

ENGL 233
The Short Story
MWF 1:30 - 2:20 rm. 317 CKH-D
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COURSE OUTLINE

In this class we will explore the history and development of the modern short story. We will investigate the ways that writers through the last two centuries have created, used and altered the conventions of the form to best suit the stories they felt drawn to tell. We will look at the tension at the heart of the short story between the imperatives of the fantastical tale and the desire of writers to create realistic portrayals of lived human experience.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

The class is organized into five chronological units. We'll start at the beginning of the 19th Century with the tales of Edgar Allen Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne. We'll move on to discuss the advent of the realist story, the experiments of early 20th Century modernism, and the characteristics of post-World War Two fiction. We'll finish the semester by examining the work of recent and contemporary writers. We will ask questions about how each subsequent period and its movements differ from or resemble their predecessors.

Each week the classes will be divided between two lectures, on Monday and Wednesday, and a discussion section on Friday. That means: Come to class on Friday read to talk! Part of your grade will depend on your participation in class discussions and other in-class activities.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The Story and Its Writer by Ann Charters, Compact 7th Edition. Bedford/St. Martins, 2007.

You can find this at the bookstore on campus. All other readings will be given as handouts in class and/or online.

ASSIGNMENTS

Your grade will be based on the following assignments:

1. Weekly Response Papers: 30pts (or 30%) -- By **5pm each Sunday**, write a thoughtful 200 - 300 word response to one of the stories of essays you have read for the following week and post it online (please see attached sheet for details on how to do this). You'll do 15 of these in all, each worth two points, including one by 5pm on Tuesday, August 19th on "The Cask of Amontillado".
2. Weekly Discussion Questions: 15pts -- By **5pm each Thursday**, post 2 - 3 discussion questions of your own devising that relate the stories and essays we've read for Wednesday and Friday of that week on our class blog. You will do 15 of these, each worth one point.
3. Take-Home Mid-term Exam: 20pts -- Write a 6 - 8 page typed response to one of a set of questions that will be **handed out on Oct 10th, due to be returned in class Oct 13th..**
4. Final Exam: 20pts -- You'll write an essay in response to a discussion question during our assigned exam period **from 3 – 5pm on December 8th**; this exam will be open book and

- open note, and you should plan to be able to write about stories from all the periods we've covered in the course.
5. Contemporary Story Collection 10pts -- **By October 24th**, you will choose, from the list provided below, a short story collection published during the past 30 years. You'll hand in a clear photocopy of this story to me on that date. In groups of 4 or 5, you'll prepare to lead one class discussion on this story on a day assigned to you during that last three weeks of class.
 6. Class participation – 5pts. This will include attendance, punctuality, your participation in discussions and occasional assignments for class.

A note on the assignments: This class is designed so that if you do all the work on time, you can expect a decent grade. Weekly posts (response papers and discussion questions) will receive full marks if they come in on time and fulfill the requirements of the assignment. If you don't do all the work on time, it will be very difficult to succeed in this course.

GRADE

Your grade will be determined by the following scale:

>100 pts = A+
100 pts – 97 pts = A
96 pts – 93 pts = A-
92 pts – 89 pts = B+
88 pts – 85 pts = B
84 pts – 81 pts = B-
80 pts – 77 pts = C+
76 pts – 73 pts = C
72 pts – 69 pts = C-
68 pts – 65 pts = D+
64 pts – 61 pts = D
60 pts or less = F

CLASS RULES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance -- I'll take attendance everyday of class. You'll lose a point from your final grade for each unexcused absence; more than nine unexcused absences and you will fail the course automatically. You'll lose half a point if you are late to class.

Late Work -- No late work will be accepted in this class. The assignments are designed to go along with the current week's readings, so if you can't get the assignments in on time, you'll just miss those points.

Food and Drink -- No food in class; you may bring coffee, soda, juice or water to class with you.

Plagiarism -- Do your own work. If you are found to have plagiarized your written assignments for this course you'll get an automatic zero for that assignment; for weekly response papers this will mean a zero for all of these if you are found to have plagiarized one or more.

Office Hours -- I will be available to see you during weekly office hours from 11:30 - 12:30 and 2:30 - 3:30 on Mondays. If you need to meet with me and this time doesn't work for you, please speak to me before or after class about setting up an alternative time to meet.

Email – Please don't use email as a substitute for talking to me face to face! I am available to talk to you in person three times a week in class, plus office hours, and this seems like enough time to respond to any course related issues that arise. You are welcome to email me if you'd like, but be patient when waiting for a response.

