

Introduction to Literature

English 115

Southern Maine Community College

Instructor: Sharon Ross

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Spring 2016

Meets: Tuesday 3-5:45 p.m.

Office Hours: By Appointment

Texts/Supplies:

Literature and its Writers, 6th edition - Charters

Prerequisite: Successful completion of English 111

Course Description:

This course introduces the student to the literary genres of poetry, drama, and fiction. It emphasizes literature as a reflection of culture. This includes the discussion of literary terms, close textual reading, and historical backgrounds. This course is required for the SMCC associate degree student and is a prerequisite for intermediate courses on the university level. It is also designated as a writing-intensive (W) course which means that at least 25% of the final grade is based on writing. By successfully completing this course, students will be able to accomplish the following:

Content Objectives

1. To introduce students to the literary genres of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama
2. To enable students to read critically and analytically.
3. To introduce students to the process of aesthetic evaluation of written works of art
4. To introduce students to the archetypal literary characters, plots and themes
5. To enable students to distinguish between written work that is defined as literature as contrasted with popular entertainments.
6. To discern what is significant about human life across time.
7. To delineate the values of other cultures.

Writing Objectives: The course takes improvement in student writing as one of its central goals and includes explicit discussion of writing issues. Upon successfully completing this course, students will:

1. Show ability to communicate ideas clearly, with a specific purpose and to a specific audience, utilizing appropriate strategies for varying contexts and logical organization methods.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of literary analysis and comparison/contrast rhetorical modes and identify appropriate uses for each.
3. Apply revision methods to achieve polished final draft/presentation, using standard academic format and conventions of grammar.
4. When necessary, utilize information-literacy skills, including analysis of print and web-based materials and proper MLA and/or APA documentation.
5. Use critical thinking and listening skills in written and oral communication as a tool for learning.

Course requirements: Since classes will involve the student-led discussion approach, it is crucial that you read the material in order to succeed in class and actively participate in discussions. Completed documents must be typed, follow the assignment and MLA guidelines. You have the potential to earn up to 100 points (A) this semester based on the following requirements:

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REQUIREMENT	WHAT IT INCLUDES	Percentage of GRADE
LITERARY ANALYSIS ESSAY/FAN FICTION	2 literary essays. (15 points for each essay) or 1 literary essay and 1 Fan Fiction piece (e.g., two response poems or reimagining a story/character, etc.)	30% or 30 points
GENRE REVIEWS and RESPONSES	3 genre reviews = 5 points each; 8 responses = 2.5 point each; Final review = 5 points	40% or 40 points
CLASS PARTICIPATION	Attendance, engages in discussion, in-class exercises	15% or 15 points
LITERATURE PROJECT	Essay and special research project.	15% or 15 points

The Literary Analysis Essays: You will write TWO analysis essays (2-4 pages) (or ONE analysis and ONE fan fiction piece). In each essay you will pose an argument based on one of the critical approaches to literature and support your argument based on your own critical analysis and examples from the text you are examining. One essay can be the explication of a poem, or poems. You can use assigned reading responses and class discussions as a basis for any of the essays. Essays must include an argumentative thesis that is developed and supported, and at least one source outside of the textbook. Essays must be written in third person and formatted using MLA (Modern Language Association) guidelines. We will go over the details and required format for the essays in class.

Fan Fiction: Well before the Internet, poets and writers have been re-imagining plot lines, character development and storylines, and setting in response to other poets and writers. This assignment is an opportunity to re-imagine a favorite short story, poem(s), or scene in a play you find within the textbook. Maybe you want to change the ending, or add another chapter in a character's life, or maybe change the personality or conflict of a character within the original plot line.

Reading Responses and Unit Reviews: Throughout the semester I will ask you to write EIGHT, brief (no more than 1-page) reading responses on assigned reading selections. The reading responses are not formal, but **do need to reveal some critical thinking and analysis** (Avoid the summary technique). Neither summaries nor last-minute, stream-of-consciousness writing will be accepted for credit. Unit reviews will be similar short-answer questions but focus on the genres of fiction, poetry and drama.

