

# THE SHORT STORY AND NOVEL

## “Outsiders”

English 132, 002 | Spring, 2014

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<b>Office hours:</b>	MTWR: 1:30 – 2:30 PM; by appointmt.	<b>Phone #:</b>	304-293-9723(office); 304-296-8437 (home)
<b>Meeting at:</b>	MWF from 11:30 – 12:20 PM	<b>Meeting in:</b>	104 Clark Hall

### REQUIRED TEXTS

Alexie, Sherman. *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (Grove)  
Cather, Willa, *My Antonia*. (Broadview)  
Oates, Joyce Carol. *American Short Stories*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. (Oxford).  
Woodrell, Daniel. *Winter's Bone* (Back Bay Books)  
Wright, Richard. *Native Son* (Harper Perennial)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce you to fiction as a broad literary genre distinct from poetry and drama. In it, we will read short stories and novels that exemplify the historical development of these forms, as well as the important differences in voice, style, structure, and effect between stories and novels that treat similar themes. Part of our work will be to define distinctive qualities of the short story and novel within the broad category of prose fiction. But our focus will also be thematic: the three novels and many of the short stories we will read this semester imagine the lives of marginalized people, people who find themselves on the fringes of American life because of their race, gender, ethnicity, age, socio-economic status, or other divergence from the accepted norm. Consequently, as we explore the characteristics and evolution of the forms of American fiction, we will also be exploring, conceptually and practically, how “outsider fiction” influences us, broadly, how literature is powerfully linked to our experience and may help us engage with it.

### EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the semester, students who successfully complete English 132 will:

- engage with human experience, perplexity, pleasure, difficulty, beauty through reading and writing about literature
- be able to apply their knowledge of the various manifestations and characteristics of prose fiction to the oral and written analysis of specific texts
- discuss the history and emerging forms of the short story, novel and novella and use this knowledge to contextualize individual works across historical periods and cultures
- ask probing questions about texts, moving beyond surface readings or responses
- deploy in discussion and in writing basic critical approaches to literature
- write about literature critically and analytically, with the demonstrated ability to develop a thesis for a literary essay, support it with textual evidence, and critically analyze and interpret a literary text
- articulate and develop ideas in class discussion

### WVU GEC CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

This class is designed to meet WVU's GEC curriculum objectives #5 and #6:

#5: **Artistic Expression**—Students are expected to apply methods and principles of critical inquiry to the analysis of literary or artistic expression.

#7: **American Culture**—Students are expected to develop knowledge critical to the understanding of the issues that shape the culture of the United States.

### GRADING SCALE AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

The semester grading scale is based on 1000 points. Individual assignments will be evaluated on the 90-100 scale that follows; then points will be calculated proportional to the percentage value of the assignment.

<b>A+</b> = 985 – 1000 points	<b>A</b> = 915 – 984 points	<b>A-</b> = 895 – 914 points	
<b>B+</b> = 885 – 894 points	<b>B</b> = 815 – 884 points	<b>B-</b> = 795 – 814 points	
<b>C+</b> = 785 – 794 points	<b>C</b> = 715 – 784 points	<b>C-</b> = 695 – 714 points	
<b>D+</b> = 685 – 694 points	<b>D</b> = 615 – 684 points	<b>D-</b> = 595 – 614 points	<b>F</b> = 0 – 594 points

### Criteria for evaluation of the take-home essays and literary analysis essay:

An **A** paper is outstanding, a perceptive, thoughtful and original response to the assignment. It is well-organized, with

robust development of its ideas or themes. Strong evidence supports the analysis, which is clearly and effectively organized. If research is required, it is robust, scholarly, and well-documented. The writing is excellent, with no substantive revisions required.

A **B** paper is very good work that fulfills the assignment and beyond that shows evidence of clear insight and good planning. It is well-organized with solid supporting details. Substantial engagement with the subject is demonstrated, but the analysis may be incomplete, involve weak evidence, or evince some difficulty with organization. If research is required, it is solid, and documentation has been carefully attempted, though with a few glitches. The writing is fluent, with only minor errors that do not interfere with the reading of the paper.

A **C** paper offers satisfactory writing that meets all the requirements of the assignment; it is adequately developed and adequately written. **C** work shows effort by the student. While the essay's fundamental concepts or insights may be satisfactory, there is likely a sense of incomplete development, lack of evidence, or disorganization in a C paper. If research is required, it is perfunctory or may involve sources lacking credibility, and documentation is sloppy. Writing gets the point across but requires substantive or stylistic revisions such that the reading of the paper may be laborious.

A **D** paper fulfills many components of the assignment but exhibits a faulty or inadequate engagement with it. The paper's evidence, analysis, and/or organization are deficient; major problems can be seen with the presentation of ideas (lack of clear thesis, weak organization, poor development or supporting arguments, inappropriate diction). Research is inadequate or unscholarly and poorly documented. Alternatively or additionally, the paper may be so marred by writing and mechanical errors that reading the paper is very difficult.

An **F** paper relates to the prompt but is so poorly presented that it completely fails to fulfill the assignment, showing a significant lack of engagement and effort. The paper fails to present its basic concept comprehensibly because of extremely inadequate content or because of poor organization and lack of clarity or because the writing reflects a lack of control over the basic conventions of standard American usage.

## OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Commitment to this class

- a. *Defined by class attendance.* I value your regular attendance and participation in our classes, and you need to come to class in order to succeed in class. Thus the following rule governs your attendance record in English 132: you are allowed up to two weeks' worth of absences from class (6 absences) for whatever reason without penalty. After that, your semester grade will drop one letter grade for each additional day you are absent beyond 6.
- b. *Defined by participation in class.* Our meeting together to learn together is important. This class is not just about reading a lot of fiction—you could do that yourself on your own time. Nor is it designed so you can hear me lecturing about the literary features of our texts (though there will be some of that): you can find some information like that in Wikipedia. Rather, it's about our being a community of readers learning together through insight-sharing, questioning, dialoguing, light bulbs going off. **Thus:** your grade will be substantially affected, positively or negatively, by your participation in class every day. I ask that you contribute regularly to class by making an observation; asking a question; summarizing an insight you had as you completed the required reading for the day; responding to a question on "Round" days; and so on. I have quantified this ideal as follows:  
*Quantification of participation:* You can earn up to **5%** (50 points/1000) of your grade as follows:
  - 50 points: you attend class regularly and participate regularly, ideally at least once a day
  - 20 points: you attend class regularly but participate sporadically, perhaps offering one comment or insight every couple of weeks
  - 5 points: you attend class regularly, keeping within the allowed number of absences, but you never speak or speak very rarely (once or twice in the entire semester)

2. **Reading quizzes** (10% of class total of 1000 points, hence 100 points total) Unscheduled reading checks will be given in class ten times to make sure you are keeping up with the assigned reading. These will consist of from two to five objective questions in various formats (multiple choice, short answer, etc.) Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

3. **Two tests with take-home essays** (50% of class total of 1000 points, hence 500 points total):

- a. *Test 1 at mid-semester* (250 points) —In class on Friday, February 14, one or two open-book take-home essay questions will be distributed which must be answered and submitted in class on Friday February 21, the day of the in-class objective test. The in-class test will require your completion of some objective questions about the material we have read and learned during the first half of the semester.

- b. *Test 2 near the end of the semester (250 points)* –In class on Wednesday, April 9, one or two open-book take-home essay questions will be given which must be answered and submitted in class on Wednesday, April 16, when the in-class portion of Test 2 will be given. The class period on April 16 will be designated for your completion of some objective questions about the material we have covered during the second half of the term.
4. **One 3-page literary interpretation essay, no research required, due the last day of classes in lieu of a final exam (25% of class total of 1000 points, hence 250 points)** After we have completed Unit 2, you will choose a short story or novel that particularly interests you and write an analysis/interpretation of it, focusing on the “outsider” theme that will frame our readings at various points throughout the semester. No research will be needed for this essay, only close conscientious reading and a carefully-developed interpretation of a work of fiction on our reading list.
5. **An in-class presentation with another student (10% of class total of 1000 points, hence 100 points).** Twenty-one presentations slots are scheduled into the semester calendar, marked | **[SP]** (see pages 4 and 5). You are invited to sign up for one of these presentations and to team with another student to deliver it. The presentation must be on relevant background for the story or novel under consideration; you can decide what is relevant and important to discuss about the story or novel for that day. The presentation prompt and sign-up sheet will be distributed Jan. 13.

