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ENG 1092-098

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Goals: 1092 is a writing course designed to improve skills in critical thinking and analytical expression based on the reading of literary texts. At the end of the course, you should be able to write even better than you did at the end of 1091/1001. The course is also designed to introduce three major genres of literature—poetry, drama, and fiction—and to enhance your enjoyment of them. And finally, I'm hoping you'll find the reading and writing useful on a personal level, since talking about literature often involves discussing our own values and identity. A couple of comments on reading and writing:

If the book we are reading does not wake us, as with a fist hammering on our skull, why then do we read? So that it shall make us happy? Good God, we should also be happy if we had no books, and such books as make us happy we could, if need be, write ourselves. But what we must have are those books which come upon us like ill fortune, and distress us deeply, like the death of one we love better than ourselves; like suicide. A book must be an ice-axe to break the sea frozen inside us. --Kafka

... at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously -- I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason ...
--Keats

Policies: English Department 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 representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) --has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of NC for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. . Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

Late/missing work: Hand in papers on time. If you're having problems, let me know; often even a brief conversation with make the paper easier to write. Any paper handed in on time may be rewritten IF it is handed in again within one week of its being returned. In-class writing assignments may not be made up except in cases of serious illness/personal emergency. Essays handed in more than a week late will not be accepted at all.

Attendance: Come to class prepared. You'll have more fun if you've done the reading, and I will notice if you haven't. Note that a portion of the grade is based on class participation and reading responses--
both of which require keeping up with the reading and being in class. Excessive absences will result in a grade of 0 for participation. Missing a peer editing session will result in a 5-point penalty on your paper grade. If, due to illness or personal emergency, you must miss class, let me know so I can make sure you’re not penalized.

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

This class is writing-centered. You may use an essay from this class in your electronic writing portfolio. For more information, visit the website: http://www.eiu.edu/~assess.

Requirements: midterm and final (20%)  
Three 2-4 pp. essays: (40%)  
One 6-8 pp. essay (20%)  
Brief in-class and at-home writing assignments and WebCT postings: 10%  
Group presentation, class participation and involvement 10%

Grades: Paper grades will be based on “Guidelines for Evaluating Writing Assignments in EIU’s English Department.” I plan to use number rather than letter grades; this will convert into your final grade as follows: 91-100=A; 81-90=B; 70-80=C; 65-69=D. Because I grade on a 100-point scale, missing assignments affect the grade tremendously. Please note that you must have a C average in order to receive credit for this course.

Responses: Each week, you’ll be required to write at least one response to a reading assignment on the Web CT bulletin board. Your response must be posted at least 90 minutes before the class for which the assignment is due. Plan on writing a thoughtful 1-2 paragraph response in the course of which you: 1. respond to the comments of at least one other student (unless you’re the first to post); 2. make some observation about what you’ve read and develop your idea; and 3. quote at some point from the reading, providing the page number in parentheses after your quotation. You might focus on a question from the list at the end of the syllabus, follow up on an issue raised by a previous posting, or make and develop an observation of your own. I will not grade individual responses, but will evaluate them at the end of the semester on the basis of thoughtfulness, precision, punctuality, and completeness.

If you fail to gain access to Web-CT for reasons beyond your control (this may happen especially during the first week or two): Bring a typed 1-page response to the appropriate class period. Same rules apply except that you won’t be able to comment on each other’s ideas. I will read and give credit for only those responses given to me in class. I will comment on these and return; make sure you save them as you’ll be asked to hand them all in at once at the end of the semester for evaluation.

Group presentation: In groups of 3-4, I’d like you to select, from those represented in the anthology, a contemporary poet or fiction-writer who particularly interests you. Your task will be to research that writer’s work and, as a group, lead a class on either a story from the anthology, or a group of 3-4 poems you select (and get to me ahead of time so that I can duplicate them for the class). Prepare 5-10 minutes of background information, then lead the class in a discussion of the work. Use whatever methods you’d like to make it interesting (let me know ahead of time if you need anything duplicated); feel free to assign group work, give quizzes, etc. For your final paper, use what you have learned to make some point about the author’s work.
Tentative Syllabus

I. Culture and identity
Mon Jan 9: Intro to course. Whitman, “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer” (642)
for Wed Jan 11: Hughes, The Big Sea, 3-51. Post self-introduction to WebCT.
Fri. Jan 13: Big Sea, 51-98. Post response to Hughes to WebCT.

