ENGLISH 251A (02)
LITERARY CRITICISM: PRACTICE

RCH 306

Instructor: Paul Kreller
Office: HH 258
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs.
8:30-9:30, 12:30-1:15.

Tues. & Thurs. 10-11:20

Telephone: (H) 669-2421
(O) 888-4567, ex. 6027
E-mail:
pkreller@golden.net

*************************************************************************

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The main emphasis of English 251A is a close reading of lyrical and narrative poetry and short narrative fictional prose. The course is skills-oriented and therefore not a lecture course. In-class exercises and group work will constitute a major portion of class time. Students are expected to come to class regularly, to have read the material assigned and to have thought about it, and to be prepared to discuss and even debate points. Because we will not be concerned with what critics have said about specific texts, the course will not require you to do secondary research.

OBJECTIVES:

The basic aim of English 251 is to help you become a better, more confident reader and writer. You will study some of the terminology necessary for close reading and the formal analysis of texts. By the end of the course, you should be able to define key terms (listed below) and recognize examples in texts. By applying these terms and examining methods and patterns in a variety of works, you should be better able to articulate your responses to texts and to write more effectively. I hope that the course will also add to your enjoyment of reading.

KEY TERMS:

Key terms include grammatical terms, figurative language, diction, speech acts, prosody, figures of sound, conventional verse forms, rhetorical figures, and narrative elements.

Grammatical terms include the parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections); parts of a sentence (subject, predicate, object); basic verb tenses (past, present, future), voices (active, passive), and moods (indicative, interrogative, imperative, subjunctive, hortatory); participles (active, passive); phrases (prepositional, participial) and clauses (main, subordinate); and basic types of sentences (statement, command, question, exclamation; simple, compound, complex, compound-complex; paratactic, hypotactic).

Figurative language includes figures of speech (simile, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, synaesthesia), as well as imagery and symbolism.
Diction includes aspects of connotation and denotation, as well as levels of language (formal, informal, archaic, colloquial, monosyllabic, polysyllabic, technical, etc.).

Speech acts include commanding, exhorting, inviting, confessing, praying, proposing, hypothesizing, clarifying, reminiscing, etc.

Prosody includes types of rhyme (end, internal, perfect, imperfect, masculine, feminine); stanza forms (couplet, tercet, quatrains, etc.); and the basics of rhythm, such as types of feet (especially iambic, anapestic, trochaic, and dactylic); and the terminology for describing the length of a line of verse (especially trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, and hexameter).

Figures of sound include alliteration, assonance, consonance, and onomatopoeia.

Conventional verse forms include ballad, Italian and English sonnets, free verse, sestina, and villanelle.

Rhetorical figures include apostrophe, rhetorical question, analogy, antithesis, parallelism, and hierarchical ordering.

Narrative elements include plot, characterization, and setting (time, place); mimesis and diegesis; points of view (especially first and third person); narrator (e.g., unreliable, homodiegetic, heterodiegetic); and representation of discourse (e.g., direct discourse, free indirect discourse, interior monologue and stream of consciousness)

A key aspect of narration is time, which includes order (e.g., analepsis, prolepsis, paralepsis); speed (summary, scene, stretch, pause, ellipsis); and frequency (e.g., singulative, repetitive).

Basic ideas of Classical Rhetoric include the three branches (deliberative, forensic, epideictic); the five canons (invention, arrangement, style, memory, delivery); and the three appeals of invention (ethos, pathos, logos).

TEXTS:

The following texts are required:

Nathaniel Hawthorne, Young Goodman Brown and Other Stories (Dover).
Alice Munro, Selected Stories (Penguin).

The following text is recommended:

Jane E. Aaron and Murray McArthur, The Little, Brown Compact Handbook, Second Canadian Edition (Addison-Wesley). [This text has very useful sections on punctuation, grammar, and sentence errors, as well as suggestions for writing essays and a summary of the MLA style. Please note: All royalties derived from the sale of this text will be donated to the Department of English scholarship fund.]

Poems for the course will be provided on handouts.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

(The poems listed for each class are from the "Class Anthology"; they are the main poems, but we will continually return to earlier poems.)

1. Poetry: Grammatical Terms (poems 1 - 5).

2. Poetry: Patterns and Structures (poems 6 - 8).


10. Narrative: Narrative Structures and Plots; Hawthorne, "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" (1-9).

11. Narrative: Point of View--First Person; Munro, "A Wilderness Station" (626-56).

12. Narrative: Point of View--Third Person; Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown" (24-34).


GROUP WORK:

In the first week I will divide you into groups of 5 or 6 students. I anticipate that there will be some time in the Thursday classes to gather in your groups. I hope that you may find other times to meet, or keep in touch via e-mail.

The purpose of the group will be to discuss issues that I propose and also to toss around ideas about the poems and stories on which you will base your essays. Each group will be given its own set of four poems, as well as one story from Alice Munro's Selected Stories.

Each group will appoint a president and vice-president who will be responsible for taking attendance, leading discussions, and generally ensuring that the group is accomplishing its tasks. Five per cent of the final mark will be largely based on group attendance and participation. I will arrive at a mark in consultation with the president and vice-president.
GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

One short essay of approximately four double-spaced, typewritten pages (1000 words) will account for 15% of the final grade.

Another short essay of approximately five double-spaced, typewritten pages (1250 words) will account for 20% of the final grade.

One longer essay of six to eight double-spaced, typewritten pages (approximately 1500-2000 words) will account for 30% of the final grade.

One 3-hour final exam will account for 30% of the final grade.

The remaining 5% of the final grade will be based on group work (see above).

Notes: (1) I will reward participation in class with up to 5%. I will deduct up to 5% if your attendance is noticeably irregular.

(2) One number grade (1%) may be subtracted for each day that a paper is late, unless an extension has been granted in advance. No paper will be accepted after the other students' papers have been returned to them.

***************

The Faculty of Arts requires that we notify you of the following:

"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. 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 your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean."

***************
ENGLISH 251A: ESSAY TOPICS:

NOTE: These essay topics require a careful and thoughtful reading of the texts and no use of secondary material. Use the MLA style for documenting page or line references from your primary sources and for your list of works cited (bibliography). I will give you some basic points on the MLA style; for more information, see The Little, Brown Compact Handbook.

***********************

ESSAY 1:

DUE: Thursday, October 10, 2002.

LENGTH: Approximately four double-spaced typewritten pages (1000 words).

TOPIC: Discuss the use of metaphor in poem #1 of your group's "anthology." Relate the use of metaphor to other figurative language in the poem, to the structure or pattern of the poem, to the ideas and emotions that the poem is expressing, and/or to the poem's power and depth.

***********************

ESSAY 2:

DUE: Thursday, October 31, 2002.

LENGTH: Approximately five double-spaced typewritten pages (1250 words).

TOPIC: Focussing on issues #1 and #8, along with two or three others that you consider to be important (see the sheet "Some Issues to Consider When Analysing Poems"), write a close study of your assigned poem from your group's anthology. Show how the issues that you choose match up with (or contradict) one another, and how they match up with (or contradict) the sentiments, emotions, and/or ideas that the poem is expressing.

***********************

ESSAY 3:

DUE: Thursday, November 28, 2002.

LENGTH: Six to eight double-spaced, typewritten pages (approximately 1500-2000 words).

TOPIC: Analyse issues of point of view, narrator and narratee, representation of discourse, and aspects of time in your assigned story from Selected Stories. How do these issues affect the structure of the story and/or your interpretation of the characters and events of the story?

***********************