

Spring 1-15-2010

# ENG 2011G-003: Literature, the Self and the World: Fiction

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**English 2011-003**  
**Literature, the Self, and the World**  
 Spring 2010

Dr. Francine McGregor  
 Coleman 3355  
 581-6305

[fmcgregor@eiu.edu](mailto:fmcgregor@eiu.edu) (M-F 8am – 3pm)

**Office Hours:** When my door is open, and M/W/F 11-12:45, and by appointment

**About the Course**

In this course, we'll be exploring the rich world of fiction to ask how and why this art form might be relevant to our daily lives. Does it send us inward to encourage reflection on and understanding of ourselves, outward to a more nuanced understanding of worlds other than our own, both, neither? What do we ask of literature and what does it ask of us? To address these questions, we'll be reading novels and short fiction (the latter of your own choosing) to consider how the texts situate us in relation to ourselves and to the world, and we'll be developing a vocabulary with which to discuss the texts and our responses to them.

**Required Texts:**

Alvarez, *In the Time of the Butterflies*  
 Carter, *Nights at the Circus*  
 Cassill and Oates, *Norton Anthology of Contemporary Fiction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)  
 Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*  
 Jones, *Leaving Atlanta, 2003*  
 Palahniuk, *Fight Club*  
 Tyler, *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*  
 Willett, *Jenny and the Jaws of Life*

**Course Requirements/ Evaluation**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1) midterm exam   | 10% |
| 2) final exam   | 15% |
| 3) 3 papers (15% each)  | 45% |
| 4) class participation (may include quizzes and short writings) | 20% |
| 5) leading one class discussion                                 | 10% |

\* You'll also be required to sign up for the Literary Studies Podcast

## **Policies**

- 1) The reading load for this course is heavy and the material challenging, so make sure you allow yourself plenty of time to complete the assigned reading. Keep in mind that if you come to class unprepared, you'll lose participation credit. On the less punitive side, class is simply a lot more fun and interesting when you know what everyone else is talking about and have ideas of your own to contribute.
- 2) Much of what you will learn in this course will come from ideas generated in class discussion and so your presence in, and engagement with, the class are essential. Missing more than four classes will lower your grade.
- 3) Assignments must be handed in within the first five minutes of class on the day they are due unless we have worked out a prior arrangement. Work handed in after that time will lose half a letter grade for each calendar day it is late. No work will be accepted a week after the deadline.
- 4) You must successfully complete all work for the course in order to receive a passing grade.

## **Plagiarism Policy**

The following is the English department's statement concerning 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 a grade of 'F' for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

While I assume I'll have no need to impose penalties for plagiarism, the ones I consider appropriate are that the student fail the course and be reported to the Judicial Affairs Office. If at any point in your writing for this course (or for another, if you like) you're uncertain about whether you're using sources appropriately, please come and talk to me.

## **Students with Disabilities**

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

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## Syllabus: Month One

Week 1: (Jan 11-15)

Tyler, *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*, chapters 1-4

Week 2: (Jan 18-22)

No class Mon 18<sup>th</sup> - King's Birthday

Tyler, chapters 5-8

Week 3: (Jan 25-29)

Tyler, chapters 9-10

Writing workshop

**Optional draft of paper 1 is due**

Week 4: (Feb 1-5)

55 Word Short Stories (handout)

Balwin, "Sonny's Blues" (short story – handout)

**First Paper is due**