Mon Jan 16: no class.
Wed Jan 18: in Meyer: Hughes, “The Weary Blues” (380); Keats, “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer” (226); Eady, “The Supremes” (670); Machan, “Hazel Tells LaVerne” (61)
Fri Jan 20: Maggarell, “Joy of Cooking” (134); Owen, “Dulce et Decorum Est” (102); Cummings, “next to of course god” 146. Post to WebCT M, W, or F

Mon Jan 23: Bring 3 copies of draft essay #1 to distribute. Petrarch sonnet (hand-out); Shakespeare, “My Mistress’ Eyes” (229)
Wed Jan 25: Workshop
Fri Jan 27: conferences

Mon Jan 30: conferences

II. Bodies
Wed Feb 1: Hand in essay #1. In Donley and Buckley: Hawthorne, “The Birthmark” (334-48)
Fri Feb 3: Poe, “Hop-Frog” (247-56); Carey, “the Quasimodo Complex” (27-52). Post to WebCT M or W

Mon Feb 6: Kafka, “Hunger-Artist” (204-12)
Wed 8: Carver, “Fat” (147-50). Post to WebCT M or W
Fri 10: Select one additional essay from Donley and Buckley.

Mon 13: Lorde, “Hanging Fire” (622), Olds, “Rite of Passage” (265) and “Poem for the Breasts” (127); Soto, “Behind Grandma’s House” (167), Plath, “Mirror” (126), Mirikatani, “Recipe” (144). Post to WebCT
Wed 15: Bring 3 copies of draft of essay #2 to distribute. Continue talking about poems.
Fri 17: no class

Mon 20: workshop
Wed 22: conferences
Fri 24: conferences.

Mon 27: Hand in essay #2. Midterm

III. Scapegoats
Wed March 1: in Pocket Anthology: Oedipus
Fri March 3: Oedipus. Post to WebCT W or F

Mon March 6: Bluest Eye
Wed March 8: Bluest Eye
Fri March 10: Bluest Eye. Post to WebCT M, W, or F
Spring break

Mon March 20: Bluest Eye
Wed 22: Shakespeare
Fri 24: Shakespeare. Post to WebCT M, W, or F

Mon 27: Shakespeare
Wed 29: Shakespeare. Post to WebCT M or W
Fri 31: Shakespeare. Bring 3 copies of essay #3 to exchange

Mon Ap 3: workshop
Wed Ap 6: conferences
Fri Ap 8: conferences

Mon Ap 10: work assigned and presented by Group 1
Wed Ap 12: Group 2
Fri Ap 14: Group 3. Post to WebCT M, W, or F

Mon Ap 17: Group 4
Wed Ap 19: Group 5
Fri Ap 21: Group 6 (if necessary). Post to WebCT M, W, or F

Mon Ap 24: bring papers to exchange
Wed Ap 26: workshop

There will be a noncumulative final exam during exam week.

Possible questions to address in WebCT postings for prose:
What is the main character like (physically, mentally, gestures, speech, values)?
What parallels or contrasts do you see between two characters?
Focus on a minor character and discuss why he/she’s there
How is the setting described? Is there a contrast set up between two settings?
Focus on a single conflict (within a character? Between characters? Between a character and the environment?)
Is there an authorial mouthpiece? How do you know? What’s she/he saying?
What is the narrator’s relation to the action? Why is he/she telling the story? How is his/her values shaping what he/she notices?
Significance of title?
How does a character change during the course of the work?
Is there a crucial moment or turning point when someone makes a big mistake or does something right?
Is there an object or moment that works symbolically, or a pattern of imagery or a key word that recurs?
Look up one allusion and explain its significance.
To what extent does the ending tie up loose ends?
Is the ending “happy?” For whom? Who gets left out?
How does the work depict gender, race, sexuality, or class?
To what extent does the work as a whole reinforce values you share or don’t share?
For poems: FIRST: read in terms of punctuation, not line breaks. Then look up words you don’t know. Take into account ALL the word’s listed meanings before deciding how it works in context. Think about the poem in terms of its sentences, assuming they work together to make sense. Then think about: Who is the speaker? To whom is the speaker speaking (if anyone in particular)? In what situation or context? Any hints about what’s happened immediately before the poem’s opening? At this point try paraphrasing the poem for yourself (translate it into ordinary speech).

THEN get more analytical about how it’s put together: What is the speaker’s attitude toward the audience and topic (tone)? Any irony or sarcasm? Is there a gap between what the speaker is saying and what you sense the poet wants to get across? Does the poem fall into parts? How do they build on or contrast with each other? Does the poem follow a particular structure (sonnet, for example)? Does it have a regular rhyme scheme or rhythmic pattern? How has the poet used these things to reinforce the poem’s meaning/impact? Pick a single word that seems significant, look it up in the dictionary, and discuss its significance in terms of both denotation and connotations. Do the speaker’s thoughts change during the course of the poem? What seems to be the underlying theme of the poem? Discuss a pattern of images (lots of disease references? Flowers?) Discuss the poet’s use of figurative language (metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, apostrophe) Is there a particularly difficult phrase or line? What questions do you have about it, and what ideas do you have about what it means?

WHEN I heard the learn’d astronomer;
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me;
When I was shown the charts and the diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them;
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wandered off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Looked up in perfect silence at the stars.