Textbook

Course Description
Introduction to understanding and interpreting literature. Literary selections drawn from various cultures and genres. No prerequisite.

Course Requirements, Strategies, and Policies
These requirements are subject to modification on an individual basis at the discretion of the professor for extenuating circumstances.

Attendance
You will need to attend class regularly. Many assignments and exercises will be fulfilled in class. If for some reason you are unable to be in class, please contact me before class to make arrangements about missed work. Leaving an e-mail or voice mail message does not constitute “making arrangements.” Missed work may not always be made up.

Participation
Active engagement in reading, writing, discussing, questioning, and responding is essential to literary study. You must not only keep up with the readings but also participate in daily discussion and response during class to fare well.

Readings
The majority of vital information in this class will come from the readings assigned each day and our discussion of them in class. The tentative daily schedule should help you follow what readings are due. Any deviations from this schedule will be announced in class. Good class discussion depends upon your having read the material, so keep up with the reading.

Course Objectives
*When you are finished with this course you should be able to:*

1. Distinguish among the major genres of literature.
2. Identify the elements of literature (such as plot, character, imagery, voice) that apply to the genre of a given work and discuss their impact on the reading of that work.
3. Discuss a variety of works of short fiction, poetry, and drama from a spectrum of authors and time periods.
4. Write intelligently and cohesively about a given piece of literature.
5. Approach new literary works intelligently and enthusiastically using the tools, terminology, and confidence gained in this class.
**Course Methods and Outcomes**

You will accomplish these objectives by the following skills and outcomes:

- **Reading critically and taking notes** on the elements of literature and on authors and their works.

- **Discussing in class** the elements of literature each writer uses to convey meaning.

- **Short writings** assigned on the reading schedule. The short writing assignments are designed to keep you reading and coming to class in lieu of quizzes. These assignments cannot be “made up.” Most will be worth 10 points.
  - You must pass 5 of 10 possible short writings for the fiction section, 10 of 12 possible writings for the poetry section, and 5 of 10 possible writings for the drama section. All writings in each section must earn a 7 or better. If you receive a grade lower than 7, you will need to turn in more writings during that section until you pass the required number of assignments. So do not wait until the last five writings to begin turning in assignments.
  - Writings are due in Turnitin.com via the Angel appropriate “Writings Assignment” folder before class on the day their number appears on the syllabus. **Late writings will not be accepted.**

- **Writing a 3-page character analysis**. 100 points. Due on turnitin.com via Angel.

- **Writing a 3-page poetry explication**. 100 points. Due on turnitin.com via Angel.

- **Taking four short exams**, one on each genre and a final. The exams will focus on terms related to the genre under consideration and the specific content of the reading. Each will be worth 50 points; total 200 points.

  **Note:** You do not need to use outside sources for your papers, but if you do, you should document them in the text according to the methods given in your textbook or visit the Write Place for help in using the MLA documentation style.

**Grading**

Grades will be stated as percentages of 100. For example, 93 percent and above is an A; 90–92 percent is an A- and so on. Class attendance and participation will be taken into consideration for borderline cases.

**Point Distribution**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Writings</td>
<td>200 points (total)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Character Analysis</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poetry explication</td>
<td>100 points</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>200 points</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>600 points</td>
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“Stories invite us into a world other than ourselves, and, if they are good and true stories, a world larger than ourselves.”

— Eugene Peterson
# English 123 Reading Schedule

Note that page numbers on the reading schedule are approximate. I have provided the author’s last name and the title of the story or poem we will focus on in class. You will need to look up these works in the table of contents if they do not appear within the assigned reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wednesday JANUARY 9</th>
<th>Friday 11</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Fable, Tale, Parable: pp. 1 – 4; Marquez, “Handsomest Drowned Man”; F1</td>
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<tr>
<th>Monday 14</th>
<th>Wednesday 16</th>
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<th>Monday 21</th>
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<th>Monday 28</th>
<th>Wednesday 30</th>
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<tr>
<th>Monday 4</th>
<th>Wednesday 6</th>
<th>Friday 8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating a Story: Kafka, “The Metamorphosis” F10</td>
<td>Writing about characters</td>
<td>Fiction Exam</td>
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<th>Monday 11</th>
<th>Wednesday 13</th>
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<th>Monday 18</th>
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<th>Monday 25</th>
<th>Wednesday 27</th>
<th>Friday 29</th>
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<td>Fixed Forms, Sonnets: pp. 850 – 862; Shakespeare, “Let me not to the marriage of true minds” (Sonnet 116); Milton “When I consider how my light is spent”; Frost, “Acquainted with the night”; P6</td>
<td>Other fixed forms: pp. 862 – 871; Pinsky, “ABC”; Thomas, “Do not go gentle”; Bishop “Sestina”; P7</td>
<td>Open Forms: pp. 873 – 892; Stevens, “13 ways of looking” Herbert, “Easter wings”; P8</td>
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March 1 – March 9 Spring Break
**Fiction Paper:** Write a 3-page character analysis of a character in a story that we have read. Choose to focus on two or three traits you find “unlock” some aspect of the character’s behavior. Please follow the “keyhole” structure and include an outline and works cited page (citing your textbook). You may make an appointment in the Write Place for help on this assignment, especially if you have not yet passed proficiency or are unfamiliar with the keyhole structure.

