English 201—The Short Story  Spring 2004

Instructor: Erin E. MacDonald
Time: Monday, 6:30 p.m. – 9:20 p.m.
Room: ML 246
Office Hours: Wednesday, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., PAS 2213
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Course Description

This course will introduce the student to the short story as a genre with its own unique characteristics and trace its development from the 19th century to the present day. The stories will cover a broad range of English language authors from Britain, the United States, and Canada, and will include seminal works by such well-known authors as Poe, Joyce, Carver, and Richler, in addition to select non-canonical authors such as Chandler and McBain. Through a combination of class discussions, lectures, group work, and written assignments, students will gain a knowledge of the elements of the short story in general and of several of the different short story sub-genres. The course will also offer students significant practice in thinking and writing critically about English literature, specifically in the form of the academic essay.

Required Texts

_Norton Anthology of Short Fiction, 6th ed._ (full) Eds. R.V. Cassill and R. Bausch

Courseware booklet of additional readings (available at the bookstore)

Recommended Texts


_The Little, Brown Compact Handbook_  Eds. Jane E. Aaron and Murray McArthur

Assignment Weighting

Critical Analysis Paper  20%
Short Essay  25%
Research Essay  30%
Test  25%
English 201  Assignment Descriptions

Critical Analysis Paper
For this first assignment, students will be asked to write a 2-3 page, double-spaced, 12-point font critical analysis of one (or a comparison of two) of the following stories: Anderson, “I Want to Know Why”; Faulkner, “Barn Burning”; Twain, “Notorious Jumping Frog”; Roth, “Conversion of the Jews.” The analysis should consist of a reasoned, thorough, logically progressive discussion of one or more particular elements or stylistic features of the work(s). The paper must contain an introduction stating a particular thesis, as well as properly cited references (by way of quotation and/or paraphrase) to the story (or stories) being discussed. A Works Cited entry must also appear at the end of the paper (using current MLA format). DUE May 25

Short Essay
This essay must be 5-6 pages in length, double-spaced, with 12-point font, and must include a Works Cited page and correct MLA format. Topic suggestions will be provided and will cover the first few stories discussed. Secondary research is not required for this assignment, but may be used if desired or necessary. Students will be given an in-class opportunity to have a first draft of the paper peer reviewed before submitting it for marks. Draft DUE June 14, Final DUE June 21

Test  July 19
The test will consist of several short answers and one essay question and may include questions about any of the works covered or discussed in class up to the date of the test. Students will have 90 minutes to complete the test, which will be written in class.

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 stories 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 26

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 clearly labeled, signed and dated by a secretary, and put in the English drop box outside Hagey Hall 229 (English mailroom). DO NOT put anything under my office door!
Spring 2004

The Short Story

Tentative Schedule

Note: All readings in Norton Anthology except * in course booklet

Mon. May 3 -- Cheever, "Why I Write Short Stories,"* "Art of Short Story,"* "History of Short Story,"* Elements of Short Story*


Critical Analysis, MLA style, thesis


Mon. May 24 -- NO CLASS (Victoria Day) Critical Analysis Paper Due Tues. 25th

Mon. May 31 -- Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"

Mon. June 7 -- O'Connor, "Nature and Aim of Fiction," "A Good Man is Hard to Find"

Mon. June 14 -- Joyce, "The Dead," Short Essay Draft Due, Peer Edit


"Interview," Carver, "On Writing," "Cathedral," Short Essay Final Due

Mon. June 28 -- Hoppenstand, "Intro to Pop. Fic.,"* Chandler, "Simple Art of Murder,"*

McBain, "Sadie When She Died"*

Mon. July 5 -- Walker, "Everyday Use," Tan, "In the Canon for All the Wrong Reasons,"* Research Essay Conferencing

Mon. July 12 -- Birdsell, "Flowers for Weddings and Funerals,"* Richler, "Benny, the War in Europe, and Myerson's Daughter Bella,"* Munro, "What is Real?"

Mon. July 19 -- TEST

Mon. July 26 -- Research Essay Due