

English 200 Section 1: Introduction of the Study of Literature Syllabus

David Arnold
Office: CCC 440
715-346-2638

David.Arnold@uwsp.edu

Sec 1: TR 3:30-4:45
CCC 128
Office Hours: MW 12-1

English 200 is designed as a foundation course for English majors and others interested in the in-depth analysis of literature. This class has many objectives. Through a close focus on a handful of texts representing the main genres of literature— prose fiction, poetry, and drama—we will try to figure out what exactly constitutes literature and literary study and how best to go about it. We'll experiment with some of the central methods of literary analysis and principles of literary research and find ways to situate ourselves in the sometimes dizzying relationship between author, text, and reader.

Note further that in addition to introducing you to information that will be useful to you as you pursue a major in English, this course also contributes to the General Education Program's "Humanities" requirement. Learning outcomes for this requirement stipulate that successful students will be able to

- Read closely, think critically, and write effectively about texts or cultural artifacts that reflect on perennial questions concerning the human condition (such as the search for truth and meaning, the confrontation with suffering and mortality, or the struggle for justice, equality, and human dignity).
- Investigate and thoughtfully respond to a variety of ideas, beliefs or values held by persons in situations other than one's own.

ENGLISH 200 COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Mask mandate: UWSP's policy regarding facemasks states that everyone is required to wear a mask while in campus buildings unless they have been granted an exemption by the Disability and Assistive Technology Center (DATC).

We will be following these protocols in our classroom, and **for us specifically the bottom line is that everyone in class will wear a mask (and this means wear it properly)**. Students with exemptions approved through the DATC are excepted, but only once I receive official notification from DATC. **Until I receive such notification I cannot allow unmasked students (or any other unmasked people) into the classroom.**

We will be using the following texts:

- *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism, and Theory* (LCT) by Bennett and Royle (5th ed) (rental)

- Also, you'll need a source for MLA documentation conventions. *Hacker's Rules for Writers* (9th ed), which you should still have from Freshman Comp, will do fine.

Your grade in this class will be based on your continued conscientious application to the things we're reading, discussing, and writing. If you read all the assigned material carefully and thoughtfully, come to class prepared to talk and think about it and work on it with your colleagues, and strive to write journal entries and craft presentations you feel proud of, you will enjoy spectacular, resounding success. Specifically, I will evaluate the following tasks:

- A Reflective Essay: Early in the semester I'll ask you to write a short essay (3-4 pages) in which you reflect on your experience with literature thus far: for example, the factors that prompted you to become an English major, the nature and extent of your formal and informal experience with literary study, your expectations regarding what you will gain from this program, and that ways you believe it will prepare you to fulfill your long-term aspirations. I will read these and score them as Complete / Incomplete (C / I). One copy will be kept on file in the Department office (you should also keep a copy) and will be used to assess your development when you complete the required Senior Project before you complete the major. It will not be considered as part of your academic record.
- Journal Entries: These will consist of weekly responses to the primary works on the syllabus supplemented by consultation of specified chapters in *Literature, Criticism and Theory* (LCT), *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (GLT) (entries from which are located on our Canvas page in the GLT module), and selected secondary sources (which are located on our Canvas page in the Secondary Readings module). They should come in at about a typed, double-spaced page (roughly 300 words) and are due at the beginning of class every Monday. See the Journal Prompts module on our Canvas page for a list of prompts.
- A formal Group Presentation: These will be undertaken throughout the semester and will involve close readings of primary texts supplemented by biographical and historical context as well as insights gleaned from readings in LCT. Library research is required. Also note that these presentations will provide the basis for the midterm and final examinations.
- Midterm and Final Examinations: These will provide you the opportunity to dilate at length on matters arising from the primary texts we will have read and to connect them to ideas we've worked with in both Bennet and Royle and Abrams. Format, as well as strategies for preparation, will be discussed well in advance.
- Participation in daily workshops and discussions

The breakdown of your grade will work roughly as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| • Reflective Essay | 50 points |
| • Journal | 300 points |
| • Group Presentation | 200 points |
| • 2 Midterm Exams | 100 points @ |
| • Final Exam | 200 points |
| • Preparation, Participation | 100 points |

Reading: Plan to have the reading for a given week done before the first day of class that week. The readings and films will provide the bases for our discussions and Journal assignments, and we will very frequently be doing exercises and other activities that will require intimate knowledge of what you've read.

