

ENG 200 80 2: Literary Analysis

Cedar Crest College

Fall 2009

TTh 5:30-6:45 p.m.

ALH 214

Prof. Mary H. Snyder

220 Hartzel Hall

Office hours: MWTh 2:30-4 p.m.

Office phone: 610-437-4471, x4483

Email: mhsnyder@cedarcrest.edu

Merre727@aol.com

Texts

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*. New York: Anchor Books, 1998.

Meyer, Michael. *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature*. 8th Edition. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.

An adequate style manual, such as *The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook*, Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual*, *The Bedford Handbook*, or the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* in its latest version.

Handouts.

Course Description

ENG 200 is a three-credit course that provides an introduction to literary genres, basic terminology, and theory, emphasizing analytical strategies for reading and writing about literary texts. 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 the texts assigned for this course, in other print sources, or on the Internet.

This course satisfies the college's WRI-2 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 critically analyze 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 effectively. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of literary terminology and its application to an understanding of works of literature through class discussion of assigned reading, exams and writing assignments for the course. 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, on exams, and in their writing. Students will demonstrate their ability to engage in appropriate research practices through their completion of a research assignment.

Honor Philosophy: The Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy states that students shall uphold community standards for academic and social behavior to preserve a learning environment dedicated to personal and academic excellence. It is based upon the principle that, as a self-governing body, students have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support. Within this environment, individuals are empowered to make their own decisions, develop personal regard for the system under which they live, and achieve a sense of integrity and judgment that will guide them through life.

Classroom Protocol: Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations, and any other behaviors that might disrupt instruction or compromise students' access to their Cedar Crest College education.

A special note is appropriate here regarding the tone of our classroom discussions. An important strategy for producing more thoughtful writing is to approach ideas with an attitude of skepticism, whether those ideas come from readings, professors, or classmates. In order to better understand a way of fashioning the world, we must probe the basis for that point of view and examine what reasons and evidence may or may not support it. This is especially critical when it comes to our most closely held beliefs, beliefs that we might feel uncomfortable with placing them under too much scrutiny. As we engage in this process of inquiry, please remember that, while we should question and challenge each other's opinions, a sign of intellectual maturity is that we do so respectfully.

As we live in an age of increasing technological diversion, it becomes easy to forget the good manners of paying attention to those immediately around us. Please remember to shut cell phones off and refrain from checking your email or any wayward browsing of the Internet during class. ***Let me reiterate this: no cell phone, laptop, or Internet use – or any technological item use for that matter – during class, or I will ask you to leave.***

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's ideas or words and passing them off as your own without giving credit to the original source. Since a key goal of a college education is to develop and express your own ideas, plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offense.

It is dishonest to present oral or written work that is not entirely the student's own, except as may be approved by the instructor. Students must follow the requirements of the instructor regarding when and how much collaboration with other students is permitted. Any language taken from another source, whether individual words or entire paragraphs, must be placed in quotation marks and attributed to the source, following the citation format specified. Paraphrased material from an outside source must also be attributed. In addition, if the student is indebted to another source for a specific perspective or a line of argument—regardless of whether the student has directly quoted the source or not—that debt must be acknowledged.

In this class, the penalty for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty is a grade of F either on the individual assignment or for the entire course, to be determined by the instructor based upon the severity of the offense.

For an extended description of what constitutes plagiarism, please consult *Writing at Cedar Crest College: A Student's Guide*.

Attendance: Simply put, you are expected to attend and participate in each class meeting. Improving your college writing skills requires sustained practice in class discussions and exercises, and missing class means that you're missing activities that cannot easily be made up. There is no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. If you miss a class, you remain responsible for the material covered. Missing more than 1/4 of the class meetings (8 classes in a semester) will result in a final grade of F.

Class Cancellation: If Cedar Crest's campus is open, you should expect our class meetings to be held. If troublesome weather threatens to close the campus and thus cancel class, however, you should refer to Cedar Crest's Inclement Weather Hotline at 610-606-4629 for notification. If I cancel class independently of the campus closing, due to weather or for other reasons, I will send a class-wide email to your Cedar Crest account.