Attendance policy: Your active, positive contributions to the learning environment are necessary for a successful class for everyone, since many of our activities involve in-class exercises and group work. **You are allowed 2 absences without penalty. Additional absences will lower your participation grade one full letter. FOUR OR MORE absences will constitute reason for failure of the course. Four or more tardies will count as ONE absence.** If attendance is an issue, feel free to discuss this with me. **TEXTING during class will be counted as an absence.**

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Late Assignments

All essays handed in late will automatically drop 5 points in grade. So if you have a grade 100 paper and it is handed in late- it is a grade 95 paper. If you hand in a grade 75 paper, handing it in late will bring it down to 70. If an essay is handed in more than 1 week late, as the instructor, I reserve the right to continue to drop the grade for each week it is late.

Classroom Courtesy/Cell phone policy

Includes politeness, positive attention to others and awareness of how your behavior affects your peers. Use appropriate language. If you are uncertain about certain activities, ask permission or consult the SMCC student code of conduct. This class is a cell-phone-free zone. If distracted by your cell phone, I will remind you to set it aside. **If distracted by your cell-phone a second time, I will ask you to leave class and you will be marked absent.**

Affirmative Action Statement:

Southern Maine Community College is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and employer. For more information, please call 207-741-5798. If you have a disabling condition and wish to request accommodations in order to have reasonable access to the programs and services offered by SMCC, you must register with the Assistant Dean of Students, who can be reached at 741-5629 (TTD 207-741-5667). Further information about services for students with disabilities and the accommodation process is available upon request at this number.

Ethical Behavior Statement:

Southern Maine Community College requires all students to adhere to high standards of integrity in their academic work. Activities such as cheating on exams and plagiarizing the intellectual work of others are not acceptable and will be subject to severe disciplinary actions, including dismissal.

SMCC plagiarism statement

If it is suspected that a student in any course in which s/he is enrolled has knowingly committed such a violation, the faculty member should refer the matter to the Maine Community College System Policy on Student Grade Appeals and Academic Misconduct. The instructor has the authority to review the alleged misconduct and determine the grade that the student should receive for the assignment and the course. The instructor may also refer the matter to the College's disciplinary officer for additional sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct. Sanctions from an instructor may include suspension from the course and a failing grade in the course.

Weekly Schedule and Assignments Subject to Change

UNIT 1

WEEK 1 (Jan. 19): Introductions, elements of fiction; Discuss "Popular Mechanics"

READ for NEXT WEEK: "Samuel"; "What is a Short Story?" pg. 9-10; PLOT, 25-28 and 32-35 including; "Young Goodman Brown" (261); CHARACTER, SETTING (pg. 40-42; 45); "Open Boat" (177)

WEEK 2 (Jan. 26): Reading response: Elements of fiction: (character, setting); discussions

READ: STYLE, TONE, IRONY, SYMBOL, THEME (pg. 57; 62-63; 68-71); "Rocking Horse Winner" (375); "Araby" (317); "Hills Like White Elephants" (273); "Half a Day"; (71) "The Day it Happened" (73)

WEEK 3 (Feb. 2): Style, voice, tone, irony, symbol, theme; story discussions

READ: "Cathedral" (137); "A&P" (599); "The Things They Carried" (468);

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WEEK 4 (Feb. 9): Reading response: Discuss stories

READ: CONTEXTs (form, cultural, historical, social) pg. 636-647; “Metamorphosis” (340-373);

WEEK 5 (Feb. 16): Discuss Kafka, context

WRITE: Literary Analysis Essay; **READ:** “The Lesson” (126); “Battle Royale” (204); “Sweat” (278); “How it Feels to be Colored Me” (286)

WEEK 6 (Feb. 23): Discuss context and stories; **Reading response: LITERARY ANALYSIS ESSAY DUE/GENRE REVIEW**

READ: Poetry/Poems 669-679; Chapter 9 (681-691); Language: 726-728; 730-734; 737; 741; “Love’s Labor Lost” excerpt

UNIT 2

WEEK 7 (March 1): Love’s Labor Lost Field Trip

“Kubla Khan” 948; “Frost at Midnight” 949; “The Flea” (958); “Bright Star” (976); “To my Dear and Loving Husband” (940);

WEEK 8 (March 8): Reading response; Intro to Poetry; poem discussions; Play discussions

