Fall 8-15-2000

ENG 2205-003: Introduction to Literary Studies

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Course Description: This course explores the delight and instruction inherent in the active, engaged reading of a literary text. We'll begin with a review of "close reading" skills derived from the New Criticism (though already a half-century old), then examine some classical and canonical guideposts in literary theory, which is, simply, to ask why do we read literature and what are the ways in which we might respond to it? We'll read, slowly and carefully, three novels—Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Heart of Darkness and Invisible Man—a variety of poems and Shakespeare's The Tempest. With the help of recent theoretical developments, we'll explore a number of strategies for making sense of what we are reading. Among those forays, we'll encounter psychoanalytical, structuralist, poststructuralist, feminist, Marxist, New Historicist, deconstructionist and cultural criticism.

Course Format: I'll expect thorough preparation, a willingness to engage in discussion and disputes, and openness to unfamiliar ways of reflecting on the literary adventure.

Course Prerequisite: All students must have completed ENG 1002, 1092 or the equivalent.

Requirements: Participation (20%), several short essays (approximately ten pages altogether, 20%), a longer critical study (8-10 pages, 20%) and midterm (20%) and final (20%) essay examinations. (Group 1)

Texts:

Hayden Carruth, ed., The Voice That Is Great Within Us
Joel Canarroe, ed., Six American Poets: An Anthology
Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness: A Case Study
Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man
D. Richter, Falling into Theory
Shakespeare, The Tempest, ed. By Frye
Mark Twain, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: A Case Study
William Carlos Williams, Pictures from Bruegel
General Policies:

Grading Standards: I shall follow the EIU English Department Guidelines, distributed in class. In all cases, I shall use a plus and minus system to distinguish, say, a high B from a low one.

Attendance: I do take roll, and I evaluate attendance only indirectly in the context of your participation in the course.

Conferences: These are at your request unless I ask to see you. Please ask for help as soon as you feel you need it; please don’t wait until the last couple of weeks of class.

Submission of work: Essays should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the paper only, titled and indicate the following: name, date, course and section number. Exercises and quizzes must be legible.

Late Essays: For each day that the essay is late, the letter grade will fall by one full grade: an A essay due on Friday will be an F by the next Thursday. If there are particular difficulties, please see one of us.

Plagiarism: The English Department Policy

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and the representation of them as one’s own 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 course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

If we discover an act of plagiarism, we shall exercise the right to the fullest extent possible. (See the Handbook, pp. 505-518, for a further discussion of what constitutes plagiarism and how to integrate properly your material from sources.)

Academic Dishonesty:

Obviously, any act of cheating other than plagiarism will also carry an academic penalty, that to be determined by Judicial Affairs, depending upon the dishonest act and the circumstances.

Information for Students with Disabilities:

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.