College Policy Regarding Learning Disabilities: Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with their professors during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact the Learning Center.

My Policy Regarding Late Assignments: I DO NOT accept late assignments. If you experience extenuating circumstances that prevent you from completing an assignment on time, you will need to have documentation of that circumstance and I reserve the right to make my decision. If it is an extenuating circumstance, you have 24 hours past the due date to hand in the assignment, both through email and a hard copy. Thus, no late assignments will be accepted unless proper documentation of an extenuating circumstance is provided and approved by me, and then only by getting the late assignment to me, both through email and hard copy, within 24 hours of the due date. A penalty for lateness will apply.

My Policy Regarding Email: I will not accept writing assignments over email, especially due to the new version of Microsoft. Also, I will only respond to emails that I deem necessary to do so. I recommend that you bring any concerns or questions to me before/after class or during my office hours.

Modern Language Association (MLA) format is required for formal writing assignments. The work must be typed (double-spaced) and stapled, with one-inch margins all around. Please use 12 point, Times New Roman font. Do not include a cover page or plastic cover; instead, place your name, the course information (my name and the course/section numbers), and the due date in the upper left corner of page one. A title for the work is required, and should be centered on page one. Subsequent pages must include your name and the page number at upper right. For the writing project, these requirements apply whether you choose to write an analytical paper or an original short story.

Please familiarize yourself with the MLA format as soon as possible. Any good college writing manual will contain what you need. If you write an analytical paper, you must use in-text citations rather than footnotes or endnotes; a Works Cited page must also be included in accordance with the MLA style.

Important Note: In writing a college level analytical paper, sources such as *Sparks Notes*, *Cliff Notes*, *gradesaver.com* and the like **are not acceptable**; articles in reputable literary journals (find them via EBSCOHost and other databases – library reference staff can help you), book-length works by literary scholars and biographers, and published interviews with writers and literary scholars relevant to the paper are appropriate sources. If at any time you have a question regarding the appropriateness of a source, please ask me. (And, stay away from Wikipedia!)

Grading

Your work will be evaluated as follows:

Informal writing assignments (Exercises) -	10%
Paper #1 (Explication of poem) -	10%
Paper #2 (Analysis of short story) -	15%
Paper #3 (Intertextual comparison) -	15%
Paper #4 (Literary research paper) -	20%
Facilitated discussion -	10%
Participation -	20%

Informal writing assignments (Exercises): These include any assignments that I assign in class or for out-of-class work. Such assignments are designed to enhance your understanding of the material, and also your performance on the papers. Think of

them as exercises, getting you ready for more challenging tasks. Most of these exercises are listed on the assignment schedule. I will provide more details in class.

Papers: Each assignment will have specific requirements. However, the following are my primary concerns when I grade literary analysis papers:

- **Close textual analysis** – Whenever you make a claim about a text, you must support it with textual evidence. In addition, your analysis should be precise. Avoid broad statements and arguments that could be applied to many texts. Furthermore, you should be attentive to the complexities and ambiguities of the text you’re analyzing.
- **Cohesion** – Your papers should not be collections of random ideas that barely relate to each other. I want your papers to progress logically and build toward conclusions. You should take your reader step by step through your argument.
- **Clarity** – Your reader should not have to read your paper twice to comprehend your argument, nor should she be confused about your position on the issue you’re discussing. I will always deduct points for grammatical errors that obscure your meaning!

All papers must be **typed, stapled, and double-spaced**.

Facilitated discussion: You will be assigned a reading or topic that you will introduce to the class and then begin a discussion with the class that you will lead.

Participation: You will be required to participate in class, and be respectful and open-minded with others, including myself. I will be calling on students during discussions, so be prepared. Your participation grade will reflect your group work as well, which I will be observing and monitoring. In addition, this grade will reflect attendance, which represents your contribution to the intellectual environment of the class, requiring you be here to contribute.

Assignment Schedule

Have assignments ready for specified day. I reserve the right to change the schedule should I feel it necessary for any reason, including both additions and/or subtractions. Also, further details will be given in class for all assignments listed; this is a general guide.

