English 251A: Criticism I (LEC 003)
Monday and Wednesday 10:30-11:50 (DWE 3522A)

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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. Along with the other core courses required for all English plans, 251A makes available to the student in English the fundamental professional vocabulary and protocols used by researchers in our discipline. Your success as an English student depends upon the acquisition and the skillful deployment of these disciplinary practices. As the description states, we will be primarily concerned with these practices as determined by poetics, narrative, rhetoric, and discourse, the formal or technical fundamentals of reading in a disciplinary or professional manner, and we will bring these practices to bear on literary texts, both poetry and prose, as well as non-literary texts, including a film, a newspaper, and several paintings.

Required Texts:

Eliot, T. S. Selected Poems. London: Faber and Faber, 1954 (the bookstore has a cheaper offprint of this text).

Optional Texts:

Assignments and Marks:

- Participation: 10%
- Mid-term 1: 25%
- Mid-term 2: 25%
- Final: 40%

**Participation:** This mark is based on your attendance and participation in class. I will take attendance for every class. I will also circulate questions or issues to consider for the next class. You should come to class having read the assigned texts and prepared to make contributions. You must also always have the three required course texts with you in class (Ways of Reading, Selected Poems, and Dubliners). A perfect 10 is quite possible, and so is 0. You will lose ½ of a mark for each absence (see note below).

**Mid-terms 1 and 2:** Both are in-class assignments combining short definition questions and longer interpretive questions. For the definition questions, you will need to know what the vocabulary and protocols are (e.g., what is irony?). For the interpretive questions, you will have to be able to identify them and explain how they work as literary devices in particular primary texts (the Eliot and Joyce texts for both mid-terms, plus the Houston film of "The Dead" for the second mid-term). There will be two types of interpretive questions: (1) that ask you to discuss texts studied in class; (2) that ask you to analyze texts or parts of texts not studied in class. The first mid-term will cover material taken up to that point on the course, and the second will cover material taken since the first mid-term. (Eighty minutes each.)

**Final examination:** The final will be structured like the mid-terms and will be scheduled during the examination period. (Two and a half hours.)

**Absentee policy:** An absence from a mid-term 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. An absence from a class will also require documentation. Work load does not count as an excuse.

**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:

"Note on avoidance of academic offences: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an
offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (section 1; on the Web at http://wwwadm.uwaterlooo.ca/infoucal/UW/policy_71.html). If you need help in learning how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your TA or course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean."

Note: On November 18/02, Senate passed a motion that all course outlines also contain the following reference to the student’s right to grieve: “Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70. Student Grievance, http://wwwadm.uwaterlooo.ca/infoucal/Policies/policy70.html.”

For guidance on avoiding plagiarism and other academic offences, please consult the Arts Faculty Web page, “How to Avoid Plagiarism and Other Written Offences: A Guide for Students and Instructors” (http://watarts.uwaterlooo.ca/~sager/plagiarism.html).

Class Schedule:

Basic Techniques and Problem Solving

12 September
Introduction: English literary studies

14 September
Asking questions and using information: read Ways of Reading Units 1, 2, T. S. Eliot, “The Waste Land,” James Joyce “The Sisters” (both will be our central primary texts until mid-term 1)

19 September
Form, structure, grammar: read WR Unit 3

Dimensions of Language Variation

21 September
Language and time and space: read WR Unit 4, 5

26 September
Language and context: register: read WR Unit 6

28 September
Language and gender and society: read WR Unit 7, 8

Analyzing Poetic Form

3 October
Rhyme and sound patterning; Verse and metre: read WR Unit 9, 10
5 October  Parallelism; Deviation: *read* WR Unit 11, 12

10 October  Thanksgiving

**Reading Figures of Speech**

12 October  Metaphor; Irony: *read* WR Unit 13, 14

17 October  Juxtaposition; Intertextuality and allusion: *read* WR Unit 15, 16

19 October  Mid-term 1

**Aspects of Narrative**

24 October  Genre; Narrative: *read* WR Unit 17, 18, T. S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” Joyce, “Eveline”

26 October  Writing, speech and narration; Narrative point of view: *read* WR Unit 19, 20, Joyce, “The Dead”

31 October  Narration in film and prose fiction; Realism: *read* WR Unit 21, 22

2 November  Film viewing: John Huston’s *The Dead*

7 November  Narration and realism in “The Dead” and *The Dead*

**Beyond the literary text**

9 November  Positioning the reader or spectator: *read* WR Unit 23, Eliot “Portrait of a Lady,” Joyce, “A Mother”

14 November  Authorship and intention: *read* WR Unit 24, Eliot, “Preludes,” Joyce, “Clay”

16 November  Mid-term 2


23 November  Literature in performance: *read* WR Unit 26, Eliot,
“Rhapsody on a Windy Night,” Joyce, “Counterparts”

28 November
Ways of reading non-literary texts: read *WR* Unit 27, *Globe and Mail*, November 23

30 November
Ways of reading non-literary texts: Gustave Caillebotte’s *Rue de Paris, temps pluies*, Pablo Picasso’s *Les Demoiselles des Avignon*

5 December
Review