Department of English Language and Literature  
University of Waterloo  
Winter 2008

Course syllabus for English 101A, Introduction to Literary Studies

**Instructor:** Professor Linda Warley  
**Class Time and Place:** MC 4042

**My office:** Hagey Hall 270  
**My extension:** 35379  
**My email:** lwarley@uwaterloo.ca  
**Office hours:** T, Th 12:45 – 2:00 p.m. or by appointment

**Note:** This course is managed through UW-ACE: you should get into the habit of checking there for announcements.

**Calendar Course Description:** An introduction to the study of literature, covering such areas of enquiry as literary history, genre, criticism, analysis, and theory.

**Detailed Course Description:** Welcome! In this course we will develop methods of analyzing literary works from a range of nations, periods and genres. This course will prepare you for upper-level study in the discipline of English and my principle aim is to get you to think and work like literary critics. Thus, one focus of the course is on acquiring a strong knowledge of critical terms and concepts, so that you can apply the language of literary criticism and, eventually, literary theory, to your study of literature. Along the way, I hope to demonstrate to you that detailed and nuanced study of individual literary works enhances our understanding and our enjoyment of them. We will also work on your English essay writing skills.

**Book List:** (required)


I also recommend that you acquire a good writing handbook. The bookstore stocks copies of the *Little, Brown Compact Handbook*. 
Schedule of classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings, topics, activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 8</td>
<td>Introduction and welcome to the course</td>
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| Jan 10     | Lecture: Is any narrative a story?  
Read: anthology “Introduction to Fiction” and Jamaica Kincaid “Girl” |
| Jan 15     | Lecture: What kind of story is this?  
Read: Edgar Allen Poe “The Cask of Amontillado” and Abrams “Gothic” |
| Jan 17     | Lecture: Who tells and how does she tell?  
Read: Katherine Mansfield “Miss Brill” and Abrams “Point of View” |
| Jan 22     | Lecture: Everybody’s got an attitude  
Read: Raymond Carver “Cathedral” and Abrams “Persona, Tone and Voice” |
| Jan 24     | Lecture: What difference does place make?  
Read: Alistair MacLeod “The Boat” and Abrams “Realism and Naturalism” |
| Jan 28     | Lecture: Postcolonial engishes  
Read: Ama Ata Aidoo “The Message” and Abrams “Postcolonial Studies” |
| Jan 30     | Lecture: Oral and verbal literacies  
Read: Thomas King “A Coyote Columbus Story” and Abrams “Satire” |
| Feb 5      | Writing workshop I  
Read: anthology “Writing About Literature” pages 5-13 and James Joyce “Araby” |
| Feb 7      | Lecture: Language and meaning  
Carol Shields “Words” and Abrams “Modernism and Postmodernism” |
| Feb 12     | Lecture: Deconstruction  
Read: Donald Barthelme “The Glass Mountain” and Abrams “Irony” |
| Feb 14     | IN-CLASS MID-TERM TEST  
READING WEEK |
| Feb 26     | Lecture: The cure for poetry phobia  
Read: anthology “Introduction to Poetry” pages 369-396, Abrams “Lyric” and bring a dictionary to class |
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| Feb 28 | Lecture: What kind of poem is this?  
Read: Shakespeare “Sonnet 18” and “Sonnet 130” and Abrams “Sonnet” |
| Mar 4  | Writing workshop II  
Read: anthology “Writing About Literature” pages 13-19 and pages 24-29 and review “Araby” |
| Mar 6  | Lecture: What’s lyrical about a lyric poem?  
| Mar 11 | Lecture: Cadence  
Read: Gerard Manley Hopkins “God’s Grandeur” and Pauline Johnson “The Idlers” and Abrams “Meter” |
| Mar 13 | Lecture: Sound devices  
Read: Alfred Lord Tennyson “The Lady of Shalott” and Abrams “Alliteration”  
**TERM ESSAYS DUE** |
| Mar 18 | Lecture: Tropes  
Read: Pablo Neruda “In Praise of Ironing” and P.K. Page “Planet Earth” and Abrams “Figurative Language” |
| Mar 20 | Lecture: When is a cigar more than a cigar?  
Read: Robert Kroetsch “Stone Hammer Poem” and Dorothy Parker “One Perfect Rose” and Abrams “Symbol” |
| Mar 25 | Lecture: Personae in poetry  
Read: T. S. Eliot “Journey of the Magi” and Robert Browning “My Last Duchess” and Abrams “Dramatic Monologue” |
| Mar 27 | Lecture: What’s free about free verse?  
Anne Sexton “Cinderella” and Bronwen Wallace “Common Magic” and Abrams “Free verse” |
| Apr 1  | Lecture: Blackening English poetry  
Read: Kamau Brathwaite “Colombe” and Dionne Brand “Blues Spiritual for Mammy Prater” |
| Apr 3  | Conclusion and exam preparation |

**Assignments and due dates (more detailed descriptions below):**

- **Mid-term**: Feb 14, 20%
- **4 short quizzes**: random, 15% (top 3 marks)
- **Essay**: March 13, 25%
- **Final exam**: exam period, 40%
Course assignments:

1. Surprise quizzes

Throughout the course, there will be four in-class surprise quizzes. These will be short, quick, and fact-based. Questions may be on any of the course material—all anthology readings, literary terms, grammar & punctuation, MLA citation style and other writing issues. The three quizzes in which you score the highest marks will count towards your final grade. Together they are worth 15% of your course grade.

2. Mid-term test

This in-class test will evaluate your knowledge of the primary works, the lecture material, and the literary terms learned to that point in the course. It will require that you write your answers in short essay form. It is worth 20% of your course grade.

3. Essay

You will choose one of the assigned topics (see below) and write a 2000 word essay. You are NOT required to take into consideration other critics’ opinions about the literary works. On the contrary, I am interested in seeing how you develop an independent analysis and present that analysis in a rhetorically effective way. The essay is due in class on March 13th. Hand in both a hard copy and an electronic copy (post a digital file to the “drop box” on UW-ACE). The essay is worth 25% of your course grade.

There will be some instruction in class about essay writing. On UW-ACE you will also find a downloadable document that gives general advice about writing good essays in English courses.

4. Final exam

The exam will be scheduled during the exam period and will test material learned throughout the course. It is worth 40% of your course grade.

Course Policies:

Classroom work
Attendance is mandatory and you are expected to arrive in class well prepared, having read and thought carefully about the material to be discussed that day.

Note for students with disabilities
The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with OPD at the beginning of each academic term.
Plagiarism and other academic offences
All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. If you need help in learning how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

The Internet has made plagiarism and other forms of cheating much more tempting; it has also made it easier to detect. I will investigate and report to the Associate Dean all cases of suspected plagiarism. Proven cases will result in academic penalty, proportional to the extent of the infraction, and could include an official written reprimand from the Associate Dean that will be placed in your file. Please consult the following web site for a comprehensive explanation of what plagiarism is and how to avoid it "Avoiding Academic Offences" http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve: refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm.

Late essays and missed exams

There will be no make-up quizzes—they are surprise quizzes after all! If you miss the mid-term you must provide medical documentation to substantiate your incapacity to write the test on the scheduled day. The essay is due in class on the due date. I do not grant extensions except in emergency circumstances (being busy with other courses or having computer problems do not count as emergencies). If there is an emergency contact me immediately, preferably in person (i.e. by phone or by coming to my office). If you decide to hand in your essay after the due date, the late penalty is 3% per day, including weekends.

Hard and fast rule: I do not accept any essays at all after the last day of classes.
**Essay Topics and Instructions:**

Choose one of the topics below and write a 2000 word analytical essay (that’s 7-8 double-spaced pages in 12-pt. font with 1 inch page margins). In the essay, you must develop an argument (a thesis) and present textual evidence from the literary works to substantiate and demonstrate your points. Use the literary critical terminology we are learning throughout the course and format your essay in strict observance of MLA style (see anthology pages 29-32). DO NOT make a separate title page—simply put your name, ID number, the course, my name, and the date on the top left corner of the first page. DO include a list of works cited, even if you have only referred to a literary work in the anthology.

Remember to hand in both a hard copy and an electronic copy of your essay.

**NOTE: You must choose as your examples literary works that are on the course syllabus.**

1. Choose five words from any one of the literary texts that you think are important to the work overall; look those words up in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED, which is available on-line through the UW Library web site), paying attention to the etymology and history of the words; consider both their denotative and their connotative meanings. Write an essay in which you a) argue why these five words are crucial to the text and b) explain in detail how they contribute to its meaning.

2. All literary works emerge from particular cultural, political, and historical moments. Choose a literary work and then determine one or two pieces of contextual information that you think readers need to make fuller sense of the literary work (it could be anything from any discipline—science, geography, history, politics, etc.) and research that additional information. Write an essay in which you a) argue why that context is crucial and b) explain how that contextual information deepens our understanding of the literary text. Note: make sure that your essay is still an ENGLISH essay—i.e. the focus must be on analyzing and interpreting the literary work. That means, for example, that an author’s biography will not be sufficient in itself.

3. Choose a literary text; find a visual text that seems to resonate with the literary work in some way. Write an essay in which you a) argue how and why the visual text you have chosen relates to the literary work and b) explain how they are both similar and different (other than the obvious—i.e. one is visual and one is verbal). For example, you could choose a visual image that treats a similar theme as the literary work but has a different tone. In that case, you would analyze how tone is created in each and explain why that difference in tone matters.

4. Every text creates literary personae—characters, narrators, or speakers of poems. Inhabit one persona who appears in one literary work and write an essay in which part is an imaginary journal ‘written’ by that persona and part is an analysis of what you have created. The purpose of this essay is to imitate the writing style of the original author;
therefore, everything you create must be consistent in some way with the original. You can invent—indeed, don’t just copy the original!—but remember that your main job is to identify, analyze, and mimic a particular author’s style. Write 4 pages of invention; then write 4 pages in which you analyze your creation. In the second part of the essay, you must argue for the validity of your creation—i.e. you still need to create a thesis and use evidence from the original work to substantiate your claims.

5. Choose one aspect of literary technique—it could be point of view in prose or tropes in poetry or anything else we have studied in the course—and compare and contrast two authors’ use of that particular technique. In your analyses, consider both similarities and differences between the two texts; explain how the technique contributes to your reading experience; discuss the relation of technique to the meaning of each text; and comment on why and to what ends each author uses the technique.