ENG 2205-003: Introduction to Literary Studies

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Course Information:

Why do we read literature, and what happens when we read it? How do we read it, and what questions can or should arise when we think about what we read? This course focuses on the questions that we might ask about literature—and, by extension, literary study—and on why these questions are worth asking. Our inquiries will be a start toward figuring out the value of literature and why we involve ourselves in this activity called “literary study.”

Required Texts:

Adams, Critical Theory Since Plato, revised or 2/e
Richter, Falling into Theory, 2/e
Conarroe, Six American Poets
Shelley, Frankenstein
Wharton, The House of Mirth
Du Bois. The Souls of Black Folk
Holman and Harmon, A Handbook to Literature, 6/e
Baker and Huling, A Research Guide for Undergraduate Students, 4/e

- Recommended: a notebook, earmarked for this class, for use both in class and as a reading journal. I strongly encourage you to keep a reading journal throughout the semester.

Course Requirements:

1. Seven one-page, typed, single-spaced “Response” papers focusing on your reading. In each Response you will write about, explore, what you see as key in the readings up to that point. Your purpose here is not to generalize, but to draw out one or two specific ideas found in the critical reading that particularly interest you, and then to reflect on the importance of these ideas. Due dates are listed on the Schedule of Meetings. More on format and medium later.

2. A longer essay, due at the end of the semester, focusing upon your studies this semester and your critical inquiries.

3. A collaborative research and interpretive project and presentation, focusing on W.E.B. Du Bois’s The Souls of Black Folk.

4. Midterm and final exams

5. Sustained, engaged participation throughout the semester. This means more than simply being here: you must have the reading finished on time, turn in assignments on time, and contribute thoughtfully and often to class discussion.

6. Contributions to an electronic discussion group. You’ll need an e-mail account, if you don’t already have one. More information on what’s expected will come later.
Grades, Evaluation, and Attendance:

1. The following percentages make up the total of the final grade: Responses=20%; Final essay=20%; Collaborative project=20%; Midterm exam=15%; Final exam=20%; Contributions to electronic discussion group = 5%.
2. You are expected to complete all, not just part, of the semester's study and work.
3. If you have more than two unexcused absences, your final grade for the course will drop by one (1) full grade point.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, then 1) please inform me as soon as possible, and 2) contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS
(all changes will be announced in class)

CT = Critical Theory Since Plato
FT = Falling into Theory
HL = A Handbook to Literature
SAP = Six American Poets

week 1
- 8/21: Introductions; read Richter, “Introduction” (FT 1-13)
- 8/23: Arnold, “Dover Beach”; Williams, from Spring and All (“The Red Wheel Barrow”) (SAP 165); Graff, “Disliking Books at an Early Age” (FT 40-48)

week 2
- 8/28: Plato, Ion (CT 12-18); Dickinson, #435 (SAP 84-85)
- 8/30: Aristotle, Poetics (CT 50-55); Frost, “Mending Wall” (SAP 197-99)
  * Response #1 due.

week 3
- 9/4: Richter, “Why We Read” (FT 15-30); Stevens, “Anecdote of the Jar” (SAP 122) and “The Reader” (SAP 132)

week 4
- 9/13: Hughes, “Mother to Son” (SAP 247), “The Weary Blues” (SAP 233-34), “Harlem” (SAP 257), and “Juke Box Love Song” (SAP 255)
  * Response #2 due

week 5
- 9/18: Visit from EIU Career Services
- 9/20: Shelley, Frankenstein (3-82) (through Chapter VIII)
  * Response #3 due

week 6
- 9/25: Robinson, “Treason Our Text” (FT 152-66)
- 9/27: Frankenstein (83-124) (Chapters IX-XVI)
Week 7
- 10/2: Fish, “How to Recognize a Poem When You See One” (FT 267-78)
- 10/5: Frankenstein (124-85) (Chapters XVII-XXIV)
  - Response #4 due.

Week 8
- 10/9: Dasenbrock, “Do We Write the Text We Read?” (FT 278-89)
- 10/11: midterm exam

Week 9
- 10/16: Richter, “How We Read” (FT 235-52); Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (CT 761-64)
- 10/18: Wimsatt and Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy” (CT 945-51); Barthes, “The Death of the Author” (FT 253-57)
  - Response #5 due.

Week 10
- 10/23: Wharton, The House of Mirth
  - Response #6 due.

Week 11
- 10/30: The House of Mirth; Derrida, excerpt from “Structure, Sign, and Play ...” (CT 959-63)
  - Response #7 due.

Week 12
- 11/8: continued preparation for research and presentations

Week 13
- 11/13 & 15: Student research and presentations
  - Thanksgiving Break 11/19-23

Week 14
- 11/27 & 11/29: Student research and presentations

Week 15
- 12/4: Bérubé, “Aesthetics and the Literal Imagination” (FT 390-97); Plato, Republic, from Books II & X (CT 18-38) & from Cratylus (CT 38-48)
- 12/6: continued discussion and review
  - ESSAY DUE

Final Exam: