ENGLISH 251A (005)
LITERARY CRITICISM: PRACTICE

HH 150
Instructor: Paul Kreller
Office: HH 262
Office Hours: Tues., Thurs.
11:30-12:30

Tues., Thurs. 1:00-2:20
Telephone: (H) 519-669-2421
(O) 519-888-4567 (ext. 33398)
Email: pdwkrell@uwaterloo.ca

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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. 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 251A is to help you to become a 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 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, prosody, sound devices, diction, speech acts, types of rhyming verse, types of unrhymed verse, rhetorical figures, and terms associated with narration.

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

Figurative language includes figures of speech (simile, metaphor, catachresis, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, reification, synaesthesia), as well as imagery and symbolism.
Prosody includes types of rhyme (end, internal, perfect, imperfect, masculine, feminine, eye-rhyme); stanza form (couplet, tercet, quatrain, etc.); and the basics of rhythm, such as types of feet (iambic, anapestic, trochaic, dactylic, spondaic); and the terminology for describing the length of a line of verse (trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter).

Sound devices include alliteration, assonance, consonance, and onomatopoeia.

Types of rhyming poems include the ballad, sonnet (Italian and English), ode, sestina, villanelle, and limerick.

Types of unrhymed verse include blank verse and free verse.

Persona, Voice, and Diction include aspects of connotation and denotation, as well as levels of language (figurative or poetic, formal, informal, archaic, contemporary, colloquial, monosyllabic, polysyllabic, dialect, specialized).

Speech acts include commanding, exhorting, inviting, confessing, praying, proposing, hypothesizing, clarifying, reminiscing, etc., as well as forms of address: vocative, invocation, apostrophe.

Rhetoric includes the three appeals of ethos, pathos and logos, as well as rhetorical figures, such as apostrophe, rhetorical question, analogy, antithesis, parallelism, hierarchical ordering, etc.

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

Issues of time and sequence include order (fabula, sjuet, chronology, analepsis, prolepsis, paralipsis, achrony); speed (summary, scene, stretch, pause, ellipsis); and frequency (e.g., singulative, repetitive)

TEXTS:
The following text is required:


The following texts are recommended:

M. H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms, 10th Edition (Thomas Wadsworth)

Poems for the course will be provided.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

(Poem numbers refer to the "Class Anthology" (handout); they are the main poems, but we will continually return to earlier poems. Short stories are all from the Courseware Package. Beginning with Week 2, Tuesday's class will begin with "Words of the Week".)

**Sept. 13:**  Introduction

**Sept. 15 & 20:**  Poetry: Grammatical Terms (Poems 1 – 6)

**Sept. 22 & 27:**  Poetry: Patterns and Structures (Poems 7 – 10)
Poetry: Figurative Language (Poems 11 – 15) [Note that Poem # 12 is "I Wandered Lonely" from the Courseware Package]

**Sept. 29 & Oct. 4:**  Poetry: Sound Devices (Poem 16)
Poetry: Prosody (Poems 17 – 18)

**Oct. 6 & 11:**  Poetry: Types of Rhyming Verse (Poems 19 – 24)
Poetry: Types of Unrhymed Verse

[The short midterm test will be based on terms studied to this point.]

**Oct. 13 & 18:**  Poetry: Persona, Voice, and Diction (Poems 25 – 27)

**Oct. 21 & 26:**  Poetry: Speech Acts (Poems 28 – 29)
Poetry: Rhetorical Patterns (Time permitting—Various)

**Oct. 27 & Nov. 1:**  Narrative: Structures and Plots (Hawthorne, "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment")

**Nov. 3 & 8:**  Narrative: First Person Point of View (Munro, "A Wilderness Station")

**Nov. 10 & 15:**  Narrative: Third Person Point of View (Jackson, "The Lottery"; and Mansfield, "Miss Brill")

**Nov. 17 & 22:**  Narrative Time: Order, Speed, and Frequency ("Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," "A Wilderness Station," "The Lottery," and "Miss Brill")

