

ENGLISH 210: APPROACHES TO LITERATURE

Spring 2001

Missouri Western State College

Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism

Section – 02, 9:30-10:50 TTh, JGM 311

Section - 90N, 6:30-9:20 T, JGM 303

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ENG 210 Approaches to Literature. A general studies course emphasizing ways of reading and writing about poetry, fiction and drama. Various thematic approaches may be offered.

Outlooks and Insights. A study of readings encompassing themes of personal experiences and relationships, including such aspects of our lives as education, work, language, technology, and considerations of contemporary social issues and ethical questions.

For a complete course description and objectives, visit to the English Department web-site at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/EFLJ/eng210.asp>

COURSE PHILOSOPHY

English 210, a course in reading, thinking, discussing, and writing about literature, will show how literature comments on life, explores issues that matter, and raises questions that trouble and fascinate.

Outlooks and Insights is about stories. We all have stories to tell. Our stories reveal our loves and our hates, our laughter and our tears, our confidence and our fear. Our stories explain how and why we have formed certain opinions or made specific decisions. They explain what impact our actions have had on others. Our stories shape us.

We have also been affected by the stories of others. We read and re-read the same books until we know some stories by heart and call some characters friend. We sit spellbound through movies. We listen again and again to songs that haunt us. We call friends to share stories and laugh at new jokes. These stories too shape our attitudes and beliefs.

In this course, we will explore the theme of Outlooks and Insights by examining the impact of story in our lives. We will have the opportunity to write our own important stories. We will also read and discuss the stories, poems, and dramas of other writers. We will study how individuals, both real and fictional, face problems, conflicts, and issues; and we will study how their stories affect us.

Key Course Questions

(What you should know by the time you finish this course.)

1. How is a story constructed?
2. How do you interpret a story and discuss your interpretation both orally and in written form?
3. How and why does story (literature) create a magic spell and engage the reader?
4. How can we relate story to our lives?
5. What makes you an active reader?
6. What makes you an active writer?

Instructor's Philosophy

(What I believe about teaching literature and how I will apply these beliefs to this course.)

- o *Readers must discuss.* The opportunity to discuss literature, to ask questions, to offer reactions and opinions, to form interpretations will be part of every class. This discussion will take both oral and written forms.
- o *Readers must think beyond the surface of the story.* We will focus on character, structure, language, and details to understand and appreciate individual works.
- o *Readers need to understand that literature shows, does not always tell.* We must recognize when characters and situations change and why these changes occur. We must study how these changes affect the characters within the work and our understanding.
- o *Readers must be independent thinkers.* I will ask you to focus your thinking on specific questions, write weekly responses, lead a class discussion, and examine themes from a personal point of view.
- o *Readers must discover how literature creates a magic spell, how literature engages us.* We need to learn how writers grab our attention, make us want to read about a situation or character, and force us to think about an issue or event.
- o *Readers must search for meaning.* We need to study how a work is believable, memorable, insightful, and meaningful.
- o *Readers must relate what they read to their own experiences.* We write several narratives as a way of exploring the issues studied in the course.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Meyer, Michael. *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*. 5th Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments and Grading

As in all literature classes, reading is essential. You will have a reading assignment for every class. You are expected to come to class with questions and reactions to what has been read and ready to participate actively in class discussions. Reading will be evaluated through my observation of your participation in discussion, quizzes, weekly response writings, and other class activities.

Currently, I have plans to build this class around three units: Identity, Home and Family, and Love and Its Complications.

There will be approximately 800 points in this class. The majority of your grade will be earned in three areas:

- o 250 points for weekly responses. These 1-2 page typed response essays will be due on most Tuesdays. The essays will be written in response to one of the literary selections to be read and discussed that week. Right now, I plan for 10 responses of 25 points each.
- o 250 points for class participation. I expect you to be an active student in class, coming prepared to participate in all class activities. Each student will lead a discussion over one of the assigned stories. This presentation will be worth 50 points. Participation in class discussions, grades on tests and quizzes, and other activities will account for around 100 points before mid-term and 100 points after mid-term.
- o 250 points for an end-of-course portfolio. You will be asked to write a narrative on the topic of each unit. The drafts of these narratives will be worth 25 points each. At the end of the semester you will be required to submit a portfolio of your study of story. The portfolio will include a new writing on the theme of the portfolio, revisions of two narratives, revisions of several weekly responses, and other material.

I expect you to complete all assignments on time. Late assignments (this is any work that is not submitted on time and includes assignments left at home or "temporarily lost" by a computer malfunction) will result in a deduction of that assignment's grade. If you are facing difficulties in completing a major assignment, please discuss the problems with me before the essay is due.

The grading scale for this course is:

100-90%=A; 89-80%=B; 79-70%=C; 69-60%=D; Below 60%=F

Attendance

For this class to be successful and for you to be successful in it, attendance is mandatory. I expect you to be on time and ready to participate for every class meeting. I realize that "things" sometimes come up. Therefore, you are allowed two unexcused absences (that is one week or one class for the evening section) before your grade will be affected. More than two absences (two weeks or two classes for the evening section) will result in a grade deduction. More than six absences (three weeks or three classes for the evening section) will result in a failing grade for this course. Quizzes, in-class writing and class activities cannot be made up if you are late for class or absent.

If you miss class because of a college-sponsored activity, you will not be penalized. It is your responsibility to contact me before class for assignments.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is an act of theft. It is taking another's words or ideas and calling them your own. That does not mean you cannot use another's words or ideas to illustrate and to support your thoughts, but it does mean that you must give credit to the one whose words and ideas you are using. Plagiarism like cheating cannot be tolerated. If I find evidence of plagiarism or cheating, the assignment will fail.

Disabled Student Policy

Any student enrolled in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities or that prevents or hinders the completion of class requirements as stated in the syllabus should contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss class requirements.

Center for Academic Support

The Center for Academic Support provides trained tutors for students requiring additional reading and writing instruction. There is no cost to students for using these services. You are encouraged to make use of these services throughout this course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule explains the direction of the class. It is subject to change.

(Special note for the evening section: Your weekly assignments will be selected from this course schedule. Because of the circumstances of this class, some adaptation of this schedule will be necessary.)

Poems will be paired with many of these stories. Specific poems will be assigned for study throughout the semester.

Jan 16 - Course introduction. Introduce Identity Unit. "The Story of An Hour," 14 and "The Hand," 220.

Jan 18 - "How To Tell A True War Story," 555.

Jan 23 - "Miss Brill," 258 and "A&P," 576.

Jan 25 - "Revelation," 407.

Jan 30 - "The Proposal: A Jest in One Act," 1615.

Feb 1 - "Suffer the Little Children," 535.

Feb 6 - Identity Narrative is due. "The Night Nurse," 653.

Feb 8 - Introduce Home and Family Unit. "Popular Mechanics," 272; "Powder," 665; and "Killings," 81.

Feb 13 - "A Sorrowful Woman," 33 and "Soldier's Home," 145.

Feb 15 - "A Good Man Is Hard To Find," 381.

Feb 20 - "An Ounce of Cure," 434 and "Eveline," 512.

Feb 22 - "A Red Sweater," 235.

Feb 27 - *A Raisin in the Sun*, 1730, or *The Glass Menagerie*, 1864, or *Death of A Salesman*, 1795, or *Oedipus the King*, 1224 and *Antigone*, 1267.

March 1 - Continue discussion of the play.

March 6 - Home and Family Narrative is due. "Barn Burning," 481.

March 8 - "The Tenant," 102.

March 11-18 - Spring Recess.

March 20 - Introduce Love and Its Complications Unit. "Love in LA," 265 and "Lust," 290.

March 22 - "IND AFF, or Out of Love in Sarajevo," 153.

March 27 - "How I Met My Husband," 442 and "Prue," 454.

March 29 - "Good Country People," 392.

April 3 - *A Doll House*, 1564.

April 5 - Continue discussion of *A Doll House*.

April 10 - Love and Its Complications Narrative is due. "The Lady with the Pet Dog," 185 and "The Lady with the Pet Dog," 200.

April 12 - "A Rose for Emily," 72.

April 17 - *M. Butterfly*, 1675

April 19 - Continue discussion of *M. Butterfly*.

April 24 - "Patriotism," 593.

April 26 - Portfolio is due. "Carnal Knowledge," 276.

May 1 - "The Lesson," 179.

May 8 - Final Exam. Section 02, 8:30-10:20.

May 8 - Final Exam. Section 90N, 6:30-9:20.