**Poetry Paper:** Choose one poem we have studied in this class. Write a coherent 3- to 4-page essay in which you explicate or explain the poem’s meaning by dealing with its major literary aspects: imagery, figurative language, meter and/or rhythm. Remember that meaning drives your essay, not literary terminology. You will use literary terminology to explain how you have arrived at the meaning you assert. Please follow the “keyhole” structure and include an outline and works cited page (citing your
textbook). You may make an appointment in the Write Place for help on this assignment, especially if you have not yet passed proficiency or are unfamiliar with the keyhole structure.
**Fiction Short Writings:** See reading schedule for due dates.

**F1 Marquez’s “Handsomest Drowned Man”**: Define *fable, tale,* and *parable.* Then tell which definition best fits “The Handsomest Drowned Man” and why you think so.

**F2 Updike’s “A&P”**: List 8 things you can determine about setting. Then write a *short* paragraph that reflects on how setting is important to the conflict in the story.

**F3 Walker’s “Everyday Use”**: List 5 things Mama says that describe herself. How do mama’s actions differ from this description or support it? Write a paragraph to explain the difference.

**F4 Cather’s “Paul’s Case”**: Choose one of the following:
   a. List 5 specific character traits for Paul. Write a short paragraph describing what Paul’s “case” is.
   b. In a short paragraph, tell what the pictures of Calvin & Washington, Cordelia Street, and the carnation in his lapel symbolize.

**F5 Faulkner’s “Barn Burning”**: Choose one of the following:
   a. Define *epiphany.* Identify in a short paragraph why paragraphs 40 and 41 might be considered Sarty’s epiphany.
   b. List 8 words Faulkner uses to describe Abner Snopes. Write a paragraph analyzing what these words say about him as a character.
   c. List 5 passages that describe Sarty’s character (paragraph numbers will do). Write a paragraph using these passages to support whether you think Sarty is mostly free from his father’s influence or still completely bound by it at the end of the story.

**F6 Steinbeck’s “The Chrysanthemums”**: Choose one of the following:
   a. Define *symbol.* In a short paragraph, identify three potential symbols in the story and describe what they suggest.
   b. Choose 5 characteristics of Elisa and explain in a short paragraph how they relate to the conflict she experiences.
   c. Discuss the significance of elements of the setting to the major conflict of the story.

**F7 O’Connor’s “A Good Man is Hard to Find”**: Read the essay “Excerpt from ‘On her Own Work’” (p. 396). Choose one of the following, and using information gathered from the essay, write your own short essay (no more than 500 words):
   a. Write a character analysis of the grandmother. Identify three major characteristics that define her based on your own reading and O’Connor’s essay. Then discuss whether any of these characteristics undergo a transformation through her encounter with the Misfit.
   b. Summarize O’Connor’s descriptions of the Misfit in her essay. Is he a dynamic or static character? What is his role in the story? In the grandmother’s life?
   c. Identify the moment of grace, the “gesture” that O’Connor speaks of in the essay. What is transcendent in this gesture and why do you think O’Connor sees it as indispensable to the story?
   d. Summarize O’Connor position on the role of violence in her stories. Do you agree or disagree with her assessment? Why or why not?

**F8 O’Connor’s “Parker’s Back”**: One key to understanding Flannery O’Connor’s work is her belief that moments of grace are often preceded or followed by violence (see p. 398). In what way does an act of violence in “Parker’s Back” lead to a moment of grace or transformation?