**Nov. 24 & 29:**  Narrative: Second Person and Mixed Points of View ("How" and "Flight Paths of the Emperor")

**Dec 1:**  Summary: "Adam’s Curse: Inspiration and Effort” in Courseware Package.
ONLINE COMPONENT:

There will be an online component, which is mainly for your convenience. This will consist of:

- Weekly Announcements.
- A copy of the Syllabus.
- An opportunity to “Introduce Yourself”
- “Coffee Club” for discussions that involve the whole class.
- Downloadable Handouts, mainly supplementary notes and exercises
- Links to websites of interest.
- Dropboxes for essay submission (optional). Please submit a hard copy.
- Student Essays: I may ask some of you to make your essay available to the class.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

- Three short essays of approximately three to four double-spaced typewritten pages (750-1000 words) will account for 40% of the final grade. (The first assignment will account for 10%, the remaining two for 15% each). These assignments will be based on poetry.
- One essay of four or five double-spaced, typewritten pages (approximately 1000-1250 words) will account for 15% of the final grade. This will be based on a short story from the course package.
- One short midterm test will account for 10% of your final grade. It will be based mainly on poetic terminology. The date and time will be finalized in class, but it will be held at the beginning of class.
- One 2.5 hour examination will account for the remaining 35% of the final grade. The main part of the exam will involve an analysis of a poem and a short narrative passage.

Note that I reward class participation, including observable participation in group discussions, with up to 3%. Up to 3% may be deducted if your attendance is noticeably irregular. One number grade (1%) may be subtracted for each day that a paper is late, unless an extension has been granted in advance.

The faculty of Arts requires that we notify to of the following:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.
**Discipline:** All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity (www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/) and to take responsibility for their academic actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an academic offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about rules for group work / collaboration, should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy # 71, Student Discipline: www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check guidelines for the assessment of penalties: www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) (other than a petition) or Policy 71 (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. Students who believe that they have a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals): www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm.

**Grievance:** Students who believe that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4: www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance. Associate Dean.”

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**ASSIGNMENTS**

These essay topics require a careful and thoughtful reading of the texts and no use of secondary sources. Select quotations carefully, and be clear as to why you are using them; do not overquote. Use the MLA style for documenting line or page references from your sources and for your list of Works Cited at the end. Some basic points on MLA style are give in the “handout” section of your Courseware Package. For more information, consult The Little, Brown Compact Handbook.

**ASSIGNMENT 1:**

**Due:** Thursday, October 6, 2011

**Length:** Three to four double-spaced, typewritten pages (750 – 1000 words)

**Topic:** Discuss metaphors and other figurative language in one of the poems from Sheet A. If possible, try to organize your ideas around the controlling metaphor. Relate issues of metaphor and figurative language to the structure or pattern of the poem, and/or to the ideas or emotions that the poem is expressing.
ASSIGNMENT 2:

Due: Thursday, October 20, 2011
Length: Three to four double-spaced, typewritten pages (750 – 1000 words)
Topic: Discuss issues of prosody (rhythm, metre, rhyme, stanza form) in one of the poems from Sheet B. You should rewrite and scan enough of the poem to give a sense of the rhythm and where it deviates. Relate issues of prosody to the stanza form (e.g., sonnet, ballad); to the structure or pattern of the poem; and/or to the ideas or emotions that the poem is expressing.

ASSIGNMENT 3:

Due: Thursday, November 3, 2011
Length: Three to four double-spaced, typewritten pages (750 - 1000 words)
Topic: Discuss the creation of a persona in one of the poems from Sheet C. Show especially how diction and/or speech acts contribute to the creation of the persona.

ASSIGNMENT 4:

Due: Thursday, December 1, 2011
Length: Four or five double-spaced, typewritten pages (approximately 1000 – 1250 words)
Topic: Analyze at least one of the following issues in the selected short story: point of view, including narrator and narratee; representation of discourse, including diction; representation of time, including order, speed, and frequency. How do these issues affect the structure of the story and/or your interpretation of the characters and events?

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