Journals: A Journal entry will be due every Monday. Individual prompts with specific instructions are available on our Canvas page in the Journal Prompts module and also in each week's Reading and Writing module. You'll upload your Journal entries through links in these modules; please upload Word documents or PDFs. Canvas is finicky about other formats. The Journal will be the site of a large percentage of your writing in this course. In it you will reflect on things we read and view, respond to specific questions, and begin marshaling ideas about what we read.

For each journal entry you will

- read one of the week's primary texts and also
- consult a chapter from *Literature, Criticism and Theory* **OR** an entry from *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, as well as
- a secondary source. Secondary sources reside in the Secondary Readings module on our Canvas page, and *Glossary of Literary Terms* entries can be found in the GLT module.

The journal will give you an opportunity to reflect on the primary readings as well as on your conceptions of yourself and the things you value, and to develop your own ideas and voice. The Journal is an arena where you can express yourself honestly and openly and is not quite as structured as a formal paper. Nonetheless successful journaling requires careful thought and effort. **Spelling, grammar, mechanics, and strong writing are all important parts of this exercise.** Think of the Journal as prewriting or exploratory writing, writing that you work through in order to massage and refine your ideas and understanding of a subject. While you hope it will impress people, you don't necessarily expect it to wind up in a formal draft in its current form. We will (anonymously) read and evaluate Journal entries regularly in the synchronous portion of our class, so put forth effort that you will feel comfortable having your classmates read. Journals are scored holistically and will typically receive a "check," "plus," or "minus." Point-wise, this translates to roughly 26.5 for a check, 28.5 for a plus, and 22.5 for a minus (basically a B+, an A, or a C).

Presentations: Each student will undertake a formal oral group presentation. We'll be setting up groups and choosing topics during the first two weeks of class.

Presentations will take place throughout the class and will cover one of the authors on the syllabus for that day as well as relevant chapters from *Literature, Criticism, and Theory*. Presenters will prepare

- background information and historical context on the author
- readings of some or all of that author's works on the syllabus, which, like the author background material, should reflect engagement with secondary sources
- a specific connection to a chapter or chapters from LCT (that is, suggestions about how the ideas in LCT can enhance our understanding of the primary works
- a formal Write-up which you will give to me.

Essentially, your group will be leading a class on that author. You should strive to deliver a product you can be proud of and one that will enhance your colleagues' knowledge about your author.

Consider the kinds of things you would find helpful and informative in such a presentation, and try to make yours as useful as possible. Plan to cover biographical and historical context, and to provide some critical insight on the works you focus on. **Research is required for the presentation;** plan to consult at least three library sources. Your library research should prove invaluable in helping you locate and explicate important passages. **These interpretations will constitute the heart of your presentation.** Further, consider producing handouts, making use of audio or video aids, and designing exercises to actively engage your classmates.

Also due at the time of your presentation, as suggested above, is a 1-2 page write-up, essentially a copy of your notes or outline, and a bibliography of the sources you've consulted.

Email: All of you, as you know, are assigned an email account when you arrive. *Get to know it and get into the habit of checking your email every evening.* I will frequently send reminders, copies of assignments, and other important stuff via email, and it's your responsibility to make sure you get it.

Attendance Addendum: Although the Attendance Policy outlined in the syllabus remains generally in force, please know that I'm well aware of the volatility of our situation created by Covid-19. In the event of excused absences I'll make every reasonable effort to help ensure that you're able to stay on track. It's your responsibility to keep me posted if anything goes awry and we'll work to figure out how to make things work.

