

Fall 8-15-2010

ENG 2205-002: Introduction to Literary Studies

Angela Vietto
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2010



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vietto, Angela, "ENG 2205-002: Introduction to Literary Studies" (2010). *Fall 2010*. 73.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2010/73

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2010 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2010 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

English 2205 / Fall 2010

Introduction to Literary Studies

Prof. Angela Vietto
 arvietto@eiu.com
 217-549-3203 (cell)
<http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~arvietto>

Office:
 3345 Coleman Hall
 Office hours: M 3-4:30, T 1:30-2:30,
 R 11-12, and by appointment

Why This Course?

I'd be willing to bet a lot of money that you've studied literature before. Most high schools use literature in English and other language classes, and Eastern's first-year writing classes include a required course called "Literature and Composition." Why, then, does the English Department require English majors to take "Introduction to Literary Studies"?

Because the study of literature in the English major is not just more of what you've already had in high school or as a freshman. Literary study in high school or in the general education program should enrich people's lives in many ways, but what it generally does not do, and rarely even tries to do, is to make people professional scholars of literature, people who have specialized knowledge about how to read literary works and how to produce new knowledge about literary works.

The goal of this course, then, is to introduce you to the most important skills required for literary studies and to give you practice in those skills. Specifically, this course will focus on the following skills:

- a set of interpretive practices that go by the name "close reading"
- the ability to interpret literary texts in historical and cultural context
- the ability to situate your own interpretation of a literary text as part of a larger conversation

None of these are skills you will be "done" learning this semester, but English 2205 should help you understand the standards and expectations that other instructors will bring to the classes you take in the major in regard to these skills.

Required Texts (from TRS)

Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland*. 1798.

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*. 1818

Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth*. 1905.

The MLA Handbook For Writers of Research Papers, 7th edition. 2009

Information for Students with Disabilities

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

Coordination with Other Sections

Our class will be coordinated this semester with the two other sections of English 2205 being offered by Professors Randall Beebe and Christopher Hanlon. Professors Beebe, Hanlon, and I have spent many hours consulting one another and planning for this semester because we regard this course as the one with the most potential to determine your success as an English major. Although Professors Beebe, Hanlon, and I will lead our courses in somewhat different ways, we share a set of foundational attitudes about professional literary study, and these attitudes are the basis for this syllabus.

Plenary Sessions: Five times over the course of the semester, all three sections will meet together in Doudna Lecture Hall (see dates on schedule).

Blogging: As one of the requirements of the course, you will make postings on a class blog in response to our readings (see p. 3 for more detail). In addition, on certain days, your job will be to look at the blog postings made by either Dr. Hanlon's or Dr. Beebe's students and respond to them. On other days, the students in the other sections will be responding to your comments.

The Close Reading Cooperative: In addition to our required reading, we will have some required viewing. The Close Reading Cooperative is a video podcast in literary studies produced here at Eastern in order to help you stay in practice with some of the nuts-and-bolts skills we'll build this semester. You should subscribe to the podcast and expect that I will hold you responsible for knowing the material covered in these video lessons. Instructions for subscribing to the Close Reading Cooperative appear on the English Department's website: <http://www.eiu.edu/~english/>

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 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 assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

My Statement on Academic Honesty

According to surveys, cheating is rampant among college students. However, it is not a light matter. My current policy is to fail any student who cheats or plagiarizes in any of my courses. I might not seem like that type, but trust me, I am. In addition, those who wish to teach high school should be aware that every one of your instructors in the English Department has the ability to recommend that you not be permitted to student teach. For any student who plagiarizes or otherwise cheats, I will go on record with such a recommendation, and I will explain my reasons in detail.

Grade Breakdown

Projects	Distribution	Final Grade	
Quizzes	10%	93-100	A
Blogging/Other Homework	20%	85-92	B
Participation	15%	77-84	C
Essay 1	20%	69-76	D
Essay 2	20%	68 and below	F
Final Exam	15%		

Quizzes: In this class, quizzes will be given simply to ensure that you are reading, and to give appropriate credit for doing this most basic work of any literature course. *Please do not interpret the reading quizzes as a suggestion that knowing the literal content is the end goal of reading. The point of the quizzes is to ensure, instead, that you at least have some basis to make a beginning as a close reader or interpreter of the text at hand.*

Blogging: On our class blog, which you can find at <<http://e2205.wordpress.com/>>, you will practice close reading. Blog postings will be required prior to most class sessions. In most cases, your postings will be due by 1 hour before class begins, but on certain days you will be required to post your responses earlier so that the students in Dr. Beebe's and Dr. Hanlon's classes can read and comment on what you write.

Other Homework: Especially early in the semester, I will give you the opportunity to practice your close reading skills with an audience of just one—me. I'll give you detailed feedback on these homework assignments to help you develop your skills. By mid-semester and later, my goal will be to be able to reduce or eliminate these assignments and have most of your written homework be done on the blog, where you can share ideas with your peers.

