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# ENG 1002-011-026-045: Composition and Literature

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*Lucinda Berry*

1002-011  
-026  
-045

## EN 1002G **Composition and Literature**

Instructor: Lucinda Berry [laberry@eiu.edu](mailto:laberry@eiu.edu) Coleman 3820 581-6309

Office Hours: ~~11:00-12:15~~ & 3:30 - 4:30 on Tuesday & Thursday  
12:30 - 1:45.

### **Course Description**

This course offers practice in analytical academic writing using poetry, short fiction and drama as the subject matter. Various terms and theories associated with each genre are examined. You are expected to read carefully and think deeply about what you have read. Read the work more than once; I will expect you to remember significant details, not just the basic plot. You will be expected to write well-reasoned, logically organized essays using sound rhetorical means to support an arguable thesis.

### **Course Policies and Grade Determination**

In percentage terms, your grade will be determined as follows:

Poetry essay	15%	Class participation/	
Fiction essay	20%	Miscellaneous	15%
Drama essay	20%	Quiz Average	15%
		Final Exam	15%

100-90% = A, 89-80% = B, 79-70% = C, below 70 = NC!

Specific requirements for the three major essays will be explained in class, so take notes. In general, I will be assessing your writing for:

- overall development in support of your thesis
- clarity of expression
- effective organization and use of transitions
- use of standard conventions for spelling and grammar

Deadlines will be given for each of these essays. **Late work will be marked down one full letter grade if it is received within a week of the original due date. If it is more than a week late, you will receive a maximum of half the points the assignment is worth.** If you have a documented excused absence due to illness, make-up work must be completed within 7 calendar days of your return to class. All assignments must be completed to receive credit for the course.

Homework, largely listed on this syllabus, must be typed. **It will not be accepted late.** Points will be given for class discussion. Homework plus discussion and group work in class make up the participation portion of your grade.

Quizzes requiring a short answer or short essay response will be given at the beginning of the class period. Don't be late, or you'll miss them. **There are no make-ups for the quizzes.** When determining your average, I will throw out the lowest two scores.

The final exam for this course is on

It will consist of a series of short essay questions. You will be allowed to use notes from class, so you'd better take them.

### Policy on Plagiarism

Random House Dictionary of the English Language defines plagiarism as “the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one’s own original work.” In this course, plagiarism will result in an F on the assignment. In cases of blatant and intentional plagiarism, you will receive an F for the course, and you will be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs, which is not a pleasant experience.

### Policy on Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 581-6583 as soon as possible.

### Textbooks

Charters, Ann, ed. The Story and Its Writer. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003.

Klaus, Carl H. et al., eds. Stages of Drama: Classical to Contemporary Theater, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003.

Meyer, Michael. Poetry: An Introduction. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2004.

Roberts, Edgar V. Writing About Literature. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.

**Course Schedule** (Subject to changes announced in class. If you are absent, consult one of your classmates.)

- Jan 9* Introduction to course/discussion /terminology/Ars Poetica
- Jan 11* Poetry: 1-19 Just browse through the illustrated pages and note anything of interest to discuss in class. Write out answers to questions 2, 3, 4 on page 19. Be able to discuss “Introduction to Poetry” 45
- Jan 16* Poetry: 23 - 44 Questions on 62-3.  
Answer the questions following “The Fish.” Also the following:  
“A Study of Reading Habits” 1. How does the rhyme scheme fit with the diction? 2. Explain how imagery is linked among the stanzas.  
“Mountain Graveyard” 1. Would this piece be classified as poetry if it were untitled? Explain. 2. Which line is most effective? Least effective? Explain why. “Nighttime Fires” 1. Discuss the use of the following: “all pajamas and running noses” “wolf whine of the siren” “fire engines that snaked like dragons” “falling cinders that covered the ground like snow”  
2. Write two or three paragraphs describing the father; two or three more describing the mother.
- Jan 18* “Bored” 88-9 “The Red Hat” 229-30 “Rite of Passage” 282-3 Answer questions after each poem. Write a brief essay on the poem you like best.
- Jan 23* Poetry: 69-79 Answer the Consideration for Critical Thinking and Writing questions after each poem. Know terminology in boldface .
- Jan 25* Poetry: 108 “Poem”, 238 “Fast Break”, 508-9 “A Boy Juggling a Soccer Ball” Write an essay about how these poems convey motion.

- Jan 30 466-70 Answer the questions, as usual.  
Feb 1 471- 6 Answer the questions yet again.
- Feb 6 424-9 "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" Answer questions.  
Feb 8 429-40 Critical analysis Be able to explain which essay was most helpful to you in understanding the poem
- Feb 13 DUE: Essay on Poetry (4 pages minimum) **Bring The Short Story and Its Writer to class!!!!**
- Feb 15 "Boys" 578-82 Short answers: How does entering the house function as a motif for the story? Is it important that the boys are twins? What role do women play in the story? Is this a typical American story? Is this a funny story?
- Feb 20 "The Widow's Son" 471-9 Write a few paragraphs explaining how it is like a fable and what the moral is. Short answers: What is your attitude toward the son? Toward the mother? Does it change over the course of either version of the story? Does its having two endings improve the literary merit of this story? Why or why not?
- Feb 22 "The Rocking Horse Winner" 481-92 Write a brief analysis of one of the characters in the story. Short answer: Why do the voices become even louder when some money becomes available? How accurate is the mother's definition of luck? What are the implications of Paul's confusing luck and lucre? Is Paul right when he claims to be lucky? In what sense was Paul a "poor devil" as Oscar says at the end?
- Feb 27 "Tiny, Smiling Daddy" 289-98 Write a couple of paragraphs about the main conflict in the story and explain which side you take on it and why. Short answer: What is revealed about Stew by the fact "the phone rang five times before he got up to answer it"? How would you describe the relationship between Marsh and Stew? Is it important to the story? Would this story work if it had a 1st person instead of a 3rd person narrator?
- Mar 1 "The Rich Brother" 806-19 Short answer: What details help provide the characterization of the two brothers? (It might help to keep a list as you read through the story.) What kind of gesture is Pete's giving Donald \$100? How does childhood behavior contribute to the conflict? What does Pete mean when he says "he hadn't even tried" in relationship to the passenger's story? What importance does the passenger have in the story?
- Mar 6 "The Red Convertible" 260-7 Write an essay explaining what this story shows about brotherhood. Short answer: Look closely at the first paragraph. Consider the language use here and what is significant about the details. Why does Lyman tell us about their wandering and meeting Susy? What associations does the red convertible carry? How do Lyman and Henry communicate throughout the story? Why is Lyman upset about the picture of himself and Henry?
- Mar 8 "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven" 9-14

