English 201—The Short Story   Spring 2002

Instructor: Erin E. MacDonald  
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 2:20 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday  
Room: HH 150  
Office Hours: 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday, PAS 2213  
e-mail: eem@golden.net

Course Description

This course will examine the different genres of the popular short story, including Horror, Romance, Science Fiction, Detective Fiction, and Adventure, and their relation to cultural criticism. We will interrogate canonical hierarchies and practice thinking and writing critically about English literature. The stories will cover a time period from the nineteenth century to the present day, and will include works by such well-known authors as Arthur Conan Doyle, Edgar Allan Poe, and H.G. Wells, as well as non-canonical authors such as Ed McBain and Stephen King. Through a combination of class discussions, lectures, group work, and written assignments, students will gain a knowledge of the elements of the short story and the ways in which the genre can be used to analyze issues of gender, race, and class.

Required Texts

*Popular Fiction: An Anthology* by Gary Hoppenstand (Longman)  
Course booklet of additional readings (available at the bookstore)

Recommended Texts

*MLA Handbook, 5th edition* by Joseph Gibaldi  
*The Little, Brown Compact Handbook* by Jane E. Aaron and Murray McArther

Assignment Weighting

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English 201 Assignment Descriptions

Critical Summary
The first assignment will be a 1-2 page critical summary of one of the critical essays found in the Hoppenstand text. These essays will not be discussed in class (e.g. Pilcher, Krentz, Bradbury, Muller, Cawelti, Berger, Landsman, Tompkins). Students will be required to give the main points of the essay as well as their own critical analyses of and responses to those main points. DUE May 23

Short Essay
This first essay must be 5-6 pages in length, double-spaced, with 12-point font, and must include a Works Cited page with correct MLA format. Topic suggestions will be provided and will likely cover the first three genres to be discussed (Horror, Romance, and Science Fiction). Secondary research is not required for this assignment, but may be used if desired or necessary. DUE June 18

Research Essay
This essay must be 8-10 pages in length, double-spaced, with 12-point font, and following the MLA format indicated above. Topic suggestions will be provided for this paper as well, and the topics will focus on the genres covered in the latter portion of the course. Secondary research is required for this paper, and students must include references to at least four scholarly sources. DUE July 25

Test July 9
The test will consist of several short answer and 1-2 essay questions and may include questions about any of the works covered or discussed in class up to the date of the test.

Note: Any signs of plagiarism or careless referencing of sources will not be tolerated. Late assignments unaccompanied by a doctor’s note will be docked 10% per school day up to three days, and will not be accepted more than three days past the due date. Assignments not handed in in class must be signed and dated by a secretary and put in my mailbox in Hagey Hall 229 (English mailroom). DO NOT put anything under my office door!
English 201  Schedule of Readings and Assignments (Tentative)

Note: Readings must be done BEFORE the date on which they appear.


Thursday, May 9—Intro. The Popular Short Story. Text introduction.

Tuesday, May 14—Intro. Ray B. Browne, “Popular Culture—New Notes Toward a Definition.”


Tuesday, May 21—Horror. Gaskell, “The Old Nurse’s Story,”


Thursday, June 6—Romance. Woodiwiss, “The Kiss.”


Tuesday, June 18—Science Fiction. Bradbury, “Coda,” Asimov, “Usher II.” Short Essay DUE


Thursday, June 27—Detective Fiction. Sayers, “Absolutely Elsewhere,” Routley,

Tuesday, July 2—Detective Fic. McBain, "Sadie When She Died."

Thursday, July 4—Detective Fiction. Rankin, "A Good Hanging."

Tuesday, July 9—TEST


Tuesday, July 16—Adventure. Kipling, "The Man Who Would Be King."


Tuesday, July 23—Adventure. Fleming, "From a View to a Kill."

Thursday, July 25—Summary. Research Essay DUE