English 201 - The Short Story

Room: HH 150
Time: Tuesday 6-9 pm
Instructor: Kathleen Venema
Contact: kvenema@watarts; or x 3841; leave a note in my mailbox at the English Department; or leave a message with the English Undergrad Secretary
Office Hours, PAS 2215:
Tuesday 9-9:30 pm, Wednesday 12:30-2:30 pm, and by appointment

Course Overview: This session of English 201 will i) trace the historical development of forms of short fiction, ii) review the conventional analytic vocabularies that have dominated the study of the short story form, and iii) simultaneously examine the limitations of those conventional vocabularies and the alternative usefulness of vocabularies of structural narratology and post-modernism. History, theory, and analysis will be grounded in close-readings of the stories assigned, and students will regularly be directed to further readings for both study and pleasure. The course will include lectures, small- and large-group discussions, and small-group presentations.

Course Goals: Students will have the opportunity to:
i) enhance their reading skills and reading pleasure;
ii) articulate their cognitive and emotional responses to stories, both in general terms, and in terms of the various analytic vocabularies provided;
iii) practice group-process, brainstorming, and questioning skills in focused analyses of assigned stories; and,
iv) produce, in extended written form, a thoughtful, grammatically flawless, analysis of a piece or pieces of short fiction.

Course Text: Geddes, Gary (ed.). *The Art of Short Fiction: An International Anthology.*

* additional readings will be made available through the reference desk at the arts library *
Course Requirements:

1. Group presentation 15%
Groups will be formed and stories chosen on the first day of class, at which time details of the presentation format and evaluation criteria will be elaborated.

2. Questions on the short stories examined 20%
Students will formulate and hand in one question on each of the twenty stories we will examine in detail. Questions will be due at the beginning of the class for which the story is scheduled.

3. Essay or short story 30%
Students will write either a short essay (8-10 pages) on one or more pieces of short fiction or a short story (5-7 pages) and an analysis of the story (3-5 pages). Essays and stories will be due on July 9. A detailed description of this assignment will be provided in the second class.

4. Final exam 35%

Schedule:
May 7
Introduction

May 14
Poé: “The Purloined Letter”
Welty: “A Worn Path”
Carver: “What We Talk About When We Talk About Love” (*)
Carver: “On Writing” 772-775

May 21
O’Connor: “Good Country People”
Atwood: “Hairball”
Vanderhaeghe: “Going to Russia” (*)
O’Connor: “Writing Short Stories” 827-835

May 28
Mansfield: “A Dill Pickle”
MacLeod: “As Birds Bring Forth the Sun”
MacLeod: “‘At the Moment’: Notes on Fiction” 823-824
June 4  
Bierce: “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”

Woolf: “MOMENTS OF BEING: ‘SLATER’S PINS HAVE NO POINTS’”

Phillips: “The Stripper” (*)

Woolf: “Women and Fiction” 891-897

June 11  
Findley: “Dinner Along the Amazon”

Valgardson: “The Celebration”

Laurence: “The Loons” (*)

Laurence: “On ‘The Loons!’” 805-806

June 18  
Hemingway: “Hills Like White Elephants”

Bissoondath: “The Arctic Landscape High Above the Equator”

Oates: “The Molesters” (*)

Berger: “Lost Off Cape Wrath” 763-766

June 25  
Wieber: “A Night at Fort Pitt or (If You Prefer) The Only Perfect Communist in the World”

Hempel: “The Harvest”

Blaise: “An Intimate Death” (*)

Blaise: “To Begin, to Begin” and “On Ending Stories” 766-772

July 2  
Editing workshop

July 9  
Essay due

Akutagawa: “In a Grove”

Smith: “Cape Breton is the Thought Control Centre of Canada”

Coover: “The Babysitter” (*)

July 16  
Borowskit: “This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen”

Urbina: “Our Father Who Art in Heaven” and “Portrait of a Lady”

Gordimer: “The Ultimate Safari” (*)

Gordimer: “The Flash of Fireflies” 786-788

July 23  
Le Guin: “Buffalo Gals, Won’t You Come Out Tonight”

Shaw: “Light of Other Days”

Borges: “The Book of Sand” (*)

July 30  
Venema: “Tying up Loose Ends” and “Exam Preparation”