#### **REQUIREMENTS, POLICIES, AND BITS OF FRIENDLY ADVICE** (arranged alphabetically):

**Attendance:** *Come to class!* This class will only be profitable to you if you make a serious, mature commitment to it. This means attending class regularly and bringing the text with you. In my classes, bad grades almost invariably correlate with a poor attendance record. Again, the attendance policy is: you are allowed up to two weeks' worth of absences from class (6 absences) for whatever reason without penalty. After that, your semester grade will drop one letter grade for every additional day you are absent. So, for example, if you accumulate 6 absences over the course of the semester, your semester grade will be determined by your success in completing the course requirements listed above. However, if you miss class 8 times, your grade based on completion of the course requirements will be dropped two levels (e.g. A to C) based on your excessive absence from class.

**Cell phone and pager courtesy:** Please turn your cell phones and pagers off or use a silent signal while in class.

**Disabilities:** *Let me know if you have special needs and I will respect them.* If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation to participate in this class, please let me know. You should also make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700).

**Emergencies or health crises:** *Call Student Life.* If you encounter an emergency situation or serious health problem in the course of the semester—and I sincerely hope you don't—you or your family should immediately contact the Office of Student Life in E. Moore Hall (293-5611). The Dean of Student Life will then communicate with me concerning your problem and authorize me to make any necessary arrangements for you to complete this course. *Note:* please reserve the Dean's services for serious circumstances or emergencies; they will not help you with minor problems or everyday excuses.

**Etiquette:** *Let's maintain high standards of courtesy in the classroom.* Failure to show due respect to me and your fellow students by participating in non-class-related activities during class may result in your being marked absent from class without *your being explicitly “called out” in class.* Please comply with the following:

*When you come to class, plan to arrive on time and stay the whole time.* If you know that there is some rare situation that will force you to arrive late or to leave early, please let me know, preferably in advance, and try to sit near the door so that your entrance or exit causes the least disruption possible.

*During class time, avoid holding side conversations.* Quietly checking a point with a classmate is rarely a problem, but speaking out loud or whispering with another student or students for an extended period during class lectures or discussions is rude and unacceptable. If you disturb the class this way, you will be marked absent with or without explicit notice from me.

*During class time, do not text, type or read mysteriously on your laptop, read non-class-related materials or work on non-class projects.* If you disrespect the class this way, you will be marked absent with or without explicit notice.

**Extra Credit Options:** These will become available after the first test.

**Incompletes:** *Request an incomplete only in the case of an end-of-the-semester catastrophe.* WVU policy does

not allow professors to give incompletes to students unless students have satisfactorily completed all but one of the requirements of the course and are prevented from finishing the course by some kind of personal catastrophe (for example, hospitalization, death of a parent). The Office of Student Life will help you under these circumstances.

**Late Work: *Best on time, better late than never.*** You should plan on turning your assignments in on time, but I will accept late work with the understanding that, for every paper submitted after the due date, an increasingly large number of points will be subtracted from the assessed grade. Each **business** day late means the subtraction of one assessment level (e.g. B+ to B, B to B-) until the late work has lost its value and earned an F. In my classes, “on time” denotes work that, at its best, is submitted in class on the day it is due, at worst, submitted to my mailbox or office by the end of the day it is due. Thus a paper is considered on time if it is put in my mailbox before the English office closes (4:45 PM) or under my office door before Colson closes (~ 9 PM Monday through Thursday; 5 PM Friday).

**Texts:** *You are required to bring a print or an e-reader version to class of the work we are studying on any given day.* Because texts form the “bottom line” for literary interpretation, we cannot have meaningful discussions without your bringing the assigned texts to class.

**Plagiarism: *Don't take the lazy way out.*** Talking over your ideas and getting comments on your writing from friends are NOT examples of plagiarism. Copying or paraphrasing a friend's work is. So is taking someone else's published or unpublished words and calling them your own; a synonym is academic dishonesty. This is true whether the text being “borrowed” is from the internet or in hard-copy form. When plagiarism amounts to an attempt to deceive, it has dire consequences, as spelled out in University regulations.

**Social justice: *Let's maintain high standards of respect in the classroom.*** West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I share that commitment and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin; neither should we. Any suggestions on how to further such a positive environment in this class will be appreciated.