A note on attendance: Attendance is mandatory. I allow you three absences for the semester with no questions asked. Beyond this, **excuses notwithstanding**, I will begin reducing your grade by 25 points for each absence. If you know you'll need to be absent at some point during the semester—whether for extracurricular activities like sports or personal obligations like weddings—plan to spend your three absences on these. In-class essays missed due to absence must be made up under timed conditions as soon as possible. Quizzes and workshops cannot be made up. Also please note that I cannot re-teach the class by email: if you miss class, contact another student to find out what you missed. Of course, I'll be happy to send any handouts you miss, and you're always welcome to show up at my office hours to go over anything.

Plagiarism: Do not shortchange yourself and mislead your colleagues by presenting the work of another as your own. Plagiarism is **THE** cardinal academic sin, and I take it very seriously. Proof of this offense will result at the very least in failure for that assignment, and the penalties can get much more serious very quickly. Think your own thoughts, do your own

work, and broadcast it proudly. Know too that plagiarism is always easy to detect and prove, and that, frankly, it's less work to do your own work than to craft a convincing piece of plagiarism. For more information on university standards of academic conduct, follow this link: <https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Student-Conduct.aspx>.

CALENDAR

Wk 1 (9/2-9/3)

- Introduction
- Read RW 403-417 on working with sources
- Read "Periods of English Literature," "Periods of American Literature," "Literature," and "Genre" (available on our Canvas page in the *Glossary of Literary Terms (GLT)* module)

Wk 2 (9/7-9/10)

- Introduction to fiction
- Read "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (available through the links in this week's Reading and Writing module)
- Read "Narrative" in LCT
- Read "Short story," "Plot," "Fiction and truth," and "Point of view" in GLT
- Journal #1 due
- Reflective Essay due
- Choose Presentation Groups!

Wk 3 (9/13-9/17)

- Read "The Storm" and "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin
- Read "Figures and Tropes" and "Symbol," and "Laughter" in LCT
- Read "Figurative language," and "Local color" in GLT
- Journal #2 due

Wk 4 (9/20-9/24)

- Read "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner and "Good Country People" by Flannery O'Connor
- Read "Suspense" and "Character" in LCT
- Read "Satire" in GLT
- Journal #3 due

Wk 5 (9/27-10/1)

- Midterm review (Tuesday)
- MIDTERM EXAM (Thursday)

Wk 6 (10/4-10/8)

- Introduction to poetry
- Read "Poem 199" by Emily Dickinson
- Read "Feelings," "Voice," and "The Author" in LCT
- Read "Rhyme," and "Persona, tone, and voice" in GLT

- Journal #4 due

Wk 7 (10/11-10-15)

- Introduction to Meter
- Read Sonnets 29 and 116 by William Shakespeare, and "Acquainted with the Night" by Robert Frost
- Read "Meter," "Stanza," and "Sonnet" in GLT
- Journal #5 due

Wk 8 (10/18-10/22)

- Shakespeare and Frost continued

Wk 9 (10/25-10/29)

- Read "Kubla Khan" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and "Ozymandias" by Percy Shelley
- Read "War" in LCT
- Read "Irony" in GLT
- Journal #6 due

Wk 10 (11/1-11/5)

- Read Sonnets 147, 18, and 130 by William Shakespeare
- Read "Desire" and "Love" in LCT
- Read "Courtly love" in GLT
- Journal #7 due

Wk 11 (11/8-11/12)

- Midterm review (Tuesday)
- MIDTERM EXAM (Thursday)
- Watch Branagh's "Hamlet" (1996)

Wk 12 (11/15-11/19)

- Read Acts 1 and 2 of "Hamlet" (you can use the linked copy, but any edition will do)
- Read "The Tragic" and "Ghosts" in LCT
- Read "Tragedy" in GLT
- Journal #8 due

Wk 13 (11/22-11/24)

- Hamlet continued (get through acts 3 and 4)
- Read "Pantomime and dumb show" in GLT
- Watch Olivier's "Hamlet" (1948)
- Journal #9 due

Wk 14 (11/29-12/3)

- Hamlet continued
 - Watch Zeffirelli's "Hamlet" (1990)
 - Journal #10 due
-

Wk 15 (12/6-12/10)

- Hamlet continued
- Read "The End" in LCT
- Read "Paradox" in GLT

Final Exams (12/12-12/17)

Our Exam: Thursday, December 16th, 8-10 (am!)