

English 200-80: Literary Analysis

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Cedar Crest College

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Office hours: M 1-2, W 5:30-6:30, Th 2:30-3:30, and by appt.

Required Texts

Michael Meyer, *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature*, 8th edition

Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, 2nd edition (Bedford, 2004). Please purchase this edition, as we will be using critical materials from this book, in addition to reading James's novella.

A good style manual, such as *The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook*, Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual*, *The Bedford Handbook*, and/or the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* in its latest version (if you are planning to become an English major, you should invest in the *MLA Handbook*, which you can order through the bookstore or online).

Optional: if you are or plan to become an English major, please purchase a copy of William Harmon and Hugh Harmon, *A Handbook to Literature*, 11th ed. (Prentice Hall, 2008). This book will serve as a useful resource during your career as an English major. You can order this book through the bookstore or online.

Course Description

ENG 200 is a three-credit course that provides an introduction to literary genres, terminology, and theory, and emphasizes analytical strategies for reading and writing about literary texts. Satisfaction of the WRI1 requirement is a prerequisite for this class. Class discussions and papers will approach different genres--poetry, fiction, and drama--from various critical perspectives and provide practice in interpretation of literary texts and evaluation of the merits of various critical readings, whether those readings are generated in class or are found in our textbook, in other print sources, or on the Internet.

This course satisfies the college's WRI2 requirement primarily because the course provides an introduction to the process of writing papers for and conducting research in the discipline of literary studies. More importantly, however, you will learn why students of literature discuss and write about literature as they do, what questions are unique to literary studies, and where the discipline overlaps with other fields.

Course Objectives

As with all English courses offered by the department, ENG 200 seeks to help students acquire the ability to read and analyze critically works of literature, to acquire a general knowledge of the range of literature in English, and to expand their knowledge and appreciation of their own and other cultures and historical moments. ENG 200 has the following objectives that are specific to the course:

--to familiarize students with the process of literary analysis, including the use of specialized terminology and critical approaches that are a part of the discipline of literary studies and which facilitate the interpretation of literature

--to give students practice in expressing their own ideas about literature in clear, coherent prose

--to introduce students to the process of conducting literary research, including the use of specialized databases and electronic resources, and to help them to become more comfortable with

adding their own voice and perspective to ongoing literary conversations and debates

--to give students a sense of the range of issues involved in contemporary literary study, as well as to invite them to share in the pleasures of such study

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate 1) their knowledge of basic literary terms and features of particular literary genres, 2) their familiarity with a range of strategies for interpreting works of literature, 3) their competence in reading and analyzing works of literature, and in discussing and writing about works of literature, and 4) their ability to engage in research practices that are appropriate for the discipline of literary studies.

Assessment of Course Outcomes

The successfulness of ENG 200 in achieving its outcomes will be assessed, in part, by the ability of students to complete course assignments successfully. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of literary terminology and its application to an understanding of works of literature through class discussion of assigned reading and in their papers for the course, as well as by a quiz and a final exam. Students will demonstrate their awareness of the interpretive possibilities for literary works and their competence in formulating coherent analyses of these works through participation in class discussions, through informal written contributions to assignments placed on the eCollege companion site for this course, and in their papers. Students will demonstrate their ability to engage in appropriate research practices through their completion of a research assignment.

Course Requirements

1. *Responses to informal weekly writing assignments placed on course site at eCollege (15%).* Each week, you will find an informal writing assignment posted to the companion web site for our course. These assignments may take the form of reader responses to the assigned literature, brief analyses of a writer's use of a particular literary device, exploratory responses to a directed question, or, on occasion, participation in an online discussion with your classmates. Your responses to these assignments will be graded with a \surd , $\surd+$, or $\surd-$ on the basis of how well they achieve the following: 1) timeliness (all weekly assignments are due by 7:00 p.m. on the day of our class meeting, unless indicated otherwise in the assignment directions); 2) appropriate length for the assignment (most will require the equivalent of a page of writing); and 3) quality of response—writing should demonstrate thoughtfulness, rather than superficiality or "just going through the motions." I will not expect a polished response—indeed, the purpose of the informal writing assignments is to encourage you to explore ideas and concepts, and such explorations are often tentative and messy—but I will expect that you have given each assignment reasonable attention.

If you are unable to access or have any difficulty using the eCollege site features at any time, please let me know this at once. I will help to resolve any access issue you might have, but, in the absence of your effort to work with me to resolve problems as they occur, I will not excuse your non-completion of online assignments on the basis of a claim that you have not been able to access or use the eCollege site and/or features.