READ: “Stop all the Clocks” 926; “Not Waving but Drowning” (699); “Musee des Beaux Arts (926);

WEEK 9 (SPRING BREAK): NO CLASS

WEEK 10 (March 22): Speaker, situation/setting, language, metaphor and simile

READ: Rhyme (693-695); “They Flee From Me” (702); “Summer Storm” (707); “My Papa’s Waltz” (706); “One Art” (932)

WEEK 11 (March 29): Reading response; Symbol, sounds, rhyme

READ: METER 713-719; “Lake Isle of Innisfree” (1027); “The Fish” 930; “Diving into the Wreck” (994); “There’s a Certain Slant of Light” (847); “This Be the Verse” (832); **DRAFT:** Explication essay

WEEK 12 (April 5): Reading response: Meter, Cont./Form; poem discussions;

READ: Chapter 13 traditional forms 746-748; 753-756; 763-765; “when god lets my body be” (705); “What Lips My Lips...” 768; “Sestina” 770; “Do Not Go Gentle into...” 771; “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” 879

WEEK 13: Traditional Forms; poem discussions; **GENRE REVIEW; EXPLICATION ESSAY due**

READ: Introduction to Drama (1093-1100), including “The Stronger”; Chapter 23 (1110-1125); Plays and Playwrights, 1126-1128; Langston Hughes “A Toast to Harlem” (903-907); “A Raisin in the Sun” (Act I)

UNIT 3

WEEK 14 (April 19): (LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW); Reading response; Discuss elements of drama, “The Stronger”; Harlem Renaissance; “A Raisin in the Sun” (Act I)

READ: “A Raisin in the Sun” (*Act II*)

WEEK 15 (April 26): SPECIAL LIT PROJECT DUE; LIT PROJECT PRESENTATIONS; Discuss context and Act II

READ: “A Raisin in the Sun” (*Act III*)

WEEK 16 (May 3): Reading response; LIT PROJECT PRESENTATIONS; Discuss Act III

WEEK 17 (May 10): DRAMA GENRE REVIEW; FINAL REVIEW

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LITERARY ANALYSIS ESSAY

For the literary analysis essay, you'll be analyzing a piece (or pieces) of literature (stories or poems) in *Literature and its Writers*. To do this, you will be interpreting its meaning, form a conclusion about the author's intent, or examine a context using evidence to illustrate and support your claims. Examples of evidence include excerpts from the text, a literary critique, or an author's biography.

Topics: Choose a piece (or pieces) of literature from *Literature and its Writers* and analyze it using one of the following approaches or contexts (we'll review these during the course):

- **Formal:** Examines how a writer writes, (e.g. use of imagery, conflict, plot, character development, setting, etc.) to convey a meaning or effect for the reader.
- **Historical analysis:** How does the essay reflect values and beliefs of the time and place in which it was written?
- **Cultural analysis:** What are some of the social or political forces that were at work when the author wrote the piece?
- **Biographical analysis:** How is the author's life reflected in the story, poem or play?
- **Gender analysis:** How does the work portray gender roles? Feminism, etc.

Sources: You must include at least one source from a scholarly journal to support your thesis (**use the SMCC library portal to find a scholarly or peer-reviewed journal**).

Length: 2-3 pages

DEADLINE: ____

PURPOSE/AUDIENCE:

- Find a story or poem you have read in *Literature and its Writers*. **Remember:** ask yourself "Why is this important to me?" If you aren't excited about it, chances are your reader won't be either.
- Make sure your topic is narrow enough for a 3-4 page paper.
- **You can use your response questions to any of the readings, or questions in the text, as a springboard for your essay.**

STRATEGIES/STRUCTURE:

- Form a thesis much like you do for a research essay:
 1. Ask yourself what you want to know about how a writer explores a theme or develops a story.
 2. Then answer that question.
 3. Then rephrase it into a thesis statement.
- The literary essay is much like a research essay; you should think of your audience as jurors, and you must provide them with evidence from the text that you're examining to support your thesis. You will want your purpose and your information to be clear so that your audience can make judgments for themselves.
- Use **transitions and signal phrases** to unify your paragraphs and essay. Connect your ideas from one paragraph to the next with transitional phrases. Introduce outside sources with a signal phrase (a sign that lets your reader know you'll be using someone's words or ideas).
- **Use MLA formatting and include a works cited page:** (see Chapter 28 in *Literature and its Writers*)

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MID-TERM ESSAY: EXPLICATION

For the explication essay, you'll be examining a poem in *Literature and its Writers* to determine its meaning and what you think the author may have meant when he or she wrote the poem (see page 1642-1643 for guidelines). Ideally you will support your interpretation of the poem with a secondary source to support your understanding. Examples of a secondary source include excerpts from the textbook, a literary critique, or an author's biography (see www.bedfordstmartins.com/rewritinglit).

