



Missouri Western State University
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism

ENG 220-01 Introduction to Reading Texts
11:00-12:20, TR, Murphy Hall 106
Spring 2009

"A book is a mirror; if an ass peers into it, you can't expect an apostle to peer out." --Georg Christoph Lichtenberg

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Office Hours: 8:30-9:30 TR, 2:00-3:30 W, 12:30-2:00 R

Course Description and Philosophy:

English 220 is a General Studies course designed primarily for English majors emphasizing ways of reading and writing about literature texts. In this course, you will learn and develop the skills necessary to succeed in your upper-level English courses.

"The art of reading is in great part that of acquiring a better understanding of life from one's encounter with it in a book." --Andre Mauroius

Required Materials:

- Barnet and Cain. *A Short Guide to Writing about Literature*. 11th ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2009.
- Gardner, Janet. *Literature: A Portable Anthology*. 2nd ed. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.
- Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th ed. 2003.
- An up-to-date unabridged college dictionary.
- A college handbook (guide to style, grammar and usage).
- Disks/Flash drives for revising, saving, and backing up your work.
- Stamina and good humor.

Instructor's Attendance Policy:

Regular attendance is an essential part of the student's educational experience and a requirement for an adequate evaluation of student academic progress. For this and other reasons, attendance is mandatory. If you have more than two unexcused absences during the semester, your final grade will be affected. Excessive absences will result in failure of the course. Chronic lateness and/or leaving early will count toward absences. Excused absences involve acting as an official representative of the university after prior notification from the faculty/staff supervisor of the event. At the instructor's discretion, an absence may be excused in the case of a documented and unforeseen emergency. All other absences will be deemed unexcused.

You are responsible for material covered or assignments given during your absence, so ask another student to inform you of what happened while you were gone. Note that not all in-class activities and assignments can fairly and

adequately be "made up," even in the case of an excused absence. For example, unless you have a time machine, you cannot go back and participate in carefully scheduled and directed classroom discussions or group activities after the fact. Moreover, such context dependent and interpersonal participation is central to the course.

If I should be unable to meet class, you will be notified by the secretary, a fellow instructor, or by an officially stamped and dated note on the classroom door.

Institutional Attendance Policy:

In order to improve student learning as well as to achieve compliance with federal financial aid policies, Western has a mandatory attendance policy for all 100-level and 200-level courses. You will be given an excused absence when acting as an official representative of the university, provided you give prior written verification from the faculty/staff supervisor of the event. All other absences will be deemed unexcused.

The maximum number of unexcused absences allowed for this class before the midterm report is three. Thus, when you have four unexcused absences you will be reported to the Registrar's Office, who will automatically withdraw you from this class. The Financial Aid Office will reduce financial aid as appropriate.

Preparation and Participation:

You are required to make significant contributions to class in the form of preparation and participation. Preparation includes completing the readings and daily assignments, as well as bringing your assignments, textbook, and other materials with you on the appropriate days. If you come unprepared, you will receive a zero for any work due that day.

Participation includes the help you give to fellow writers and the contributions you make to class discussion. Active and insightful contributions to class discussion are therefore not "extra credit." Like the written assignments, your tactful and substantive comments are part of the minimal requirements for successful completion of the course. If you are a naturally quiet person, force yourself to be more vocal; do not assume that if I do not call on you that you need not participate, as it is your responsibility to voice your observations at appropriate and relevant times. Conversely, if you are a naturally talkative person, you may have to restrain yourself so that everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

Why is discussion so important? Because live classroom discussion:

- gives me an additional indication of how closely and thoughtfully you have read, enabling me to evaluate your knowledge and abilities more fairly and accurately.
- helps you think in terms of the subject matter by giving you practice in thinking.
- helps you learn to evaluate the logic of and evidence for your own and others' positions.
- helps you learn what counts as evidence and how to evaluate knowledge claims.
- helps you understand how knowledge is arrived at in the discipline.
- gives you practice arguing with others respectfully and professionally.
- gives you opportunities to formulate applications of principles.
- helps you construct knowledge you can recall and apply when needed.
- gives you prompt feedback on difficult or confusing issues and material.
- increases your retention of material through explaining, summarizing, and questioning.
- stimulates new ideas, approaches, questions, reading and research.

Student Conduct:

As a condition to remaining at MWSU, the college expects all students to conduct themselves so as to maintain an effective environment for learning, to act responsibly in accordance with good taste, and to respect fully the rights of others. Behavior that disrupts the classroom environment or interferes with other students' learning will result in dismissal from the classroom. Passionate and forceful language are sometimes appropriate. Intolerance, intimidation, and dogmatism are not.

Assignment Requirements:

All out of class written assignments for this course must be word processed unless otherwise specified. Non-word

processed submissions will be returned with no credit. Assignments should follow MLA format, using no larger than twelve point type and one inch margins. Pages should be stapled together before you come to class (do not use paper clips or folders and do not fold down the corners of papers). Do not throw away any work you do for this class, from notes to drafts to final papers, and keep back-up copies of all papers you turn in to me.

All assignments are due at the beginning of the hour on the due date. Learning is a cumulative process, and each assignment is designed to build on the previous one. As late work disrupts this important aspect of the learning process, no late work will be accepted without prior notification and approval.

Grading:

The standards for college English classes are higher than those used in high schools. All the guidelines and standards for classes at MWSU are similar to those used by other colleges and universities throughout the country. You, as a serious student, will appreciate the fact that we hold high standards for your work. Your grade will be determined by the quality of your daily work, short writings, and exams, as well as by your preparation and participation.

Assignments will be evaluated according to how well they meet the requirements and the following general scale.

A = Superior

B = Above Average

C = Average

D = Minimum = passing below average

F = Failing

Short Writings and Daily Assignments = 60%

Final Exam = 20%

Critical Paper = 20%

Instructor's Policy on Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is a most serious offense and, therefore, will incur harsh punishment. Don't think you won't get caught; writing style is distinctive and verifiable. It is the student's responsibility to prove to the instructor's satisfaction that all work is their own.

Institutional Policy on Academic Honesty and Due Process:

Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another's work, falsifying documents or academic records, or any other fraudulent activity. Violations of academic honesty may result in a failing grade on the assignment, failure in the course, or expulsion from the University. When a student's grade has been affected, violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Provost or designated representative on the Academic Honesty Violation Report forms. Please see the *Student Handbook* and calendar for specific activities identified as violations of this policy and the student due process procedure.

Disabilities:

Any student who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities should contact me immediately so that we can discuss class requirements.

General:

This syllabus is of a contractual nature, and by remaining in the course you acknowledge your acceptance of its stipulations in their entirety. If the goals, policies, procedures, standards, expectations, or obligations are unclear, then you should speak with me immediately. If they are clear but unacceptable to you, then you should drop the course.

If you choose to remain in the course, be sure to keep a copy of this syllabus with you and to refer to it regularly. Policies are enforced without exception to ensure uniformity and predictability, to avoid confusion and anxiety, and to facilitate fairness and objectivity for all students. In the interest of efficiency, however, I reserve the right to make necessary alterations to this syllabus and to make announced changes in daily plans. Any announcements made in class automatically supersede this syllabus. It is your responsibility to find out about announced changes.

Final Thoughts:

For further explanations, comments, and advice, I am available during office hours. For additional help outside of class, I strongly recommend the Center for Academic Support.

I genuinely want you to succeed in this class and at MWSU generally. I therefore urge you to keep in mind that what you gain from this course, and your from your education generally, is proportional to the amount of productive time and careful attention you devote to it. In the words of Abigail Adams (1744-1818), "Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence."

"When you read a classic you do not see more in the book than you did before; you see more in you than was there before." --Clifton Fadiman

Course Outline:

This outline shows major readings and assignments, but additional readings and assignments will be given in class throughout the semester. Be sure to bring your research notebook, draft materials, and any sources with you to class each day.

- 13 Syllabus
- 15 From Short Guide--Ch. 1-2: Writing about Literature/Reading and Responding; Shakespeare's "Shall I compare thee" and Donne's "Death, be not proud"

- 20 Ch. 3: Drafting and Writing; Herrick's "To the Virgins" and Bradstreet's "To My Dear and Loving Husband"
- 22 Ch. 4: Explication and Analysis; Hughes' "Theme for English B"

- 27 Ch. 5: Other Kinds of Writing about Literature; Blake's "The Tyger" and Burns' "A Red, Red Rose"
- 29 Ch. 6: Literature, Form, and Meaning; Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"

- 3 Ch. 7: What Is Interpretation?; Wordsworth's "I wandered lonely as a cloud" and Byron's "She walks in beauty"
- 5 Ch. 8: What Is Evaluation?; Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener"

- 10 Ch. 9: Writing about Literature Overview; Shelley's "Ozymandias," Keats' "When I have fears that I may cease to be"
- 12 Ch. 10: Writing about Fiction; Steinbeck's "The Chrysanthemums"

- 17 Ch. 11: Writing about Drama; Ibsen's *A Doll's House*
- 19 Drama Cont.

- 24 Ch. 12: Writing about Poetry; Hopkins' "God's Grandeur," "Pied Beauty," Whitman's "A Noiseless Patient Spider," and Dickinson's "I heard a Fly buzz--when I died"
- 26 Ch. 13: Writing about an Author; Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown"

- 3 Ch. 14: Style and Format; Houseman's "Loveliest of trees" and Yeats' "Leda and the Swan"
- 5 Ch. 15: Writing a Research Paper

- 10-12 Break

- 17 Robinson's "Richard Cory" and Dunbar's "We Wear the Mask"
- 19 Carver's "Cathedral"

- 24 Williams' "The Red Wheelbarrow" and Thomas' "Do not go gentle"
- 26 Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants"

- 31 Faulkner's "Barn Burning"
2 Paper Draft Critique Day
- 7-9 No Class; Work on Papers
- 14 Cather's "Paul's Case"
16 Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper"
- 21 O'Brien's "The Things They Carried"
23 Final Papers Due; Review for Final
- 5/5 Final Exam, 11:30-1:20