ENGL 251A
Criticism I
Instructor: Rebecca Tierney-Hynes
Phone: (519) 888-4567 x 35667
Email: rtierney@uwaterloo.ca
Office: HH 254
Office hours: TTh 1-2pm
Course website: on UW-ACE
TTh 4-5:20pm
MC 4063

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to critical methods of reading literature. We will explore genre, form, and the social context of literature. Our aim will be to uncover the ways in which meaning is created in the interactions among authors, texts, readers, and contexts, and to develop a critical vocabulary to express that meaning.

Course Texts:

- *Ways of Reading* (Routledge)
- Sinclair Ross, *As for Me and My House* (NCL)
- Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (Grove)
- Representative Poetry Online (http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca)
- Course website – UW-ACE

The course anthology is available at the UW Bookstore (SCH). The website is required reading. You are responsible for all information posted on the course website.

Method of Evaluation:

Midterm test: 15% (Oct 9)
Essay #1: 15% (due Oct 23)
Essay #2: 30% (due Nov 20)
Final Test: 25% (Nov 29)
Participation: 15%

Midterm test (15%) – Week 5 (Oct 9)

- Part A: Terminology (50%)
  - You will be asked to define three of five critical terms we have discussed in the course.
- Part B: Passage analysis (50%)
  - You will be asked to identify the author and title of two of four passages, and then to describe the significance of the passage to the themes of the text as a whole.
1000-word paper (15%) – Week 7 (Oct 23)

1500-word paper (30%) – Week 11 (Nov 20)
   • All essays must be typed, double-spaced, have 1 ¼ inch margins, use 12pt Times New Roman font, include citations in MLA format, and meet the minimum word counts outlined above.
   • Creative topics are exempt from the standard minimum page count, but they must match the specifications outlined in the essay question.
   • You are welcome and encouraged to come and speak to me about your paper topics in advance. In addition to my office hours, I am always available by appointment. You can make an appointment by phone, email, or in person after class. While I do my best to see students at times that are convenient for them, I cannot always make time at the last minute for appointments. If you want to be guaranteed a meeting outside my office hours, you must contact me at least one week in advance. Otherwise, I will do my utmost to fit you in, but I cannot guarantee you an appointment.
   • Late papers will be penalized at the rate of 2% per working day.
   • Late essays should be submitted to the English Department office. The essays must be date-stamped by a department staff member in your presence. Essays submitted after the office closes will be stamped with the next day’s date. If your essay is lost because you did not ensure that either I or a department staff member received it personally, you will be held responsible for that loss.
   • Please keep a copy of your work. In the case of a lost essay, I will require another copy.
   • I do not accept emailed or other electronic submissions.
   • A doctor’s note or a note from your registrar is required to avoid a late penalty. The note must document a serious illness or other serious crisis during the period immediately before and on the due date of the essay.
   • You are permitted one extension of two business days on one essay, no questions asked. No other extensions will be given for any reason.

Final Test (25%) – Week 12 (Nov 29)
   • Part A: Terminology (25% - 15min)
     o You will be asked to define three of five critical terms we have discussed in the course.
   • Part B: Passage analysis (35% - 25min)
     o You will be asked to identify the author and title of two of four passages, and then to describe the significance of the passage to the themes of the text as a whole.
   • Part C: Essay (40% - 40min)
     o You will be asked to write a short formal essay on one of two questions.

Participation (15%)
   • Active, informed participation is essential to your individual success in this course, as well as to the success of the course as a whole.
• I do not give marks for attendance; while a small component of your participation mark is for attentive and respectful listening, you will not do well on participation if you do not speak in class.
• Short assignments will be given throughout the term; preparing these assignments thoroughly for presentation to your peers is likely to result in a good participation mark.
• You cannot make up participation points. There is no substitute for your presence in the class.

Course Policies:

Appointments:
• You are welcome and encouraged to come and speak to me about the course material, difficulties with the course, tests and papers, plans for the future, or any other academic topic. In addition to my office hours, I am available by appointment. You can make an appointment by phone, email, or after class (rtierney@uwaterloo.ca).

Late Penalties:
• Late papers will be penalized at the rate of 2% per working day.
• Late essays should be submitted to the English Department office. The essays must be date-stamped by a department staff member in your presence. Essays submitted after the office closes will be stamped with the next day’s date. If your essay is lost because you did not ensure that either I or a department staff member received it personally, you will be held responsible for that loss.
• Please keep a copy of your work. In the case of a lost essay, I will require another copy.
• I do not accept emailed or other electronic submissions.
• A doctor’s note is required to avoid a late penalty. The note must document a serious illness during the period immediately before and on the due date of the essay.
• You are permitted one extension of two business days on one essay, no questions asked. No other extensions will be given for any reason.

