University of Waterloo
English 251A, Section 5: Criticism I
Fall 1999, Tues/Thurs, 2:30-4:00, ML 349

Prof. Victoria Lamont
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 11:30-12:30, or by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Through lectures as well as class and group discussion, this course will focus on the acquisition of close reading skills that can be applied to both "literary" and "non-literary" texts. "Close reading" is a term we use for a specific kind of reading--not the passive reading we are used to doing when we watch TV, flip through a magazine, or get lost in a good page-turner--but a more structured, rigorous kind of reading which requires that we read the text several times over and pay careful attention to both its broad structural framework (its "form"), and the finer details of its composition. In textual analysis, we look not only at what a text means, but how it means. Like all academic disciplines, textual analysis uses a specialized language, the purpose of which is to identify the building blocks of texts and to shed light upon aspects of language and text that we don't necessarily notice in our everyday life; hence, acquiring a critical vocabulary is an important component of this course. You are encouraged to think of critical vocabulary as the set of tools you will use to make sense of texts and the way they communicate.

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to use accepted critical vocabulary to identify and name the fundamental elements of texts, analyze the ways in which these elements work together to produce meaning, and use this analysis to formulate arguments (in essays and exams) about what texts mean and how they mean.

BOOKS

Required
Beverly Lawn (ed.). The Short Story: 30 Masterpieces. 2nd. Ed. (St. Martin's Press)
Robert Scholes, Nancy R. Comley, and Gregory L. Ulmer, (eds.). Text Book. 2nd Ed. (St.
Martin's Press)

Highly Recommended
A recently published dictionary of literary terms such as Martin Gray's A Dictionary of Literary
Terms. 2nd Ed. (Longman York Press)

(Note: All royalties earned from the sale of The Little, Brown Compact Handbook will go to the
Department of English Scholarship Fund.)
ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

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<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class assignment #1</td>
<td>Oct. 7</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Topic</td>
<td>Oct. 14</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class assignment #2</td>
<td>Oct. 28</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group presentation</td>
<td>Nov. 2 &amp; 4</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>Nov. 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>30%</td>
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1. In-class assignments
Two in-class assignments have been scheduled. For each assignment, you will be asked to analyze a brief passage using critical methods taken up in class. 30 minutes of class time will be set aside for each assignment.

2. Group Presentation Workshop (Groups of 4)
Group presentations, worth 20% of your final mark, will be held Nov. 2 and 4. You have the option of choosing your own groups or having me choose for you. If you would like to make your own group, or have a preference for a particular presentation day, please let me know by Tues., Sept. 21. I will do my best to accommodate everyone's preferences.

Each member of the group will receive the same mark, so it is up to you to make sure that each member contributes equally. Detailed information about this assignment is supplied in a separate handout.

3. Statement of Topic (1-2 pages) and Term Paper (4-6 pages)
(1 page=250 words, double-spaced, 1-inch margins)
This assignment will give you an opportunity to engage more fully with a primary text, using the critical terms and methods discussed in class. Before writing the final draft of your term paper, you will prepare a Statement of Topic (1-2 pages), in which you summarize your plan for the essay. The Statement of Topic assignment is designed to help you prepare for the term paper, and to give you an opportunity to receive feedback on your essay project before you hand in your final draft. 10% of your final mark for the course will be based on the Statement of Topic, so it is important to get an early start on your preparation for your term paper. Details about the Statement of Topic and Term Paper assignments are supplied in a separate handout.

4. Final Exam
The final exam will take place during exam week and will cover the entire course. It will consist of essay and possibly some short-answer questions. There will be some choice of questions.

If you are having difficulty with any aspect of these assignments, it is important that you consult with me early on in the term.
Note on avoidance of academic offenses: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. Ignorance of what constitutes an academic offense is not an excuse.

This course does not require the use of secondary sources in your term papers and presentations; however, if you choose to do so, you must use correct citation and documentation. If you are uncertain of how to use secondary sources, consult The Little, Brown Handbook. If you are still uncertain, consult with me. Incorrect citation and documentation is a form of plagiarism, a serious academic offense, and could result in academic penalty.

When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline), which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (p. 1:11). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask me for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

**LATE POLICY**

In order to ensure that all students receive fair and equal treatment with respect to lateness or absence, the policy for this course regarding late or missed assignments is as follows:

**Group Presentations:** A student who fails to attend a group presentation day when his/her group is scheduled to present, or who misses a substantial part of the presentation because of lateness, will receive a failing grade for the group presentation assignment. If an emergency arises, be sure to contact all involved (me, your group members) as soon as possible. Depending on the circumstances, we will either reschedule the presentation or come up with an alternative basis for evaluating your grade for the presentation, provided you supply official documentation to explain and justify your absence.

**In-class Assignments:** If a student misses an in-class assignment, that student will receive a grade of zero for that assignment, except in the case of documented emergencies (see below).

All other assignments are due *at the beginning of class* on the designated deadline date. Extensions will be considered provided the student consults with me *before* the deadline. The penalty for late assignments is a deduction of 3% per day or part thereof, including weekends. Assignments submitted on the deadline date, but *after class has started*, will be considered late. Submit assignments outside of class at your own risk. Late assignments submitted outside of class will be penalized based on the date I receive them, regardless of when they were actually submitted. Always back up your work on disk, and save hard copies of all assignments you submit. I accept no responsibility for lost assignments.

*Emergencies (usually medical) will be fairly dealt with, provided you contact me (by phone, email, or in person) within three working days of the assignment due-date, and are able to provide
official documentation to explain and justify the missed/late assignment. Documentation requirements for medical emergencies are outlined in the University of Waterloo calendar (p. 1:10). Students are also expected to know University and Faculty regulations regarding exams and assignments (University Calendar p. 1:9-1:11 and 9:8). Non-medical emergencies will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and must be accompanied with appropriate documentation. While I sympathize with students who encounter computer/printer malfunctions, I do not consider these to be emergencies.

I will not accept any essays at all after the last class of the term.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**
Readings for each unit are indicated below for those of you who wish to get a head start. Readings for particular classes will be announced ahead of time in class. You are responsible for keeping yourself informed of due dates for the assigned readings.

**Please bring your texts to class.**

**Unit I: Narrative (Sept. 14-Oct. 7)**
Topics: Introduction to the course, narrative form, point of view
Readings: *Text Book* chapter I (1-22, 26, 29-44); Alice Walker, "Everyday Use" (*The Short Story* 394-402); Herman Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener" (*TSS* 23-58); Ernest Hemingway, "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" (*TSS* 200-204).

**Note 1:** Last day to indicate preferences for Group Presentations is Tuesday, Sept. 21.
**Note 2:** Class is canceled on Thursday, Sept. 23.
**Note 3:** In-class assignment #1 is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 7.

**Unit II: Figurative Language, Poetics (Oct. 12-28)**
Topics: metaphor, metonymy, and other figures; prosody, sound & sense, image
Readings: *Text Book* chapter II; James Joyce, "Araby" (*TSS* 106-111)

**Note 1:** Statement of Topic due at the beginning of class on Thursday, Oct. 14
**Note 2:** In-class assignment #2 is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 28

**Unit III: Group Presentation Workshop (Nov. 2 & 4)**
Topics: Story, Metaphor, & Metonymy in Advertising

**Unit IV: Texts & Readers (Nov. 9-Dec. 2)**
Topics: intertextuality, reception/interpretation, course evaluations, review & exam preparation
Readings: *Text Book* Chapter III, Readings from *TSS* TBA

**Note:** Term papers are due at the beginning of class on Thursday, Nov. 25.