Eng 2205-001: Introduction to Literary Studies

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English 2205-001  
Introduction to Literary Studies  
Spring 2009

Dr. Francine McGregor  
3355 Coleman Hall  
581-6305

Office Hours: When my door is open, and M/W/F 10-11:45, and by appointment.

About the Course

In this course we'll consider some of the questions most fundamental to studying literature: What is literature, and why do we consider it worth reading? What questions do we ask as we read, and in what ways do those questions effect how we read? What, in short, is literary criticism, and where does our practice of it place us in relation to the texts we study? As we pursue these questions, we'll also be compiling a working vocabulary with which to discuss literature and exploring several of the most influential theoretical approaches informing contemporary literary criticism. The goals of the course are to introduce you to some of the practices fundamental to literary study while providing a forum in which you can experiment with, reflect on, and further develop your own critical perspectives.

Required Texts:

Carter, Wise Children (WC)  
Chaucer, The Wife of Bath, (WoB)  
Gibaldi, The MLA Handbook, 6th/ed (MLA)  
Graff, They Say/I Say (TS)  
Palahniuk, Fight Club (FC)  
Richter, Falling Into Theory 2nd/ed (FT)

Course Requirements/ Evaluation

1) Midterm exam 15%  
2) Final exam 15%  
3) 2 response papers (10% each) 20%  
4) Final paper (6-8 pages) 20%  
5) Class participation (may include short writings and quizzes) 30%
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 three classes will reduce your final 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.
Syllabus
(Changes will certainly come – I'll keep you posted)

Week 1: (Jan 12-16)
Richter, “Introduction” (FT 1-11)
Graff, “Disliking Books at an Early Age” (FT 41-48)
Selected poems (handout)

Week 2: (Jan 19-23)
Mon 1st King’s Birthday – no classes
Chaucer, *Wife of Bath’s Prologue*

Week 3: (Jan 26-30)
Chaucer, *Wife of Bath’s Tale*
Beidler, “A Critical History[…]” (WoB 89-114)

Week 4: (Feb 2-6)
Murfin, “The New Historicism and the *Wife of Bath*” (WoB 115-32)
Patterson, ”’Experience woot well it is noght so”: Marriage and the Pursuit of Happiness in the *Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale*’ (WoB 133-54)

Week 5: (Feb 9-13)
Fri 13th Lincoln’s Birthday – no classes
Murfin, “Marxist Criticism and the *Wife of Bath*” (WoB 155-70)
Finke, ”’All is for to selle”: Breeding Capital in the *Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale*’ (WoB 171-88)

Week 6: (Feb 16-20)
Murfin, “Psychoanalytic Criticism and the *Wife of Bath*” (WoB 189-204)
Fradenburg, ”’Fulfild of fairye”: The Social Meaning of Fantasy in the *Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale*” (WoB 205-220)

Week 7: (Feb 23-27)
Murfin, “Deconstruction and the *Wife of Bath*” (221-34)
Leicester, Jr., ”’My bed was ful of verray blood”: Subject, Dream, and Rape in the *Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale*” (WoB 234-54)

Week 8: (March 2-6)
Murfin, “Feminist Criticism and the *Wife of Bath*” (WoB 255-72)
Hansen, ”’Of his love daungerous to me”: Liberation, Subversion, and Domestic Violence in the *Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale*” (WoB 273-89)

Week 9: (March 9-13)
Review
Midterm Exam
Week 10: (March 16-20)
Spring Break – no classes

Week 11: (March 23-27)
Carter, *Wise Children*

Week 12: (March 30-April 3)
Carter, *Wise Children*

Week 13: (April 6-10)
Palahniuk, *Fight Club*

Week 14: (April 13-17)
Richter, “Why We Read” (*FT* 15-30)
Richter, “What We Read” (*FT* 121-136)
**Optional draft of Paper 2 due** (Friday)

Week 15: (April 20-24)
Tompkins, “Masterpiece Theater” (*FT* 137-47)
**Final paper is due**

Week 16: (April 27-May 1)
Fish, “How to Recognize a Poem When You See One” (*FT* 268-78)
Dasenbrock, “Do We Write the Text We Read?” (*FT* 278-89)

**Final Exam:**