

Foundations of Literary Study

English 200

Professor Farina
Fall 2013, TuTh 1:00-2:15

English 200 aims to sharpen your understanding of *how* literary language works. The goal here is not to read a substantial number of works or to understand literary history in a great diversity of social contexts (those are the objectives of “survey” courses), but to read carefully, thoroughly, and imaginatively. This “close reading” of texts takes note of linguistic qualities like rhythm and meter, tone, diction, imagery, metaphoric or symbolic figuration, rhetorical positioning, and the like. Recognizing the particular ways in which texts make use of these formal elements further allows us to think about “types” of literature, identifiable structures and genres that carry forward their own expectations about language.

Because we will be thinking about the importance of form for giving shape to literature, it makes sense to consider what writers have to say about the relation of form, identity, and innovation. For that reason, our readings, though widely varied, will follow a loose theme of *metamorphosis*. Shape-shifting and transformation, both physical and psychological, is a subject that has long provided authors with an opportunity to reflect on the role of form in determining what something is, be it a poem or a person.

Required Coursework:

class participation: 20%
quizzes: 30%
four 2-3 page essays: 12.5% each

Quizzes will consist of three interpretive questions and will usually take 20 minutes of class time. You will be allowed access to the day’s reading, but you will have a hard time answering the questions if you haven’t read it before class. You must make use of relevant evidence from the reading to get full credit for your answers.

Required Texts:

Since we will be working closely with our texts in class discussion and in small group work, you must have these books (or the required PDFs) with you during class on the days that we are scheduled to discuss them. Failure to do so will result in a reduction of your class participation grade.

The Seagull Reader: Poems. J. Kelly, ed.
Hand, E. *Errantry: Strange Stories.*
Winterson, J. *Weight.*
Haddon, M. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time.*
Stoppard, T. *Arcadia*

To cut costs, I will also be sending you PDFs and directing you to online texts. It is essential that your MIX email be working in order to receive these. I expect you to print out or download these materials and bring them to class.

Course Policies:

Attendance: This is a participatory class. You may miss two classes without penalty. Missing more will diminish your class participation grade. If you miss six classes, you will receive an F for the course. Lateness is rude and disrupts discussion and small group work. If you are more than 10 minutes late, your lateness will count as half of an absence (so, two lateness = one absence). In general, I do not care why you are absent or late; the only “notes” I need to see are for University-sponsored activities (e.g. class field trips, sports teams, etc.).

Late Coursework: There are no make-up opportunities for missed quizzes. I will, however, allow you to drop your lowest quiz grade from your total grade for the quizzes. Essays are due at the beginning of class on the scheduled day. If you do not hand your paper in then, it will be penalized a full grade and an additional full grade for each day late thereafter.

Access: If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services: <http://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>

Plagiarism: WVU’s policy regarding plagiarized work can be found online at: <http://studentlife.wvu.edu/studentconductcode.html> (see Section B of Article III). We will discuss plagiarism in class before the first response is due, but it is the student’s responsibility to be familiar with the WVU policy. Do note, especially, that plagiarism is regarded as such *whether it is intentional or not*. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. Plagiarized work in this course may result in an “Unforgivable F” for the course.

Conduct: I expect all members of the class to be respectful of each other and me, regardless of religious, social, or political differences. I will not condone discriminatory remarks regarding race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, health, economic status, etc. Disruptive behavior may impact your class participation grade and, if egregious enough, result in your expulsion from the class. Be mindful that the best way to participate in class is to *both talk and listen* to what others have to say. I don’t expect class members to agree, but I do expect that you will acknowledge other points of view.

Announcements: If there are changes to our schedule or assignments, I will announce these over MIX as well as in class.

Contact Info: My drop-in office hours are TuTh, 2:30-3:15, in my office 335 Colson Hall (3rd floor). I am also readily available for meeting with you at other times; just drop me an email to make an appointment. You can reach me at Lara.Farina@mail.wvu.edu.

Schedule:

You need to have read the assigned texts *before* we are scheduled to discuss them in class.

8/20 Introduction
8/22 Choices, Choices, Choices: some *Metamorphoses* (PDF)

Poetry:

8/27 Sound and Meter: excerpts from *Oliver* (PDF); *SR* xlii-xlviii, poems
8/29 Imagery, Figurative Language, Mood; *SR* xxxi-xlii, poems
9/3 Diction, Tone, Character, Personae; *SR* xxv-xxxI, poems
9/5 Specific Forms—Sonnets, Sestinas, and the like; *SR* xlviiii-li, poems
9/10 Pupura, “The Lustres” (PDF)
9/12 Essay #1 Due; Jakobson on poetic language; Pentametron

Short Fiction:

9/17 Narration v. Description: Faber, “Fish”; Yourcenar, “Wang-Fo” (PDFs)
9/19 Narrators: Poe “Tell-Tale Heart”; Carter, “The Tiger’s Bride” (PDF)
9/24 *Errantry*, “Near Zennor”
9/26 *Errantry*, “The Far Shore”
10/1 *Errantry*, “Winter’s Wife”
10/3 *Errantry*, “Errantry”
10/8 Genre criticism (PDF)
10/10 Essay #2 Due

The Novel:

10/15 Fall Break
10/17 *Weight*, ix-76
10/22 *Weight*, 77-151
10/24 Source Myths: Atlas, Herakles, etc. (online)
10/29 *Curious Incident*, 1-51
10/31 *Curious Incident*, 52-99
11/5 *Curious Incident*, 100-177
11/7 *Curious Incident*, 177-221

11/12 Contextual Criticism (PDF)
11/14 Essay #3 Due

Drama:

11/19 Stoppard, *Arcadia*, Act I
11/21 Stoppard, *Arcadia*, Act II

Thanksgiving

Nonfiction:

12/3 excerpts from Hull, *Touching the Rock*
12/5 Radiolab: "Crossroads" (online podcast)

12/10 Class Discussion/Review

Essay #4 due on scheduled exam date