ENGLISH 251A: Criticism I (LEC 004)
Fall 2017, MWF, 10:30-11:20, EV3 3408

Murray McArthur
HH264, 519 888 4567, ext. 32759
mmcarthu@uwaterloo.ca
Office hours: by appointment

Course Syllabus:

A. Course Description and Goals:

“An introduction to strategies of reading, interpretation, and analysis of literary and non-literary texts, focusing on narrative, poetics, discourse, and rhetoric, and the acquisition of critical vocabulary.” (University of Waterloo Course Calendar)

Usually taken in your 2A term, your first as an English major or minor, 251A is designed as an introduction to the strategies, practices, and resources available for the study of literary (and non-literary) texts. As the description above indicates, the specific mandate of 251A is to make available to the student the two basic and inseparable areas of disciplinary knowledge in the study of English: (1) the fundamental professional vocabulary of critical terms; (2) the practices of reading that use or deploy these terms in interpretation. Much, though not all, of your success as an English student depends upon the acquisition of these and other sets of terms and the skillful deployment of them in your assignments, and all lectures and assignments in this course focus on this acquisition and its deployment in reading primary texts.

To this end, the course is organized by the three major or structural genres of literature and the three primary texts chosen to exemplify that genre: I. Drama (Shakespeare’s The Tempest); II. Poetry (selections from Ted Hughes’ Birthday Letters); III. Prose (selections from Joyce’s Dubliners). Our textbook, Ways of Reading, is organized in a general sense, though in a different order, by the four historic and modern methods of literary and linguistic analysis also indicated in the course description: narrative, poetics, discourse, and rhetoric. All four methods and their vocabularies of critical terms can be deployed in the interpretation of any of the three major genres, and the classes will be devoted to learning these critical vocabularies and using them to read the primary texts.

The lecture and discussion format of the course require that students have read the units of Ways of Reading (WR below) and the primary text indicated before the class and that they have the primary text with them in class.

B. Required Texts:


You must have the edition above with you in class. The class will be conducted through close readings of the textbook and the three primary texts. Digital devices are not to be used in class except for note taking (with the possible exception of a primary text reader). Please consult with me if you wish to use your laptop for note taking.
C. Class Schedule:

I. DRAMA:

Week 1:
Sept. 8: Introduction

Week 2:
Sept. 11-13-15: Asking questions and using information: read Ways of Reading Units 1, 2, 14.2, Tempest, Act I

Week 3:

Week 4:

Week 5:
Oct. 2-4-6: Read Tempest Act V. Mid-term #1: Oct. 6.

II. POETRY:

Week 6:

Week 7:
Oct. 16-18-20: Parallelism; Deviation: read WR Units 18, 19, Metaphor and figurative language; Irony; Juxtaposition: read WR Units 10, 11, 12, selections Birthday Letters.

Week 8:
Oct. 23-25-27: Intertextuality and allusion; Authorship and intention; Mode of address: positioning the reader: read WR Units 13, 14, 15, selections Birthday Letters.

Week 9:

III. PROSE:

Week 10:
Nov. 6-8-10: Mid-term #2: Nov. 6. Narrative; Point of view: read WR Units 20, 21, Joyce “The Sisters.”

Week 11:
Nov. 13-15-17: Speech and narration: read WR Unit 22, “Eveline.”

Week 12:

Week 13:
Nov. 27-29, Dec. 1: Read “The Dead.”

Week 14:
Dec. 4: Conclusion: Essay due: Dec. 5.
A. D. Assignments and Grading:

Mid-term #1: 15%; Oct. 6.
Mid-term #2: 15%; Nov. 6.
Research essay: 30%; due Dec. 4.
Final examination: 40%

Mid-terms: The mid-terms are in-class tests with two parts: (1) definitions of five terms from the List studied during the mid-term period (see full List of Terms, pgs. 4-5): worth 20%; (2) longer interpretive essay answer: worth 80%. For the definitions, you will need to be able to define the terms. For the interpretive questions, in mid-term #1 you will write an essay in response to one of several questions about The Tempest, and in midterm #2 you will write an essay analyzing a sight passage from one of two selections from Birthday Letters. Time: fifty minutes.

Research essay: The essay is a limited research project on one of the stories by Joyce. Written instructions on the assignment, the research, and topic questions will be circulated after the second mid-term. Length: 5-6 double spaced pages (1200-1500 words). Essays will be submitted online at the 251A (LEC 004) Learn site by the end of the due date. Late essays will be deducted 2% per day of lateness.

Final examination: The final will have three parts: (1) definitions of five terms from the List of Terms: worth 20%; (2) essay in response to one of three questions each about one of the primary authors: worth 40%; (3) analysis of a sight passage from one of three selections from the primary texts (the primary author discussed in [2] cannot be the subject of analysis in [3]): worth 40%. Time: Two and a half hours.

Absentee policy: An absence from a mid-term or the final examination will require a doctor’s or other health care professional’s documentation in the case of illness. Any other extraordinary circumstances will also require documentation. Only under these circumstances can an alternative examination be scheduled.

Note on plagiarism:

The Faculty of Arts requires that the following statement on the avoidance of academic offences, including plagiarism, be included on all Arts course outlines:

Academic Integrity:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals.
Other sources of information for students:
Academic Integrity website (Arts) Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:
Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Services office, 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 the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

List of Terms
Inference
Intentional fallacy
Affective fallacy
Form
Structure
Tragedy
Comedy
Soliloquy
Peripeteia
Exposition
Archaism
Accent
Dialect
Register
Dialogism
Polyphony
Defamiliarization
Paratextuals
Dramatic monologue
Signifier
Signified
Vowels
Consonants
Syllable
Alliteration
Assonance
Consonance
Rhyme
Reverse rhyme
Pararhyme
Internal rhyme
Slant rhyme
Rhyme scheme
Sound symbolism
Onomatopoeia
Lineation
Meter (Iamb, Trochee, Anapest, Dactyl)
Non-polar/Polar parallelism
Phonological parallelism
Lexical parallelism
Syntactic/sentence parallelism
Canonic parallelism
Deviation
Metaphor
Simile
Metonymy
Synecdoche
Verbal irony
  Stable irony
  Generative or indeterminate irony
Situational irony
  Dramatic irony
  Structural irony
Juxtaposition
Montage
Collage
Allusion
Intertextuality
Implied author
Implied reader
Story
Narrative
Narrative pace (Scene, Summary, Ellipsis)
Aesthetic strategy
Entry and exit strategies
Closure
Author
Narrator
Persona
First person narration
Third person narration
External and Internal narration
Unrestricted and Restricted narration
Focalization
Focalizer
Direct speech
Indirect speech
Free direct speech
Free indirect speech
Realism
Flat and Round characters