Participation:
• I do not give marks for attendance.
• A small component of your participation mark is for attentive and respectful listening, but you will not do well on participation if you do not speak in class.
• I am always available to discuss strategies for effective participation, ways to overcome shyness, and topics you wish to raise in class but feel you’d like to run by me first.
• I give short assignments directed both toward preparing you for your essays and tests, and providing direction for class discussion. Preparing these assignments thoroughly and attentively for presentation in class is an easy way to ensure a good participation mark.
About email:

- Questions that require lengthy or complex responses cannot always be taken up over email. I am always happy to read these emails, but I will respond to emails that require exceptionally long responses by asking you to come to my office hours or make an appointment to see me.
- Email is not a substitute for in-person appointments, email participation is not a substitute for in-class participation, and I will not answer questions over email that have been canvassed in the lectures. If you miss a lecture, you are responsible for getting notes from a classmate.
- I check my email very regularly, and can generally be counted on to respond relatively quickly. Do not, however, expect instant responses. 24 hours is the minimum amount of time you need to wait before sending the same query again.
- Remember that hotmail and yahoo are much less reliable than a uwaterloo account. If you use one of these servers, be aware that a lack of response may indicate that my response bounced. I can’t resend responses interminably – if it bounces, I won’t send it again.
- I never give out marks on email. I want you to see the context for your mark at the same time that you see the mark itself.

Academic Offences:

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences requires that I draw your attention to the following:

- Note on avoidance of academic offences:

All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their 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 www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). If you need help in learning what constitutes an academic offence; how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission; how to follow appropriate rules with respect to “group work” and collaboration; or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your TA and/or your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

For more information, please see the Arts Faculty Web page, “Avoiding Academic Offences” (http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance (http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm)
Writing and Learning Resources on Campus:

- Professor Acheson’s Research Skills Page: http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~rses/RSEShome.html
- ELPP’s Writing Centre: (519) 888-4567 x 32837 http://elpp.uwaterloo.ca/writingcentre.html
- Services for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), Needles Hall, Rm 1132, (519) 888-4567 x 35082 (http://www.studentservices.uwaterloo.ca/disabilities/) If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.
- see the course website for a more extensive list of writing resources
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WOR = Ways of Reading
RPO = Representative Poetry Online (link on website) [http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca]

Week 1
Sept 11
  • Introduction

Sept 13
Beginning analysis
  • WOR 1.2-1.3
  • WOR 2
  • OED exercise

Week 2
Sept 18
Grammar and analysis
  • WOR 3
  • Parts of speech exercise

Sept 20
Genre
  • WOR 4
  • Handout: Abrams and Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms
  • WOR Activity 4.1

Week 3
Sept 25
Poetic form I
  • WOR 16
  • RPO glossary: “alliteration,” “assonance”
  • WOR 17
  • RPO glossary: “sonnet”
  • Handout: Keats, “If by dull rhymes our English must be chain’d”

Sept 27
Poetic form II
- **RPO glossary:** “chiasmus,” “antithesis,” “dramatic monologue”
- Handout: Shakespeare, sonnet 129 (“Th’ expense of spirit in a waste of shame”)
- Handout: Robert Browning, *My Last Duchess*

*Sept 28: Drop deadline – no penalty*

**Week 4**

Oct 2

**Poetic convention**
- **WOR 5**
- **WOR modified Activity 5.1**
- **RPO glossary:** “lyric,” “epic”

Oct 4

**Figurative language**
- **WOR 10**
- **RPO glossary:** “metaphor,” “metonymy,” “simile,” “synecdoche”
- **WOR** Activity 10.1, questions 1 and 2

**Week 5**

Oct 9

- **Midterm test (15%)**

Oct 11

**Intertextuality and allusion**
- **WOR 13**
- **WOR** Activity 13.1, questions 2-5 inclusive

**Week 6**

Oct 16

**Irony**
- **WOR 11**
- Swift exercise

Oct 18

**Juxtaposition**
- **WOR 12**

**Week 7**

Oct 23

**The author**
- **WOR 14**
- 1000-word paper due (15%)

Oct 25
The reader
  • WOR 15
  • Handout: Diana Fuss, “Reading Like a Feminist”

Week 8
Oct 30
Language and society
  • WOR 6
  • WOR Activity 6.1
  • WOR 8.1-8.2

Nov 1
Narrative I
  • WOR 20
  • Sinclair Ross, *As for Me and My House*

*Nov 2: Drop deadline – penalty 1*

Week 9
Nov 6
Narrative II
  • WOR 21
  • Sinclair Ross, *As for Me and My House*

Nov 8
Narrative III
  • WOR 22
  • Sinclair Ross, *As for Me and My House*

Week 10
Nov 13
Narrative IV
  • WOR 23
  • Sinclair Ross, *As for Me and My House*

Nov 15
Drama I
  • WOR 25
  • Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

Week 11
Nov 20
Drama II
  • Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*
  • 1500-word paper due (30%)
Nov 22

Drama III
  • WOR 26
  • Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

Week 12
Nov 27

Drama IV
  • Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

Nov 29
  • Final test (25%)