Sources: You must include at least one external, or secondary, source to support your thesis (external would be outside the poem you are examining).

Literary terms: You should use at least 3-4 literary terms to help you explain the poem (tone, setting, situation, connotation, denotation, imagery, metaphor, simile, diction, speaker, etc.)

Length: 2-3 pages

DEADLINE: _____

PURPOSE/AUDIENCE:

- Find a poem you have read in *Literature and its Writers*. **Remember:** ask yourself "Why is this important to me?" If you aren't excited about it, chances are your reader won't be either.
- Make sure your topic is narrow enough for a 3-4 page paper.
- **You can use your response questions to any of the readings, or questions in the text, as a springboard for your essay.**

STRATEGIES/STRUCTURE:

- Explicating a poem is similar to what we've been doing in class, examining the meaning of a poem, line-by-line and in some cases, word-by-word. Your job is to explain the meaning of an entire poem, or excerpt (if the poem is too long) by using your own words and understanding, supported by at least one secondary source and specific examples from the poem.
- Use **transitions and signal phrases** to unify your paragraphs and essay. Connect your ideas from one paragraph to the next with transitional phrases. Introduce outside sources with a signal phrase (a sign that lets your reader know you'll be using someone's words or ideas).
- **Use MLA formatting and include a works cited page:** (see Chapter 28 in *Literature and its Writers*)

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FAN FICTION

Choose a short story or poem in *Literature and its Writers* that you enjoyed and want to explore a bit more. Write a creative piece that either re-imagines some aspect of the story or poem or respond to it with your own version of the story or poem. Here are some examples:

- **Re-imagine:** Do you want to re-write the ending, change a character's personality, change the plotline or conflict or how the character responds to the conflict?
- **Response:** Maybe you don't agree with the writer's perspective on a particular theme, so you will write about it from your point of view. For the poem, you'll want to follow the same meter and form. For the short fiction option, you'll need to include the same character names, setting and plot line, but will change interactions or situations that present a different take on the same theme.

Length: 2-3 pages

DEADLINE: _____

PURPOSE/AUDIENCE:

- Find a poem you have read in *Literature and its Writers*. **Remember:** ask yourself "Why is this important to me?" If you aren't excited about it, chances are your reader won't be either.
- Make sure your topic is narrow enough for a 2-3 page paper.

STRATEGIES/STRUCTURE:

- When you are using fan fiction, be very careful of plagiarism. Do not repeat the poem or story word for word. If you use exact phrases, sentences, etc., you'll need to cite them.
- **Use MLA formatting and include a works cited page if you've conducted any research:** (see Chapter 28 in *Literature and its Writers*)

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SPECIAL LITERATURE PROJECT

Through research, experience and creativity, this project will give you an opportunity to explore one area of literature in depth, while also bringing a greater understanding of your topic to your classmates. Please choose one of the following options to complete this assignment.

EACH PROJECT WILL INCLUDE:

- 2-5 page essay in MLA or APA format (see possible forms below); **DUE:** _____

OPTION 1: CLASS DISCUSSION LEADER

PRESENTATION OPTIONS (Presentations will have a sign up sheet), DUE: _____

You will be responsible for leading a 10-15 minute class discussion based on an assigned reading or one of your choosing from Literature and its Writers. You can lead the discussion from your chair, or in front of the classroom.

ESSAY: The 1-2 page essay should discuss the author's life and how his/her writing reflects his/her life experiences. (See pages 1613-1620 and 1652-1653 for guidelines about writing about the context of literature). You will support your analysis of the author's work that you discuss in class with examples from the text and at least one secondary source. Examples of a secondary source include excerpts from the commentary in the textbook, someone's literary analysis or critique of the author's work, historical texts or an author's biography (see www.bedfordstmartins.com/rewritinglit or www.biography.com).