2. *Class participation (includes attendance and contributions to class discussion; 10%).* You may miss one class without affecting your participation grade; each class missed thereafter will drop your participation grade by 2/3 grade. For example, if you miss two classes and have earned a "B" in participation, you will receive a "C+." Please note that your presence in class alone does not constitute your participation in class: if you are present for every class but do not join in during class discussions, you haven't really added to our class and will therefore have earned a "B-." This class thrives upon your active involvement with it; hence, the incentive for you to participate.

3. *Quiz* on literary terminology during poetry unit (15%).
4. *Paper #1*: Explication of a poem (3 pages/750 words; 15%).
5. *Paper #2*: Comparison of two literary texts (4-5 pages/1000-1250 words; 15%).

You may choose to rewrite Papers #1 and/or #2 for a better grade. I will give you a date when revisions are due. "Revision" means substantial refocusing or development, not just the correction of grammatical/mechanical errors or spelling errors, or the modification of a few phrases. (If you only make minor corrections, the paper grade will not change.)

6. *Paper #3*: Literary research paper, building on your argument in either Paper #1 or Paper #2 (6-8 pages; 15%).
7. *Final exam* at end of semester (15%).

See course schedule for due dates for all assignments. I will give you more details about the papers and exams as we go along. For my policies concerning classroom protocol, late assignments, requests to make up exams, plagiarism, accommodations, and class cancellations, please see the handout "Dr. Fletcher's Policies" that accompanies this syllabus.

There will be opportunities for you to earn extra credit for this class by attending and responding to the work of our visiting writer, Mark Doty (reading at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 2nd), by attending the English program's trip to the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival on Friday, September 26th, or by attending another literary-related event here or elsewhere in the Lehigh Valley as I become aware of these. I will provide details as we go along.

Course Schedule

***All reading is found in Meyer, unless otherwise noted. Please note page numbers carefully, as I have often assigned selections from chapters, rather than entire chapters. Also, please bring your anthology with you to class every time. We will be looking at other selections in your book during class in addition to those assigned.

Aug 27 Introduction to course; discussion of "Reading Poetry Responsively" (569-572). "The Pleasure of Words" (572-588); "Suggestions for Approaching Poetry" (588-589); "Encountering Poetry . . . in Popular Culture" (591-599). We'll discuss these sections from your anthology in class; please review the sections on your own afterwards.

Don't forget to visit the eCollege companion site for our class and respond to the assignment for the week that you will find there. This assignment is due by 7:00 p.m. on September 3rd.

Sep 3 *Critical approaches for study: Formalism and Reader-Response*

Chopin, "The Story of an Hour" (15-16); "Critical Thinking" (1533-36); "Formalist Strategies" (1538-40); "Reader-Response Strategies" (1552-54). Also, Ch. 20: Word Choice, Word Order, and Tone (622-32); Ch. 21: Images (659-66); Ch. 24: Sounds (725-38); Ch. 25: Patterns of Rhythm (752-61). ECollege assignment as noted at the web site.

Sep 10 Ch. 22: Figures of Speech (681-90); Ch. 23: Symbol, Allegory, and Irony (702-12); Ch. 26: Poetic Forms (773-88--to epigram, 792-97--elegy to parody); Ch. 27: Open Form (800-17). And Ch. 28: Combining the Elements of Poetry: A Writing Process (818-28); "Explication" (1576). Discussion of Paper #1. ECollege assignment as noted at the web site.