Recent and Contemporary Collections --You may choose any of the following for your small group report during Weeks 13 - 16. You should read and be prepared to talk about the whole collection, in addition to choosing one story from the collection for the whole class to read and discuss:

Willful Creatures -- Amy Bender
Varieties of Disturbance – Lydia Davis
Drown -- Junot Diaz *
Love Medicine -- Louise Erdrich
You are Not a Stranger Here -- Adam Haslett
Jesus' Son – Denis Johnson
All Aunt Hagar's Children – Edward P. Jones
No One Belongs Here More Than You – Miranda July
Interpreter of Maladies -- Jhumpa Lahiri
Lust -- Susan Minot *
Like Life – Lorrie Moore
The Women of Brewster Place -- Gloria Naylor
House Fires -- Nancy Reisman *
Pastoralia – George Saunders *
Honey -- Elizabeth Tallent *
Our Story Begins -- Tobias Wolff

*Available on reserve only.

SYLLABUS

All readings from *The Story and Its Writer* unless otherwise noted. Readings are due on days next to which they appear on this syllabus.

The Tale

Week 1

Mon, Aug 18th -- Introduction to course.

Wed, Aug 20th -- "The Cask of Amontillado", Poe, p. 699; "The Tell Tale Heart", Poe, p. 705.

Fri, Aug 22nd – "The Importance of Single Effect in a Prose Tale", Edgar Allan Poe, p. 907.

Week 2

Aug 25th -- "Young Goodman Brown", Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 339.

Aug 27th -- "Bartleby the Scrivener", Herman Melville, p. 531.

Aug 29th -- "Blackness in Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown'", Herman Melville, p. 889.

The Realistic Story

Week 3

Sept 1st -- NO CLASS: Labor Day

Sept 3rd -- "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant, p 523.

Sept 5th -- "The Writer's Goal" by Guy de Maupassant, p.887.

Week 4

Sept 8th -- "Desirée's Baby", Kate Chopin, p. 154.

Sept 10th -- "The Story of an Hour", Kate Chopin, p. 158.

Sept 12th -- "How I Stumbled Upon Maupassant" Kate Chopin, p. 859.

Week 5

Sept 15th -- "The Death of Ivan Ilych", Leo Tolstoy, p.741

Sept 17th -- "The Darling", Anton Chekhov, p. 143

Sept 19th -- "Chekhov's Intent in 'The Darling'", p. 919.

Modernism

Week 6

Sept 24th -- "Araby", James Joyce, p. 400.

Sept 26th -- "The Dead", James Joyce, p. 404.

Sept 28th -- "Style and Form in Joyce's 'The Dead'", Frank O'Connor, p. 901.

Week 7

Sept 29th -- "A Clean Well-lighted Place", Ernest Hemingway, handout.

Oct 1st -- "Soldier's Home", Ernest Hemingway, handout.

Oct 3rd -- "The Fly", Katherine Mansfield, p. 506.

Week 8

Oct 6th -- "A Rose for Emily", William Faulkner, p. 286.

Oct 8th -- "Kew Gardens", Virginia Woolf, handout.

Oct 10th -- "Esther", Jean Toomer, handout.

Mid-Term Take Home Exam – due Oct 13th

Post-1940 Fiction

Week 9

Oct 13th -- "Good Country People"; "A Good Man is Hard to Find", Flannery O'Connor.

Oct 15th -- "Everything That Rises Must Converge", Flannery O'Connor

Oct 17th -- Reports on O'Connor Casebook.

Due Oct 24th: Copies of Contemporary Stories for Weeks 13 - 16.

Week 10

Oct 20th -- "The Swimmer", John Cheever, p. 133.

Oct 22th -- "Sonny's Blues", James Baldwin, p. 37.

Oct 24th -- "Autobiographical Notes", James Baldwin, p. 841

Week 11: *Magical Realism*

Oct 27th -- "The Circular Ruins", Jorge Luis Borges, p. 83.

Oct 29th -- "A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings" Gabriel Garcia Marquez, p. 307.

Oct 31st -- Reading on magical realism, handout.

1980 - Present

Week 12

Nov 3rd -- "Miles City, Montana", Alice Munro, p. 578.

Nov 5th -- "Cathedral", Raymond Carver, p. 88.

Nov 7th -- Carver Casebook, reports.

Week 13

Nov 10th, 12th, 14th -- Contemporary Stories.

Week 14

Nov 17, 19, 21 -- Contemporary Stories

Week 15

Nov 22nd - 30th -- NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Recess

Week 16

Dec 1st, 3rd, 5th -- Contemporary Stories.

Final Exam – 3pm – 5pm Monday, December 8th