Here are some key items of the assignment:

- The idea is to encourage your classmates to find meaning in the assigned reading and you will help them by offering a new perspective, asking questions, and/or informing them about the background of the piece of author, etc.
- About 10 minutes should be devoted to lively discussion.
- The discussion should include your own probing questions about the piece so that we notice what you want us to notice.
- You can choose something that is assigned on the syllabus, or let us know what you'll want us to read at least two weeks ahead of time.

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OPTION 2: LITERARY MOVEMENT TIMELINE:

DUE: _____

You will give a 5-10 minute presentation to the class that reviews a literary movement. The presentation should be a PowerPoint presentation that will include the following:

- a. The PowerPoint should follow these guidelines:
<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/technology/10-tips-for-more-effective-powerpoint-presentations.html>
- b. Timeline (when the literary movement began and ended)
- c. What world events influenced it
- d. Who are the key authors involved in the movement, and key milestones.
- e. A discussion of one piece of literature that embodies this movement and discuss how it reflects the tenets of the literary movement. For example, you might look at The Lost Generation, and how F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story, "Babylon Revisited," reflects how life was for those in the Lost Generation.

ESSAY: The 1-2 page essay should discuss the literary movement and how one short story or a collection of poems or a play reflect that movement. (See pages 1613-1620 and 1652-1653 for guidelines about writing about the context of literature). You will support your analysis with examples from the text and at least one secondary source. Examples of a secondary source include excerpts from the commentary in the textbook, someone's literary analysis or critique of the author's work, historical texts or an author's biography (see www.bedfordstmartins.com/rewritinglit or www.biography.com).

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OPTION 3: LIVE PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE:

NO PRESENTATION required; ESSAY DUE: _____

Attend a live performance relating to literature. It can be a play, poetry reading or author reading/discussion. Based on your experience, you will write an in-depth essay that examines the work that was performed or read aloud, your understanding of the text and how your experience impacted your understanding.

ESSAY: The 3-4 page essay should discuss the author's life and how the live performance or reading impacts your interpretation of at least one short story, a collection of poems, or a play. (See pages 1613-1620 and 1652-1653 for guidelines about writing about the context of literature). You will support your analysis of the author's work that you discuss in your presentation with examples from the text, your experience at the reading and at least one secondary source. Examples of a secondary source include excerpts from the commentary in the textbook, someone's literary analysis or critique of the author's work, historical texts or an author's biography (see www.bedfordstmartins.com/rewritinglit or www.biography.com).

For ideas about local literary events, visit:

- <http://www.bowdoin.edu/calendar/>
- www.mainetoday.com
- www.theaterproject.com (Antigone in March)
- <http://mainewriters.org/events/category/readings/>
- Check out the calendar sections of any local paper: Times Record, The Forecaster, Coastal Journal, etc.

OPTION 4: Mixed Tape of Literature Faves

NO PRESENTATION required; ESSAY DUE: _____

In Nick Hornby's novel "High Fidelity," the narrator often notes the important things in his life--like music, girlfriends and moments--by listing them in order of importance, like the top 5 desert island albums of all time. He also shows his affection by making mixed tapes of music, according to themes. This is an opportunity to use first person and be creative, while also blending the traditional elements of literary analysis essay, like in-text citations, textual support, analysis, etc.

ESSAY: The 3-4 page essay will discuss 10-12 pieces of literature (short stories, poems, plays) and why they should be compiled on a mixed tape. The essay will include:

- an overall context or theme of the "mixed tape" with examples from at least 5 of the 10-12 pieces you've chosen for the mixed tape.
- An introduction that previews the theme and gives the audience some background on the choices and their meaning to the author.
- An in-depth analysis of 1 to 2 pieces that are on the tape, with examples of how they reflect the overall theme.
- Include at least one additional source (other than the text of the pieces), in-text citations and a works cited page. Examples of a secondary source include excerpts from the commentary in the textbook, someone's literary analysis or critique of the author's work, historical texts or an author's biography (see www.bedfordstmartins.com/rewritinglit or www.biography.com).