- Sep 17 Quiz on literary terminology, first half of class
- Second half of class: Explication workshop
 Read: Ch. 19: Writing about Poetry (613-21); "A Sample Student Explication" (1576-80); and Fish, "On What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable" (handout).
 Bring: Two copies of your drafted paper with you to class to discuss with your classmates; one copy will be turned in to me. No ECollege assignment this week.
- Sep 24 *Critical approaches for study: Historical Criticism, Gender Criticism*
- "Historical Strategies" (1544-48); "Gender Strategies" (1548-50). Also, "Explorations and Formulas" (23-30); "A Comparison of Two Stories: 'A Secret Sorrow' and 'A Sorrowful Woman'" (30-44); Divakaruni, "Clothes" (533-41). ECollege assignment as noted at the web site.
- Paper #1: Explication due
- Oct 1 Ch. 3: Plot (69-78, 90-98) [includes Borroughs, *Tarzan*; Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily"]; Ch. 4: Character (117-122, 152-61) [includes Straight, "Mines"]; Ch. 6: Point of View (188-204) [includes Obejas, "We Came All the Way from Cuba So You Could Dress Like This?"]. ECollege assignment as noted at the web site.
- Oct 7 Ch. 5: Setting (162-64, 180-87) [includes Butler, "Christmas 1910"]; Ch. 8: Theme (262-66, 278-81) [includes Gilb, "Love in L.A."]; Ch. 9: Style, Tone, and Irony (283-99) [includes Carver, "Popular Mechanics" and Minot, "Lust"]. ECollege assignment as noted at the web site.
- Oct 15 *Critical approach for study: Mythological Criticism*
- "Mythological Strategies" (1550-52). Ch. 7: Symbolism (237-43, 258-61) [includes Colette, "The Hand" and Meinke, "The Cranes"]. ECollege assignment as noted at the web site.
- Discussion of Paper #2: comparing two literary texts. Read Ch. 2: Writing about Fiction (47-50); "Arguing about Literature" (1565-1567); "Comparison and Contrast" (1585-87); Ch. 10: Combining the Elements of Fiction: A Writing Process (302-315). ECollege assignment as noted at the web site.
- Oct 22 Workshop on comparison/contrast, first half of class
 Read: "Using Quotations" (1571-72); "Revising and Editing" (1573-74)
 Bring: Two copies of your draft of Paper #2 to discuss with your classmates and with me; one copy will be turned in to me.
- Discussion of Paper #3: Literary research paper and conducting research in the field of literary studies, second half of class
 Read: Ch. 47: The Literary Research Paper (1593-1600; skim rest of chapter); Sontag, "Against Interpretation" (handout); Dickstein, "On the Social Responsibility of the Critic" (handout). No ECollege assignment this week.
- Oct 29 James, *The Turn of the Screw*, ed. Beidler
- Critical approaches for study: Biographical and Psychological Criticism*
 In Meyer, "Biographical Strategies" (1540-42); "Psychological Strategies" (1542-44). In Beidler: "Introduction: Biographical and Historical Contexts" (3-19). ECollege assignment as noted at the

web site.

- Nov 5 In Beidler: Booth, "'He began to read to our hushed little circle': Are We Blessed or Cursed by Our Life with *The Turn of the Screw*?" (239-253) and Robbins, "'They don't much count, do they?': The Unfinished History of *The Turn of the Screw*" (333-346).

Paper #2: Comparison and contrast due (NOTE: this date is the final date for submitting Paper #2 for its initial grade; however, if you are thinking of using this paper as the basis for your research paper, try to submit it earlier so that I can be sure to return it to you by our November 12th class.) No ECollege assignment this week.

- Nov 12 Ch. 37: Reading Drama (997-1018) [Includes "Reading Drama Responsively"; Glaspell, "Trifles"; "Perspective on Trifles"; and "Elements of Drama"]; Ch. 41: Modern Drama (1200-55) [Includes "Realism"; "Naturalism"; "Theatrical Conventions"; Ibsen, *A Doll House*; "Perspective: Notes for *A Doll House*"]; Ch. 42: Critical Case Study: Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll House* (1256-66). ECollege assignment as noted at the web site.

Sign up for conferences (over the next week, I want to meet with each of you individually to discuss your plans for your final paper. In addition to your thoughts about how you might reshape (redirect or add depth to) Paper 1 or 2 in the context of secondary materials, you must bring with you to your conference the results of your research activities thus far: a list of Works Cited, prepared according to MLA format).

- Nov 19 Introduction to Contemporary Humor and Satire (1325-26); Allen, *Old Saybrook* (1326-43); Anderson, *The Reprimand* (1343-45); Ives, "*Moby-Dude, Or: The Three-Minute Whale*" (1346-48); Orloff, *Playwriting 101: The Rooftop Lesson* (1351-58). ECollege assignment as noted at the web site.

- Nov 26 Thanksgiving break: no class

- Dec 3 Literary research paper workshop (first half of class): bring two copies of your completed draft for our workshop activities

Final consideration: What is "literature," and what is it for?

Discussion (second half of class): "Reading Imaginative Literature" (1-7); "The Literary Canon: Diversity and Controversy" (1536-37); Hawkins, "Should We Study *King Kong* or *King Lear*?" (handout). Final eCollege assignment will be due by Monday, December 8th.

Final exam during final exam period, probably on Wednesday, December 10th. Your research paper is due on December 10th at 6:30 p.m.