T	8/25:	Introductions, syllabus, poetry exercise
Th	8/27:	Reading Poetry, pp. 569-90 Writing about Poetry, pp. 613-15 In-class poem exercises
T	9/1:	Word Choice, Word Order, and Tone, pp. 622-32, 638 “We Real Cool” (Brooks) – Questions 1-3 (exercise), p. 649 Figures of Speech, pp. 681-91 “How Poetry Comes to Me” (Snyder) – Questions 1-3 (exercise), pp. 690-91 Symbol, Allegory, and Irony, pp. 702-12
Th	9/3:	Sounds, pp. 725-40 Patterns of Rhythm, pp. 752-61 Assigned poem with handout of instructions Poetic Forms, pp. 773-99 “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day” (Shakespeare) – Questions 1-4 (exercise), p. 779 <i>Introduction to critical approaches: formalism and reader response</i>
T	9/8:	Open Form, pp. 800-17 Group work in class
Th	9/10:	Finish group work Paper #1 – Explication of a Poem assignment handed out

- T 9/15: Paper #1 first draft due – peer review
- Th 9/17: Paper #1 final draft due
Reading Fiction, pp. 13-23 (“The Story of an Hour”)
Writing about Fiction, pp. 47-50
Introduction to critical approaches: biographical and gender criticism
- T 9/22: Elements of Fiction handout
“Killings” (p. 103) – Questions 1-9 (exercise), p. 115
“A Rose for Emily” – Questions 1-11 (exercise), pp. 96-7
- Th 9/24: “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” (handout)
Introduction to critical approach: historical criticism
- T 9/29: “Puppy” (handout)
“Child’s Play” (handout)
Introduction to critical approaches: psychological and Marxist criticism
Revisit gender criticism
- Th 10/1: “The Bear Came Over the Mountain” (handout)
Paper #2 – Short Story Analysis assignment handed out
Discuss
- T 10/6: Paper #2 first draft due – peer review
- Th 10/8: Paper #2 final draft due
Screenplay excerpt – discuss drama
- T 10/13: No class
- Th 10/15: Introduction to film adaptation (handout)
Applying gender criticism to the story and film
- T 10/20: Questions to ask of film adaptation, *Away from Her*
Paper #3 – Intertextual Comparison assignment handed out
- Th 10/22: *Away from Her* (take notes)
- T 10/27: *Away from Her* (take notes)
- Th 10/29: Discuss film adaptation and Paper #3 assignment
- T 11/3: Paper #3 first draft due/peer review
- Th 11/5: Paper #3 final draft due
Paper #4 – Literary Research Paper Assignment handed out
- T 11/10: *The Handmaid’s Tale* – pp. 1-140
The Literary Research Paper (Bedford Lit Book) – pp. 1593-1607
- Th 11/12: *The Handmaid’s Tale* – pp. 141-295
Discuss Paper #4 – Literary Research Paper Assignment
Discussion of various critical strategies than can be applied to The Handmaid’s Tale – including gender/feminist criticism, historical/new historicist criticism, biographical and psychological criticism, and cultural criticism

T 11/17: *The Handmaid's Tale* discussion
Th 11/19: *The Handmaid's Tale* discussion
T 11/24: Paper #4 – research
Th 11/26: No class
T 12/1: Paper #4 first draft due – roundtable discussion
Th 12/3: Paper #4 second draft due – peer review

The final draft of Paper #4 is due in my office (Hartzel 220) on Monday, December 7th, by 5:00 p.m.

Grades for this course will be issued according to the following percentages:

94-100%	A
90-93.99%	A-
87-89.99%	B+
84-86.99%	B
80-83.99%	B-
77-79.99%	C+
74-76.99%	C
70-73.99%	C-
67-69.99%	D+
64-66.99%	D
60-63.99%	D-
0-59.99%	F

Please note: A D- cannot be given as a final grade according to university policy. If your final quantitative grade falls in the D- range, I will make a decision as to your letter grade based on my judgment of your work and effort in the class.