off the device being used. Refusal to comply with the policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom, and possibly being reported to the Dean of Students.

**Attendance:** Because part of your grade in this course is dependent on your regular performance and preparation, regular class attendance is required. You have two absences free of charge; in other words, these two absences are not counted against your final grade. After your third absence, final course grades ***MAY*** *be* lowered by a third of a letter grade for each absence. (i.e., A to an A-). I make NO distinction between excused and unexcused absences except for religious holidays or official organized and documented UWSP events. **I DO NOT NEED TO KNOW WHY YOU ARE OR WILL BE ABSENT—UNLESS YOU ARE DEALING WITH A SEVERE AND/OR CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS THAT NECESSITATES YOU MISSING MORE THAN A CLASS OR TWO** in which case you should email me about this. I will require a doctor’s note in this event. You are also responsible for acquiring any handouts or assignments you miss. I cannot reteach the class you have missed for you. Think of it this way: You have known all semester when class is scheduled for. If you have chosen to be absent, that is your business -- you are an adult and can make decisions. My absence policy allows you to decide which classes you'll miss.

**Tardiness**: Please try to avoid excessive tardiness and leaving class before the end of class (i.e., arriving more than a minute or two after the start time may get you marked absent).

**Late Assignment Policy:** All work is due the day indicated on the syllabus. Unless I indicate otherwise, late papers will be docked a letter grade if they are not handed in the day they are due. I will not accept late assignments one week beyond the due date except in the case of a documented illness or family emergency. **Please do not email me your papers unless you have made arrangements with me to do so. In most cases, I only accept emailed papers in extreme emergencies and you will need to contact me for my approval of this.**

**Grading breakdown:**

**Reading Journal/In class assignments: 40%** You will keep a reading journal (a notebook or a folder with notebook paper) throughout the term and you should bring it to class each week. The main objective of the response is that you explore your reactions to what you're read and try to begin a bit of analysis of the work. In class, we'll further that process of analysis in discussion.

Each time you finish the two (or three) stories assigned for a particular day, take 20 minutes or so to make a corresponding entry for one of the stories you read for that work. You must do these entries before these assignments are discussed in class. Their purpose is to prepare you for class discussion, other in-class activities, as well as the exams. Normally, each entry should include a header (title), your personal reaction to the story and either your response to one of the questions following the story, if they are included, or an attempt at an analysis that addresses a question you raise about the text (a question you could pose to the rest of the class for discussion). At assigned times, I will collect the journals at times to make sure you write regularly. At the end of the term, I will collect them and evaluate how thoughtfully and thoroughly you engaged with the readings. One component of this reading journal MAY include a few pop quizzes with short answer and true or false questions to ascertain that you are keeping up with the reading.

**Journal Format**: You have the option of handwriting or typing your response. One advantage to typing them is that you have a saved copy on your computer which helps with backup in case you lose your journal. (It is also a lot easier for me to read, so I really appreciate typed responses. I find they often go into more detail than the handwritten responses, although this is not always the case). If you do type them, please doublespace them and use 11 or 12 point standard font (Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri all are readable). **If you handwrite, make sure to leave space in the margin AND PLEASE USE BLUE OR BLACK INK** instead of a pencil.

**Short Paper: 30%**

You will write a short paper (3 full pages) in response to one of several suggested topics. Some will be standard topics for literary analysis; others will be more unusual, such as to imagine a dialogue between characters from two different texts, to rewrite a scene from another character’s point of view, or two imagine how a character might behave if he/she lived in America today.

The paper should include a title, be double spaced, and printed in a regular font (size 10-12) with a one-inch margin. Also see <http://www.esc.edu/online-writing-center/resources/academic-writing/strategies-for-academic-writing/>

for strategies to deal with writer’s block if this is an issue for you.

**Final Exam: 30%**

You will write a take home essay that will be due during the scheduled exam period that responds to a variety of texts we have read during the semester and addresses a variety of themes and literary motifs we discuss in class. More information on the final will be distributed as we get close to the exam. The take-home is due the day of the final.

**Some tips for beginning our analysis of literature:** My philosophy is that in a literature course that is designed for the beginning analyst of literature, the less a teacher lectures, the more students will learn. This course is designed to encourage your maximum input which can be demonstrated via your engagement with the material. Lectures will focus largely on background material of the historical/literary type. This course, however, will often be discussion-based, so you should expect to be **actively** engaged discussion as a whole class and in small group work. Come to class prepared to talk about your ideas regarding what you’ve read (as opposed to your views on the Packers, your other classes, etc.) and remember that **ALL READINGS SHOULD BE DONE AHEAD OF TIME**. Also remember that your classmates and I want to hear your ideas regarding literature, and that’s one of the ways we all learn from one another. Also, active and regular participation might help boost your grade if you sit on that fence between a lower and a higher grade. Remember to try to value and respect your classmate’s opinions even when you may not agree with them. I will attempt to do the same.

