University of Waterloo  
Fall 2009  
English 251A: Criticism 1

Monday & Wednesday, 4:00 to 5:20  
Modern Languages, Room 311

Instructor: Bruce Wyse  
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Course description:  
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.

Required texts:  
Chris Baldick, The Oxford Dictionary of Literary of Literary Terms (Oxford)  
William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice (Oxford)  
Robert Louis Stevenson, Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Norton)  
George Eliot, The Lifted Veil (Oxford)  
Oscar Wilde, “The Decay of Lying” (www.victorianweb.org/authors/wilde/decay.html)

Learning objectives:  
• to identify important and specific formal or stylistic features of literary texts and to comment critically on their relation to aspects of content  
• to identify rhetorical, poetic, narrative and dramaturgical techniques and devices and to comment on their significance to particular works  
• to develop and effectively employ a critical vocabulary  
• to effectively engage in critical analysis of texts  
• to identify and address cruxes in the interpretation of texts  
• to assess the divergent responses and views of other critics and to adjudicate critical disagreements or controversies  
• to recognize and demonstrate awareness of the role of assumptions or presuppositions in the interpretation of literary works  
• to use different strategies in the analysis, explication and interpretation of texts
Assignments / Method of evaluation:

*See schedule for dates of assignments.

Close reading assignments (best two out of three): 20%
Three short in-class quizzes: 15%
Essay: 30%
Final exam: 25%
Class participation: 10%

[Note on class participation component:
Since this is a small class and since the focus of the course is largely on the work of responsive and productive reading, and on critical strategies, I expect students to be actively engaged in the critical endeavour of the classes. Students should attend class regularly, be sufficiently prepared for each meeting and be willing to demonstrate their familiarity with the assigned readings by thoughtfully and constructively engaging in discussions of the texts. From time to time, students will also be asked to do short, informal, in-class exercises (either individually or in small groups); these will typically involve impromptu writing.]

Submission of assignments and late policy:
Quizzes will be written in class on the designated dates. Other assignments should be submitted directly to me in class or during my office hours (do not slip assignments under the door). If necessary, assignments may also be dropped off in the English Department essay box on the second floor of Hagey Hall.
Late assignments will receive a penalty of two marks per day ((for example, from 76 to 74). When submitting your paper copy of a late assignment, you should email me (with a copy of the assignment as an attachment) to confirm the date of the submission. (I will, however, only mark paper copies of assignments.) Please also keep a hard copy or digital copy of each assignment that you submit.
Extensions may be granted for medical reasons; in that case, presentation of a health professional’s note will be required. Extensions may also be granted in some other cases (involving personal or family crises, for instance), but wherever possible I would prefer that you speak with me in advance of the due date for the assignment when asking for an extension.

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

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, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.
**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/] to avoid committing an academic offence, 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 instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) (other than a petition) or Policy 71 (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

**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 the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.
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Schedule

SEPT. 14 Organization; Introduction; Franz Kafka, “Leopards in the Temple” (photocopy), Margaret Atwood, “Horror Comics” (photocopy), Billy Collins, “Introduction to Poetry” (photocopy);

SEPT. 16 Riddle, metaphor, simile, defamiliarization: two Anglo-Saxon riddles (photocopy), Craig Raine, “A Martian Sends a Postcard Home” (photocopy), Ted Hughes, “Wodwo” (719), Ezra Pound, “In a Station of the Metro” (416), Margaret Atwood, “you fit into me” (photocopy), Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Mutability” (photocopy), Michael Ondaatje, “Sweet Like a Crow” (photocopy), Sylvia Plath, “Metaphors” (photocopy), “Mirror” (photocopy)


SEPT. 23 Metrical form, prosody and scansion, repetition and variation, refrain: William Wordsworth, “We Are Seven” (photocopy), William Blake, “The Clod & the Pebble” (photocopy), Alfred Tennyson, “The Lady of Shalott” (234), George Gordon, Lord Byron, “So We’ll Go No More A-Roving” (183), Adrienne Rich, “Final Notations” (697), Maya Angelou, “Caged Bird” (689), Anne Sexton, “Her Kind” (684)

