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ENG 1002G-012: Composition and Literature

Michael Leddy
Eastern Illinois University

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ENGLISH 1002

COMPOSITION & LITERATURE

PROFESSOR MICHAEL LEDDY

Office: Coleman 3741, MWF 11:00–12:00, MW 2:30–3:00, and by appointment

581–6983 / LUDLOW1–6983 (office)
581–2428 / LUDLOW1–2428 (department)

E-mail: mleddy@eiu.edu
Mailbox: Coleman 3155
URL: <http://leddysclass.blogspot.com>

In a recent essay on teaching literature, critic and scholar Marjorie Perloff writes: “Why do we study literature anyway? To make the connections between the progress of human lives and their verbal representations. To thicken the plot.” We will thicken the plot by reading poems and stories that take us through a human lifetime and engage the deepest questions of living.

TEXTS

Fowler, *Little Brown Handbook*
Griffith, *Writing Essays about Literature*
Gwynn, *Poetry: A Pocket Anthology*
Jacobus, *Bedford Introduction to Drama*
Pickering, *Fiction 100*

You should have access to a hardcover collegiate (college-level) dictionary when reading.

REQUIREMENTS

The course will require dedicated daily work (reading, talking, quizzes), several pieces of writing, and a final examination.

QUIZZES

Why quizzes? Michael Bérubé, who teaches English at Penn State, gives a good explanation:

Most of my students do most of the reading. How do I know? Loath as I am to admit it, I have begun giving quizzes.

Teaching at the University of Chicago Law School, Barack Obama had the following sentence on his syllabus:

I know a quiz seems a bit demeaning, but everyone needs motivation once in awhile.

Quizzes are meant to be easy if you do the reading.

ATTENDANCE

Be here, on time, every time. Students who miss class will find it very difficult to do the work of the course.

LATE, MAKE-UP WORK

Missed quizzes and writing cannot be made up. Late writing is acceptable only if you have my approval in advance. If you have a properly verified absence for illness, emergency, or participation in an official University activity, I'll record a blank for a missed quiz, not a zero.

DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, contact the coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581–6583) as soon as possible.

OFFICE HOURS

Talking to professors is one of the smartest things a college student can do. Please, come in to ask questions and talk about your work in the class. If you feel uneasy about talking to your professors, read “How to talk to a professor,” available from the URL in the left column.

E-MAIL

Before you e-mail me, please read “How to e-mail a professor,” available from the URL in the left column.

One guideline that you don't need to follow: there's no need to add your class number and meeting time to your signature. (I'll know your name).

DECORUM

The atmosphere in our class should be serious—not somber or pretentious, but genuinely intellectual. No eating, talking, sleeping, wandering, texting, drumming, wearing headphones or hoods, or doing work for other classes. No private business. Phones and other devices should be turned off and kept out of sight. Please show proper respect to your fellow learners.

DISCUSSION

Consider what the writer Thomas Merton says about a teacher he admired:

Most of the time he asked questions. His questions were very good, and if you tried to answer them intelligently, you found yourself saying excellent things that you did not know you knew, and that you had not, in fact, known before. He had “educated” them from you by his question. His classes were literally “education”—they brought things out of you, they made your mind produce its own explicit ideas.

I like to ask questions that make people think. I also like it when people ask me such questions. If you say something and I then ask you a question, I’m doing so in the spirit of dialogue. You should be asking questions too, of me and of one another.

GRADING

Your grade will be based on your written work (30%), quizzes (40%), midterm and final examinations (10% each), and participation (10%).

Writing assignments receive letter grades. Missing writing receives a zero. Quizzes receive numerical grades. A quiz average of, say, 108% counts as 108 and not as an A (95); a quiz average of, say, 40% counts as 40 and not as an F (55). Participation in the course receives one of five grades: 100 (consistent, relevant, informed), 85 (frequent, relevant, informed), 75 (less frequent or less informed), 50 (occasional), 0 (little or no participation). “Informed” participation is simply participation that comes

from having done the reading. You may check on quizzes and participation at any time.

To calculate semester grades, I use numerical equivalents for letter grades:

A	95	A-	92	B+	87	B	85	B-	82	C+	77
C	75	C-	72	D+	67	D	65	D-	62	F	55

Sometimes when I grade an essay I’ll give a grade that falls between two grades—e.g., B+/A- (89.5).

For semester grades, 90 or above is an A; 80 or above, a B; 70 or above, a C; 60 or below, NC.

EWP

Please make sure that you understand the EWP requirements and fulfill them in a timely way. You can find more information about the EWP at <http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/>.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The English Department’s statement on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—“The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and the representation of them as one’s original work” (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course.

And my statement concerning academic

integrity:

Any breach of academic integrity—from cheating on a quiz to lifting words or ideas without attribution to submitting a wholly unoriginal essay—is a serious matter and will get you a serious penalty. The Student Standards office recommends an F for the course. You will also be required to take a course in ethics administered by Student Standards, whose staff will keep your misconduct on record and notify your other professors that one of their students has violated academic integrity.

You should be familiar with Eastern’s statement on academic integrity (posted in classrooms) and should ask if you have any questions about quoting from and/or documenting sources. But because the work of the course is to be an expression of your ideas in your words, questions of plagiarism and collusion should never arise. Do not “borrow” work or give your work to anyone (allowing someone else to make use of your work is also a breach of academic integrity and will also get you a serious penalty, up to and including an F for the course).

PROVISIONAL OUTLINE (BY WEEKS)

- 1: Introduction to the course
- 2: Margaret Atwood, "You Begin"
William Blake, "Infant Joy," "Infant Sorrow"
Delmore Schwartz, "'I Am Cherry Alive,' the Little Girl Sang"
- 3: Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Spring and Fall"
Dylan Thomas, "Fern Hill"
- 4: James Joyce, "Araby," "Eveline"
John Lennon and Paul McCartney, "She's Leaving Home"
Thomas Merton, excerpt from *The Seven Storey Mountain*
- 5: T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
Langston Hughes, "Theme for English B"
- 6: Katherine Mansfield, "Her First Ball"
Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"
Lorrie Moore, "You're Ugly Too"
Sir Walter Raleigh, "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd"
Brian Wilson and Tony Asher, "Caroline, No," "Wouldn't It Be Nice"
- 7: Raymond Carver, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love"
Gregory Corso, "Marriage"
Plato, excerpt from the *Symposium*
- 8: *Marty* (dir. Delbert Mann)
- 9: Midterm examination
Conferences
- 10: Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Frost at Midnight"
Marcel Proust, excerpt from *In Search of Lost Time*
William Butler Yeats, "The Wild Swans at Coole"
- 11: Robert Hayden, "Those Winter Sundays"
Lorine Niedecker, [Old Mother turns blue and from us]
Frank O'Hara, "The Day Lady Died," "A Step Away from Them"
Theodore Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz"
- 12: Ted Berrigan, "People Who Died"
Elizabeth Bishop, "One Art"
Sufjan Stevens, "Casimir Pulaski Day"
May Swenson, "Question"
- 13: Emily Dickinson, [I heard a Fly buzz – when I died]
Thomas Hardy, "I Look into My Glass"
Philip Larkin, "Aubade"
William Shakespeare, Sonnet 73
- 14: John Donne, Holy Sonnet 10
Wit (dir. Mike Nichols)
- 15: Last things