Write an essay about the significance of the narrator's ethnic/racial background. Short answer: What is the point of the title? Why does the narrator purposely frighten the clerk?

*Spring Break*

*Mar 20* "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" 618-631  
For discussion: Is Connie a typical teenage girl? What are her two sides? What's going on with Arnold's "look"? What fairy tale elements are in the story? What religious elements are in the story?

*Mar 22* **DUE:** 5-page essay on one of the following topics. Your first step is to create an arguable thesis, and then you must support it with analysis and specific references to the story/stories. You should use at least three or four direct quotes in the course of your discussion. Limit your discussion to just a couple of the stories, otherwise, you may not have adequate development. This essay must be your own original analysis.

1. Discuss what the story tells us about the parent-child relationship
2. Discuss what the story tells us about the sibling relationship
3. Discuss what the story tells us about adolescent life in America.
4. Discuss how the images of women reflect or subvert the forces of traditional patriarchal society.

**For the rest of the semester, we will be using Stages of Drama. Bring it with you today!**

*Mar 27* Pygmalion 693-712 To the end of Act 2

*Mar 29* Pygmalion 712-733

Questions to consider about the play:

1. What role does social class play in the plot and characterization?
2. What are the similarities/differences among the male characters? among the female?
3. Which characters are most concerned about maintaining the status quo?
4. What does the play tell us about the use of language in society?
5. Is Higgins a good teacher? Is Eliza a good student?

*Apr 3* The Lesson 967-984

*Apr 5* The Lesson

Questions to consider about the play:

1. This play is classified as absurd, but in what way does it apply to a real life situation?
2. How would you describe the interaction between the pupil and the professor when they first meet?
3. When does their behavior start to change, and why?
4. What is the relationship between Maria and the professor at various points in the play?
5. How does knowing that the playwright lived under a totalitarian regime help us to understand the theme of the play?

*Apr 10* The Lesson/Oleanna 1449-1459 Read Act 1 only!

What three adjectives would you use to describe John? Carol? What do they do or say that cause you to make this assessment? In one sentence, what does John want during this act? In one sentence, what does Carol want? What do you guess was the secret she was about to reveal? What does the way this act ends show about John?

*Apr 12*

Oleanna 1459-1463 Read Act 2

How much time has passed between this act and Act I? How has Carol's attitude toward John changed? How has John's attitude toward the tenure committee changed? What does the way this act ends show about John?

*Apr 17*

Oleanna Finish the play

How much time has passed between this act and Act II? What does Carol's accusation have to do with the "term of art" as discussed in Act I? What does the way this act ends show about John?!

*Apr 19*

Discuss essay and final

*Apr 24*

The Importance of Being Earnest

*Apr 26*

The Importance of Being Earnest

Questions to consider about the play:

1. To what social class do the main characters belong? How can you tell?
2. What does all this deception by Jack and Algernon illustrate about their attitude toward their social class and the obligations?
3. Do any of the women characters exhibit this same attitude?
4. Look at the discussions between Algernon and Lane, Algernon and Jack and between Lady Bracknell and Jack in Act I. How do the attitudes expressed about marriage relate to what Higgins and Doolittle say about the same subject in *Pygmalion*?
5. Describe Gwendolen. Is she an obedient daughter, or an independent young woman?

DUE April 26: Drama essay

Your drama essay must discuss what Pygmalion, The Lesson, and Oleanna. tell us about:

1. the nature of language/communication
2. ego
3. power/the status quo
4. education/the teacher/student relationship
5. control/self-control

Make sure you have a clear thesis statement. If you have no thesis, you are likely to merely summarize the story or write a simple character analysis.

You may write about only two of the plays if you want.

Remember to use specific short quotes from the plays. Write the quotes out; don't just give page and line numbers. Be sure that your discussion is well developed. Think carefully about what you need to include in order to support your thesis

Archibald MacLeish (1892 - 1982)

Ars Poetica

1926

A poem should be palpable and mute  
As a globed fruit.

Dumb  
As old medallions to the thumb,

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone  
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown ---

A poem should be wordless  
As the flight of birds.

A poem should be motionless in time  
As the moon climbs,

Leaving, as the moon releases  
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,  
Memory by memory the mind ---

A poem should be motionless in time  
As the moon climbs.

A poem should be equal to:  
Not true.

For all the history of grief  
An empty doorway and a maple leaf.

For love  
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea ---

A poem should not mean  
But be.