## DAY BY DAY

[ALL CAPS denote work due; AP = author presentation available today]

### Unit 1: Defining Characteristics of the Short Story and Novel

**Week 1:** January 8 – 10

**W:** Introductions

**F:** Ford, “Under the Radar,” *Oxford Book of American Short Stories (OASS)*, 660

**Week 2:** January 13 – 17

**M:** Oates, “Heat,” OASS 619

**W:** Bradbury, “There Will Come Soft Rains,” OASS 475 | [SP]

**F:** O'Brien, “The Things They Carried,” OASS 688

**Week 3:** January 20 – 24

**M:** NO SCHOOL: HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DR. KING

**W:** *Winter's Bone* to end of chapter on p. 57 | [SP]

**F:** *Winter's Bone* to end of chapter on p. 108

**Week 4:** January 27 – 31

**M:** *Winter's Bone* to end of chapter on p.161

**W:** *Winter's Bone* to the end of the novel | [SP]

### Unit 2: Development of the Short Story and Novel

**F:** Irving, “Rip van Winkle, 16

**Week 5:** February 3-7

**M:** Poe, “Tell-Tale Heart,” OASS 67 | [SP]

**W:** Clemens, “Cannibalism in the Cars,” OASS 107 | [SP]

**F:** Chopin, “The Storm,” OASS 147

**Week 6:** February 10 – 14

**M:** Wharton, "The Journey," OASS 208 | [SP]

**W:** Fitzgerald, "An Alcoholic Case," OASS 326 | [SP]

**F:** Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants," OASS 353 | Take-home essays for Test 1 assigned

**Week 7:** February 17 – 21

**M:** Carver, "Actual Miles," OASS 610 | [SP]

**W:** Wallace, "Good People," OASS 814

**F:** TEST 1: in-class portion given | Take-home essays due

### Unit 3: Outsiders in Short Stories and Novels

**Week 8:** February 24 – 27

**M:** Beecher-Stowe, "The Ghost in the Mill," OASS 74 | [SP]

**W:** Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper," OASS 191 | [SP]

**F:** Cather, *My Antonia*, 47 – 87 (end of Book 1, chapter 9)

**Week 9:** March 3 – 7

**M:** Cather, *My Antonia*, 87 – 129 (end of Book II, chapter 1) | [SP]

**W:** READING DAY 129 – 171 (end of Book II, ch. 12) in *My Antonia* | NO CLASS IN CLASSROOM

**F:** Cather, *My Antonia*, 171-210 (end of Book IV, ch. 2)

**Week 10: SPRING BREAK** (Finish *My Antonia* or begin *Native Son*)

**Week 11:** March 17 – 21

**M:** Cather, *My Antonia*, to the end | [SP]

**W:** Wright, *Native Son*, to page 77, end of "Swing low, sweet chariot"

**F:** Wright, *Native Son*, to page 149, end of paragraph beginning "He was confident."

**Week 12:** March 24 – 28

**M:** Wright, *Native Son*, to page 241 at the break | [SP]

**W:** Wright, *Native Son*, to page 310 at the break

**F:** Wright, *Native Son*, to page 363 at the break | [SP]

**Week 13:** March 31 – April 4

**M:** Wright, *Native Son*, to the end | [SP]

**W:** Faulkner, "That Evening Sun," OASS 335

**F:** Roth, "Defender of the Faith," OASS 546 | Literary analysis paper assigned | [SP]

**Week 14:** April 7 – 11

**M:** Erdrich, "Fleur," OASS 761 | [SP]

**W:** Alexie, *Lone Ranger and Tonto*, Introduction and stories to page 53 | Take home essays for Test 2 assigned | [SP]

**F:** Alexie, *Lone Ranger and Tonto*, stories to page 103

**Week 15:** April 14 – 17

**M:** Alexie, *Lone Ranger and Tonto*, stories to page 148 | [SP]

**W:** TEST 2: OBJECTIVE PORTION IN CLASS | TAKE-HOME ESSAYS DUE

**F:** NO CLASS IN CLASSROOM—Friday before Easter recess [read *Lone Ranger*]

**Week 16:** April 21 – 25

**M:** Alexie, *Lone Ranger and Tonto*, to the end | [SP]

**W:** Jumpa Lahiri, "Hell-Heaven," OASS 835 | [SP]

**F:** Ha Jin, "Children as Enemies," OASS 797 | LITERARY ANALYSIS PAPER DUE

**Week 17:** April 28 – May 3 FINALS WEEK—There will be no final in English 132; your paper will take the place of a final

**ENGLISH 132 STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET & SYLLABUS CONTRACT**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student ID** \_\_\_\_\_

**Campus address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Campus phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Major** \_\_\_\_\_ **Year in college** \_\_\_\_\_

**Previous college-level English courses taken/where?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Syllabus Contract**

I have read and understood the English 132 syllabus, and I agree to abide by all its rules, requirements, and policies.

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your name

Date

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**Attendance information** (instructor use only):