Remember, too, that you should not rely on my interpretations of texts as the final word; your primary aim should not be to find what I (or any teacher) think a text means but should instead be to hone your own critical skills when reading literary texts.

**Appropriate classroom conduct** ensures that the classroom is a safe space in which all students feel comfortable to be themselves and freely, but respectfully, express their views. We will not avoid controversial or uncomfortable topics in this class. Instead, we will ask ourselves and each other why certain topics offend us or make us uncomfortable. And we will always be respectful and mindful of other people’s opinions and feelings. We can certainly disagree with each other, but dismissive or insulting attitudes toward another person or his/her views will not be tolerated.

**Plagiarism:** Essentially, plagiarism is using someone else’s words or ideas as your own without giving appropriate credit or proper acknowledgment in the form of documentation. **Plagiarizing someone else’s work may lead to an F on the assignment in question or result in a failing grade for the course.** To avoid any suspicion of plagiarism, make sure that you always cite your sources properly, using the MLA system of documentation. For text citations, use parenthetical references instead of footnotes. The first time you quote from the text, use the author’s name and page number (Woolf 1966). Unless you switch to another source, you only have to include the page number in the rest of your paper. You don’t need to include a Works Cited page UNLESS you cite sources other than those in our textbook. (I encourage you to develop your own critical perspective, rather than relying on outside critical sources, however). **Ask questions if you are not sure how to format MLA citations and consult the Purdue University OWL (Online Writing Center) for detailed specifics on MLA format:** <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

**Resources: The Tutoring and Learning Center** provides free tutoring to any student interested in improving his or her writing abilities. The Center’s purpose is not to correct or proofread your drafts, but to help you learn strategies that good writers use during the processes of writing, including helpful strategies for brainstorming, drafting, and revising. Located in the basement of the library, the TLC is available for assistance with writing projects for any of your classes, including this one.

I am committed to **accommodating students with a documented disability**. For the procedure and paperwork, please contact UWSP Disability Services (LRC, Room 609, [disserv@uwsp.edu](mailto:disserv@uwsp.edu)).

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

# **All page numbers are from *eFictions; a few readings with ER next to them are Electronic Reserve pieces and are available online (this will be explained)*. A few reading links will be sent to you via email. All readings should be read before the class for which they are assigned.** Note that some readings may be changed, deleted or supplemented, so make sure to check your email regularly**. Finally, TBA means: To BE ANNOUNCED.**

Week 1: Jan. 25/ Introduction to the class/Literary Terms handout

“Popular Mechanics” Carver (handout)

Week 2: Feb. 1/ Elements of character, fiction and setting and Avoiding plot summary

”A Rose for Emily” (129) We will watch a film version of this, too

Week 3: Feb. 8/”Eveline” Joyce (Handout; also available at: https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/j/joyce/james/j8d/chapter4.html), “Araby” Joyce (531)

“The Bridegroom” Ha Jin (515)/Pick up Chopin story

Week 4: Feb. 15/”Story of an Hour” Chopin (xerox), “The Yellow Wallpaper” Perkins Gilman (118)

Week 5: Feb. 22/”Everyday Use” Walker (839), “The Lesson” Cade Bambera (213)

**\*\*If I don’t take them up before this day, READING JOURNALS COLLECTED: Bring them to class**

Week 6: Feb. 29/”Red Convertible” Erdrich (339), Cisneros “One Holy Night” (297)

Week 7: Mar. 7/”The Swimmer” Cheever (287)/”Defender of the Faith” Roth (757)

Week 8: Mar. 14/”Cask of Amontillado” Poe (721)/Additional Poe story, PERHAPS ”The Fall of the House of Usher” Available: http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/POE/fall.html

/**Brainstorming paper topics**

Week 9: Mar. 21/**NO CLASS: HAVE A GREAT SPRING BREAK!**

Week 10: Mar. 28/”A Good Man is Hard to Find, O’Connor (683), “Good Country People” O’Connor ER/pick up Xerox of Kincaid’s “Girl”

Week 11: Apr. 4/ Girl” Kincaid (xerox)/”Where are You Going, Where Have You Been?” Oates, (669)/**READING JOURNALS COLLECTED: Bring to class**

Week 12: Apr. 11/”Babylon Revisited” Fitzgerald (361)/Borowski ”This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen” (ER)

Week 13: Apr. 18/ **NO CLASS— No class: Optional conferences on papers in my office, 318 CCC**

**Papers due on my office door: Wednesday, Apr. 20**

Week 14: Apr. 25/ *Smoke Signals* (FILM—to be watched in class) “Hold Tight” Amy Bloom (ER)

Week 15: May 2/ “Metamorphosis” Kafka available: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5200/5200-h/5200-h.htm>

**Week 16:** May 9/**ALL READING JOURNALS DUE**

Final Exam: Wed., Monday May 16 7:15 pm (Take home exam to be turned in at the beginning of the scheduled exam period)/Reading journals will be returned at this time