ENG 2205-001: Introduction to Literary Studies

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Introduction to Literary Studies

"Criticism is not literature, and the pleasure of criticism is not the pleasure of literature. But experience suggests that the two pleasures go together, and the pleasure of criticism makes literature and its pleasure the more readily accessible."
--Lionel Trilling, Preface to Literary Criticism: An Introductory Reader, qtd. in Richter.

Texts:  Morrison, Sula
       Shelley, Frankenstein
       Barnet, An Introduction to Literature
       Lentricchia, Critical Terms for Literary Study
       Richter, Falling into Theory
       Richter, The Critical Tradition
       Holman, A Handbook to Literature
       Baker, Guide to Literary Research

Goals:  I'm hoping this class will do at least three things: 1. introduce you to the terminology (regarding genre, analysis, and periodization) associated with literary study; 2. familiarize you with the resources, methods, and problems particular to literary research and 3. introduce you to literary theory and some of the arguments now raging about what it means to read, discuss, and write about literature.

Policies:  English Department 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 assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of NC for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

Come see me, call, or e-mail if you have questions, comments, problems, or just the urge to talk! Plan to hand in papers on time. If you're having problems, let me know. Papers a week or more late will not be accepted at all.

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.

Come to class prepared. You'll have more fun if you've done the
reading, and I will notice if you haven't. Note that a portion of the grade is based on class participation and a journal--both of which require keeping up with the reading and (obviously) being in class.

Requirements: midterm and final
3 brief writing assignments (2-3 pp each)
research paper (10-15 pp)
journal
group presentation
time line
careful preparation of reading assignments
and participation in class discussion

Grades: 30% of the grade will be based on exams (10/20)
20% on brief writing assignments
20% on research paper
20% journal/participation
10% on group presentation/time line

This class involves a heavy reading/thinking/writing load; make sure you plan your time accordingly. Essay grades will be based on Standards for Grading Themes at EIU. I plan to use number rather than letter grades; this will convert into your final grade as follows: 91-100=A; 81-90=B; 70-80=C; 65-69=D. Because I grade on a 100-point scale, missing assignments affect the grade tremendously.

Journals: the journal should be separate from your class notes, though I'd like you to bring it to class, as it should contain your thinking about the reading/discussion. Plan on writing an entry in preparation for each class: this might consist of responses to specific questions I ask, your own responses to the reading or to the previous class, questions you have about the reading or the class, connections you see between this class and other classes you're taking, or ideas for discussion or research. I will collect and respond to your journal every two weeks or so. We'll be dealing with complicated issues that don't have easy answers; the journal is a way for you to figure out what you think about them.

Group presentation: I will put you in groups of 2-3 based on your course experience, with each group assigned a particular period to present to the class. When you present your period at the end of the semester make sure you cover the following:
1. chronological boundaries defining the period (linked to historical event? ruler?)
2. characteristics and major writers traditionally associated with the period
3. controversies about its definition (excluded writers? uncertain boundaries?)
Be as inventive as you like in making your presentation.
Consider including a hand out (might include a poem or excerpt or dates). Plan on taking about 20 minutes of class time.

Tentative Syllabus

I. Close reading/formalism/new criticism:
Wed Aug 26: In Barnet, read Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado" (116-120). Holman, look up: point of view, setting, characterization
Fri 28: Read Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" (hand out) and essays about "Cask." In Holman, look up: allusion, symbol, image. Track down one allusion from "Fall" and discuss its significance in your journal.

Mon. 31: Holman, look up: style, explication de texte, short story, Gothic, romanticism. Read Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition" in Richter CT, 371-378.

II. Looking beyond the text: author/audience/world
Wed 16: In CT, read Aristotle 38-52. In Lentricchia, McLaughlin, "Representation."
Fri 18: In CT, read Arnold, 379-396.

Mon 28: In Barnet, start "Heart of Darkness"
Wed 30: H of D
Fri Oct 2: H of D. Hand in writing assignment #2.

Mon 5: Finish H of D.
Wed 7: Midterm.

Mon 12: Frankenstein 19-76
Wed 14: Frankenstein 76-134
Fri 16: Frankenstein 134-185

Mon 19: Reader response/Psychoanalytic criticism
Wed 21: Feminist//Marxist/Cultural criticism
Fri 23: no class: fall break

Mon 26: Hand in writing assignment #3 (annotated bibliography).
Wed 28: conferences
Fri 30: Conferences

Mon Nov 2: Conferences

III. What we read: literary history and periodization/the canon
Wed 4: Patterson in Lentricchia, "Literary History"; Richter, "What We Read" in FT. In Barnet, Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn."
Fri 6: Eliot, in CT, "Tradition and the Individual Talent." In Barnet, Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium; Rich, "Diving into the Wreck."

Mon 9: In Lentricchia, read Menand, "Diversity"; in Barnet, read Walker, "Everyday Use."
Wed 11: Morrison, Sula
Fri 13: Sula

Mon 16: Sula
Wed 18: Sula
Fri 20: Hand in draft, research paper.

Nov 21-29 Thanksgiving Recess

Mon Nov 30: Group presentation: Old English/Middle Ages
Wed Dec 2: Renaissance
Fri 4: 17th C English/Colonial American

Mon 7: Am Romanticism/English Romanticism
Wed 9: Victorian/American Realism
Fri 11: Modernism/Postmodernism. Hand in final version, research paper; hand in time line.

There will be a cumulative final exam during finals week: Dec 14-18