**F9 O’Connor’s “Revelation”**: One key to understanding Flannery O’Connor’s work is her belief that moments of grace are often preceded or followed by violence (see p. 398). In what way does an act of violence in “Revelation” lead to a moment of grace or transformation?

**F10 Kafka’s “The Metamorphosis”**: Using what you have learned this semester about fiction, write a 300- to 600-word reflection on a single literary aspect of the story (plot, characterization, setting, etc.) and
why you think it succeeds in this case. You may want to consider the checklists on pages 262 and 273 for help in thinking about your response.
Poetry Short Writings

P1  Shakespeare, “That Time of Year”: Define image. Make a list of all the images in this poem. Group them into logical categories and identify what those categories are.

P2  Choose one of the following:

    Roethke, “My Papa’s Waltz”: What is the speaker’s attitude toward this memory? Is it pleasant or painful? Why do you say so? Cite evidence from the poem.

    Lovelace, “To Lucasta”; Owen, “Dulce Et Decorum Est”; Jarrell, “Death of the Ball Turret Gunner”: Define irony. Identify the elements of irony in “Dulce” and the “Ball Turret Gunner”

P3  Wilbur, “Love Calls Us to the Things of This World”: Identify the images of sight, sound, smell, touch, and temperature. Then briefly describe what they are images of? (hint: answering the questions after the poem may help)

P4  Eliot’s “Journey of the Magi”: List all the images you can find in the first 20 lines of “The Journey of the Magi.” Then list all the images you find in lines 21 to 32 (next stanza). Briefly tell how these sets of images differ and what that difference means in the poem.

P5  Donne, “Batter My Heart” and “Death Be Not Proud”: List all the figurative language you could find in these two poems. Write the words from the poem and then label them with the type of figure they represent. List no more than two images that function only as images and not also as metaphors, similes, paradoxes, apostrophes, or other figures.

P6  Shakespeare, “Sonnet 116: Let me not to the marriage of true minds”; Milton, “When I consider how my light is spent”; Frost, “Acquainted with the Night”: Compare the FORMs of these three sonnets. Identify rhyme scheme, stanza structure, and presentation of logic (i.e. problem/solution).

P7  Write a paraphrase of one of the poems on pp. 866 – 870. Then briefly tell how your paraphrase compares (favorably or unfavorably) to the original, speculating on the necessity of form to convey, not only meaning, but emotional impact.

P8  Stevens, “13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird”: Answer three of the seven questions listed at the end of the poem. Be sure to identify the question in your answer.

P9  Frost: In-class assignment

P10  Donne, “The Flea”: Jonson “Celia”: In 200 words or less, speculate on how both of these poems accomplish the same goal for the speaker. Identify that goal and give evidence from the poem that it is accomplished.

P11  Schnackenberg, “Supernatural Love”: What is the significance of flowers, blood, and nails (or needles) in this poem? How do these symbols connect the speaker’s understanding of herself and her father with her understanding of the Incarnation?

P12  Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”: Write a brief character analysis (about 500 words) of Prufrock that relies heavily on imagery and allusions in the poem. What do the references to other writers/artists say about Prufrock? What do the images/descriptions of himself and other say about him? What kind of person is Prufrock and why?
Drama Short Writings

D1  **Theatre history:** Write a short summary of the history of theatre based on the reading in your textbook.

D2  **Tragedy:** Describe one event in your life or the life of someone you know that illustrates the definition of tragedy as the hero’s tragic realization that his/her troubles are a result of his/her transgression of some moral/social code or “order of values.” 300 words or less.

D3  **Elements of Tragedy in Oedipus** handout on Angel

D4  **Oedipus structure chart.** Instructions given in class.

D5  **Paraphrase** Iago’s speech in II.i.262 – 282. Be sure you paraphrase highlights his feelings toward Othello and his motives for the coming action.

D6  **Character Analysis:** Write a short (300 – 500 words) analysis of one of the following characters: Othello, Desdemona, Iago

D7  **Othello structure chart** (or Act III analysis handout) Instructions given in class.

D8  **Theme search:** After reading at least the first two acts of A Doll’s House, identify three possible themes for this play.

D9  **Character Analysis:** Write a short (300 – 500 words) analysis of either Nora or Torvald. Emphasize the aspects of character that create conflict in their marriage.

D10 **Tragedy Application:** Who is the tragic figure in A Doll’s House? Write a one-page analysis in which you argue either for Nora or Torvald as the tragic figure. Use as many terms from the definition of tragedy we have used in the class as you can.