AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Together with English 200A/B, English 251A/B forms the crucial foundation on which our department bases all further education in English literature. The survey in English 200A/B provides the canon of the great works of British literature and the historical and cultural framework which allows competent understanding of those works; this course introduces you to the theory and methodology behind the formal study of literature in English. In other words, it is the core course in approaching English studies as a discipline. Enrolment in this course signifies your intention to go beyond emotional response to analytical understanding of literary technique.

In English 251A, we will concentrate on close reading of texts, a method sometimes called the "New Critical," or "Formalist" approach, sometimes "Analytical Criticism," paralleling what the French call "explication de texte." This course should help you become a better, more confident reader on your own. We will concentrate on the literary text itself, not on what critics tell us about the text or what they tell us we should think about the text. We will try to determine just what can be said about any particular text and to what extent the text can be read on its own. As well, we will look at some of the assumptions behind this approach.

This is not a lecture course. Students must attend class regularly, have read the material assigned and thought about it, and be prepared to discuss or even argue points.

In addition, students should use English 251A to develop their understanding of critical terminology and critical concepts and to increase their critical vocabulary. We will concentrate on lyrical and narrative poetry and short narrative fictional prose.

TEXTS

Rudy Wiebe, The Story-Makers, (Gage).
The MLA Handbook.

READINGS

All of Hunter, 10-15 stories in Wiebe, reference work in Abrams and MLA.

REQUIREMENTS

Three short essays (4-8 pages) on assigned topics, two on poetry, one on prose fiction (in early October, November and December - 20% each).
One examination on terminology and a sight analysis on November 30 (20%).
Class participation (20%).

CONSULTATION

HH255, ext. 2419
2-3:30 TR and by appointment.
MARKING SYMBOLS

agr - agreement problems
amb - unintentional (?) ambiguity
awk - awkward

case - pronoun confusion between subject and object
cf - comma fault (use of comma where end stop needed)
cst - sentence construction problems
D - diction inappropriate to the situation
DM - dangling or misplaced modifier
frag - sentence fragment, incomplete sentence
id - unidiomatic usage
lc - use a lower case letter
mng? - I wonder what this means.
pass - inappropriate use of the passive voice
person shift - (e.g. from 'one' to 'you')
red - redundant (repetition using other words)
ref' - reference problems (pronoun and antecedent)
rel - material not relevant to the context
rep - repetitious
sp - spelling mistake
split inf - split infinitive (e.g. to boldly go)
tense - incorrect or shifted verb tense
W - wordy
WC - word choice (You probably don't want this word.)
WC? - word choice? (Do you really want this word here?)
WO - incorrect word order
WW - wrong word (I'm sure you don't want this word.)