SEPT. 28 The villanelle: Dylan Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” (587), Jacqueline Osherow, “Villanelle from a Sentence in a Poet’s Brief Biography” (997); The sonnet: Sir Philip Sidney, from Astrophil and Stella: Sonnet 1 (15), William Shakespeare, Sonnet 18 (18), Sonnet 129 (20), Sonnet 130 (21), Billy Collins, Sonnet (835), Jacqueline Osherow, Sonnet (996), John Donne, from Holy Sonnets: Sonnet X (29), Sonnet XIV

SEPT. 30 The sonnet: Elizabeth Barrett Browning, from Sonnets from the Portuguese: Sonnet XLIII (205), Dante Gabriel Rossetti, from The House of Life: “Sonnet” (296), “A Superscription” (297), “The Kiss” (photocopy), “Nuptial Sleep (photocopy);
Love: The carpe diem poem: Ben Jonson, “Song: To Cecilia” (33), Robert Herrick, “To the Virgins, to make much of Time” (40), Andrew Marvell, “To His Coy Mistress” (67), John Donne, “The Flea” (27)

*First in-class quiz
OCT. 5 More love poetry: John Donne, “The Canonization” (26);
The aubade: John Donne, “The Sunne Rising” (25), Richard Wilbur, “A Late
Aubade” (625), Philip Larkin, “Aubade” (639);
Modern love: W. H. Auden, “Lay your sleeping head, my love” (513), Leonard
Cohen, “You Have the Lovers” (742), Margaret Atwood, “Variations on the
Word Love” (photocopy)

OCT. 7 The ode: Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Ode to the West Wind” (189), John Keats, “This
living hand . . .” (photocopy), “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (196), “Ode to a
Nightingale” (194)
*First close reading assignment distributed

OCT. 12 Thanksgiving no classes

OCT. 14 Loneliness, the human condition, etc.: Matthew Arnold, “Dover Beach” (289),
“The Buried Life” (285), Thomas Hardy, “Hap” (320), Gerard Manley Hopkins,
“I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark” (329), Philip Larkin, “Ambulances” (636),
Billy Collins, “My Number” (831)
*First close reading assignment due

OCT. 19 Soliloquy & the dramatic monologue: Robert Browning, “Soliloquy of the
Spanish Cloister” (249), “Porphyria’s Lover” (248), “My Last Duchess” (251),
“Fra Lippo Lippi” (256), Alfred Tennyson, “Ulysses” (238)

OCT. 21 Symbol and allegory: Christina Rossetti, “Goblin Market” (305), William Blake,
“The Tyger” (140), Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “A Musical Instrument” (206),
Wallace Stevens, “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird” (390), Billy Collins,
“The Death of Allegory” (831)

OCT. 26 Ekphrasis: Fleur Adcock, “Leaving the Tate” (758), Margaret Atwood, “At the
Tourist Centre in Boston” (790), W. H. “Musée des Beaux Arts” (514), William
Carlos Williams, “Landscape With the Fall of Icarus” (405), Alden Nowlan, “I,
Icarus” (738);
Poetry of statement: Arthur Hugh Clough, “The Latest Decalogue” (270),
Rudyard Kipling, “Recessional” (361), Wilfred Owen, “Dulce et Decorum Est”
(467)
Variations on a “fairy-tale”: Anne Sexton, “Cinderella” (686), Amy Gerstler,
“Scorched Cinderella” (994)
*Second close reading assignment distributed

OCT. 28 The Merchant of Venice
*Second close reading assignment due
*Second in-class quiz
NOV. 2       *The Merchant of Venice
NOV. 4       *The Merchant of Venice
NOV. 9       *The Merchant of Venice
NOV. 11      *The Merchant of Venice
            *Third close reading assignment distributed
NOV. 16      *The Merchant of Venice
            *Third close reading assignment due
NOV. 18      *The Merchant of Venice / Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde
NOV. 23      *Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde
            *Third in-class quiz
NOV. 25      *Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde / The Lifted Veil
NOV. 30      *The Lifted Veil
DEC. 2       *The Lifted Veil
DEC. 5       [Saturday] *The Lifted Veil / “The Decay of Lying”
            *Essay due
DEC. 9 - 22   *22 exams
            [Students are advised not to make travel arrangements during this period.]