Participation: Plenty of research demonstrates that you actually learn more and more deeply when you engage in discussion of the material you are learning. This is not to say that listening is not an important part of participation. Opening your mouth to speak is only one part of participation. The formula for participation actually looks something like this:

Careful preparation for class + careful thinking + listening carefully to the ongoing conversation =
ability to say something meaningful

Ability to say something meaningful + willingness to put yourself on the line =
an actual contribution to discussion

Regular, meaningful contributions to class – (absences + lateness + missed conferences) =
final participation grade

Essays: The essays together are the single largest component of your final grade (40%). Detailed assignments will be provided well in advance. Planning, drafting, and revising will be crucial to your success. If you are serious about doing well in the course, do not wait to begin essays at the last moment.

Final Exam: The final exam will be an opportunity to demonstrate the skills you have acquired. You will be given new texts to read and analyze during the exam period. Your preparation for the final exam begins today.

Attendance

I expect you will come to every scheduled class session. However, illness sometimes interferes. When you are seriously ill or have symptoms of a contagious illness like H1N1, you should not come to class. The university, quite reasonably, requires that faculty allow students to make up work they miss when they have legitimate reasons, like illness, to miss class.

When you are absent, it is *your* responsibility to find out what you missed and make arrangements to make up that work.

In this class, all work that was due on a day you missed class is due on the day you return to class, and any assignments that were made while you were absent are due at the latest one class session after you return to class.

What about serious illness? If you have an illness that requires you to miss multiple class sessions, you *must* get in touch with me by phone as soon as you know you will miss more than one class session to make a plan for keeping up with the course. If you are so ill that you can not speak on the phone, have someone else call me for you.

Is there a maximum number of days I can miss and still pass the class? For this section of this class, there is no policy that says that after a certain number of absences, you automatically fail. If you miss a lot of class, however, you are at risk of failing the course due to failing to learn enough to pass it.

Late Work

Because I do not wish to encourage anyone to skip class when it isn't necessary, during the first 14 weeks of the semester I offer a one-day grace period (one class session) to anyone who finds they need an extra day to complete an assignment. After one class session, unless you have made other arrangements with me, the assignment will no longer be accepted and will be recorded as a 0.

Communicating with Me

When you want to speak with me outside class time, your first choice should be office hours.

If my office hours don't work for you or you need to speak with me sooner than that, your next choice should be a phone call. I've given you my cell number, and I don't mind receiving phone calls or, occasionally, text messages. (If you text and it would be easier to respond with a phone call, I will likely suggest you call me.)

If you have a true emergency and can't communicate any way other than email, then go ahead and email me. But please note that when you send a non-emergency request via email, I reserve the right to ignore it or to reply with a stock response such as "That would be a great question to discuss in class or in my office." I'll be happy to explain the rationale behind this policy.

Schedule

Because I will be missing some days at the beginning of the semester, our reading schedule may have to be adjusted slightly. I will distribute a slightly revised schedule when I return to campus.

<i>Introduction to Close Reading</i>	T Aug 24	Introduction to the course, with fabulous guest instructor and medieval literature specialist, Dr. McGregor
	R Aug 26	Poetry, TBA
	T Aug 31	Poetry, TBA
	R Sept 2	First plenary session, Doudna Lecture Hall Emily Dickinson poems
	T Sept 7	Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Wakefield" and "The Birth-Mark." Blog response due by Monday, Sept. 6, 8 a.m.
<i>Psychoanalytic Reading</i>	R Sept 9	Sigmund Freud, "The Method of Dream Interpretation"
	T Sept 14	Lacan, "The Mirror-Stage"
	R Sept 16	Second plenary, Doudna Lecture Hall Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown"
<i>Contextualized Reading: History</i>	T Sept 21	Frederic Jameson, from <i>The Political Unconscious</i>
	R Sept 23	Edith Wharton, <i>The House of Mirth</i> , pp. 25-107
	T Sept 28	Wharton, <i>The House of Mirth</i> , pp. 107-189
	R Sept 30	Third Plenary, Doudna Lecture Hall Wharton, <i>The House of Mirth</i> , pp. 189-284
	T Oct 5	Wharton, <i>The House of Mirth</i> , pp. 284-305
	R Oct 7	Draft of essay 1 due. Writing workshop.
<i>Contextualized Reading: Biography and Authority</i>	T Oct 12	Final version of Essay 1 due. Intro to <i>Wieland</i> .
	R Oct 14	TBA
	T Oct 19	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i> , pp. 3-69
	R Oct 21	Brown, <i>Wieland</i> , pp. 70-136
	T Oct 26	Brown, <i>Wieland</i> , pp. 137-197
	R Oct 28	Fourth Plenary, Doudna Lecture Hall Brown, <i>Wieland</i> , pp. 198-278
<i>Contextualized Reading: Genre</i>	T Nov 2	From Ann Williams, <i>The Art of Darkness</i>
	R Nov 4	Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 19-71
	T Nov 9	Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 71-128
	R Nov 11	Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 128-159
	T Nov 16	Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 159-189
<i>Joining the Conversation</i>	R Nov 18	TBA—Activities for Essay 2
	Thanksgiving Break	
	T Nov 30	TBA—Activities for Essay 2
	R Dec 2	TBA—Activities for Essay 2
	T Dec 7	TBA—Activities for Essay 2
	R Dec 9	Final Version of Essay 2 due
<i>Final Exam</i>	Wed., Dec. 15 8-10:00 a.m.	Final Exam