ENGLISH 104 SYLLABUS
INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE: FICTION

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Office Hours: Mon & Tues 1-2 pm @ NSH 203. Thursday 4-4:30 BC
Web Page http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/english/milletl/web.cfm?pgID=54
Class Time TR: 9:30-10:50 pm
Room BC-204
CRN 36002
Prerequisites: WR 121. You must have WR 121-level writing and thinking skills to succeed in this or any other Literature class. If you have not, see me and arrange for appropriate testing.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Hello, and welcome to all of you. The goal of this class is to bring fiction to life—to help you enjoy, interpret, and reflect on fiction. In the words of Paul Hagood, “It’s a partly a class about literature, and partly a class about humanity, psychology, and philosophy.” It’s partly a class about history and politics too—about what it means to be a woman or a man living in society and writing about that experience.

Here are some other questions I’d like to look at with you: Is fiction helpful and relevant, or is it just a form of entertainment? How can we interpret a story so that we don’t spoil our enjoyment of it through “over-analyzing” it? How can we see the issues in our own lives reflected in what we read, and, through an historical perspective, gain wisdom on how to live?

Here’s another question I’d like to explore with you: “What matters most—the author’s intent, or our response?”

To begin, let’s start to think about issues that are relevant to you. While good stories have something to say and can entertain us with their message and with the skill with which they are assembled, an important question is this: are they just entertainment? Or do they address the same issues that we as men and women struggle with—the indeed humankind has always struggled with—: love, power, identity, ambition, spirituality, conformity, individual identity, fame, money, death, failure, politics, fear? What issues are important to you?

My Own Philosophy of Fiction:
What we are forced to look at in the stories by Munro and Carver and Oates and Chekov and Hemingway—in most good literary fiction—is the discrepancy between inner lives and outer lives, between who we want to be and who we become, between the lives we want to live and the lives we feel we ought to live because the former are too chancy and the latter are endorsed by
society, by family and friends.

That’s what I try to put into every story I write, and it’s a primary component in how I judge fiction.

The resonance for us as readers comes from a recognition in our own lives, as Joan Didion puts it, of the “apparently bottomless gulf between what we say we want and what we do want, what we officially admire and secretly desire, between, in the largest sense, the people we marry and the people we love.”

And that’s something we’ll be looking for in the stories we read this term.

You’ll notice that many divisions of art and fiction are artificial and arbitrary. The thematic components we look at under any author (family, the journey, self-discovery) can be seen in any other author. The groupings we’ve made here are no better or worse than any other, nor more meaningful. All good writing will share components, though some may highlight some over others for the sake of the style. Don’t be tempted into seeing stories mainly in terms of groupings. And don’t confuse the merely familiar with the superior. Put on your Sociological Imagination. Look up CW Mill’s *The Sociological Imagination* and hand in a review of it for a jump-start of 25 points. The secret to reading texts effectively is to read everything you can that lends a new or different perspective to your understanding.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

We will be formatting our work using the Chicago Manual of Style for this class (see page 13 of the Appendix and your handbook for details). You will have the opportunity to demonstrate our learning outcomes by accomplishing the following tasks:

1. **Weekly Micro Critique.** (90 points) Each of us will pick a single elements and read the story with that in mind and be prepared to talk about that aspect in the class discussion. A one page (three paragraph) micro critique is to be handed in to me (or emailed) each Tuesday before we talk about the story. (9 @ 10 each.) 25%

2. **Creative Writing Exercises:** (90 points) We’ll do these in the class. Type them up and bring them to the next class to share. We’ll read them aloud. (9 @ 10 each). 25%

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1 PLEASE NOTE:

1. You are responsible for all the material that is assigned in the text as outlined in your syllabus.
2. You can be tested on any of this material at any time once it’s come due.
3. You are also responsible for material handed out, discussed, or lectured on during class, so take notes and ask questions about issues that elude you.¹
4. If you miss a class, get in touch with your classmates and/or consult your syllabus so that you can stay current.
5. Please consult your materials and schedule if you have questions before emailing or telephoning for obvious answers.
6. Do the reading (a minimum of an hour for every hour of class).
7. If you do not follow the above tips, and are caught “unawares” by a quiz or test, do not whine. I will not try to trick you; quizzes and tests are a necessary part of evaluating progress. If you are taken unawares, pay attention so that it doesn’t happen again.
8. There are no opportunities for “bonus” points. The concept of getting 110/100 is illogical and unfair to those who perform excellently on the required assignments.
3. **Author Interviews** (80 points) from the text to be read with a summary-response handed in Thursdays for credit/no credit w/ √+, √, √- option. Use the Summary Response Template on my website. These 2-page reviews will be handed in during the Thursday class and will be used as a springboard for class discussion. (8 @ 10 each) 25%

4. **Final Essay**: (100 points) This is a take-home exam, and you will have one week to complete it. Due in week 10. 25%

Please read the work before class and examine its meaning closely. **Do** mark the pages in your texts. **Allow at least two hours of outside work for each hour of class** and be sure to have all assignments done before class. Your grade will reflect your preparedness.

Word-process and double-space your work, and include your name, the class time, the instructor’s name, and the assignment title and type at the top left of the first page of all tests and assignments. Refer to the Chicago Manual of Style for guidelines. All work is to be typed in #12 courier font.

**The Story Feedback, due each Tuesday on the assigned story:**

You will be responsible for turning in, on the dates specified, a thorough, thoughtful, one-page, typed (double-spaced in courier #12 font) analysis of the assigned section or story from the textbook.

For the written critique, allow at least two readings of the story, then choose one of the following topics, and be prepared to talk about it. **Write a three-paragraph “micro-analysis” focusing on your subject and its role in the story. Please Note:** this is not to be a critique or review of these published stories. It is to be an example of your own close reading abilities and your understanding of the relationship between a writer’s craft and your interpretation of the story’s subject or psychological conflict.

In your analysis, use direct quotations from the text to support and explore your topic. I’ll evaluate these based on 1) the quality of your questions or inquiry; 2) open, but careful thinking; 3) clarity of presentation; 4) specifics from the text for support.

I’ll collect these in class and grade them on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high).

**Written Analysis Topics for these readings:** pick ONE of the following for your analysis and use a different topic for each story.

1. The handling of time.
2. Place and imagery.
3. Voice and/or point of view.
4. “Focal” character.
5. The role of a minor character.
6. Humor.
7. Mythological (or other literary) motifs.
8. The pattern of the sentence.
9. The art of the dialogue.
10. The pattern of the paragraph.
11. Transitions.
12. The use of formal repetition.
13. The opening.
14. The pattern of development.
15. The dramatic moment or crisis—is there one?
16. Ending or resolution.
17. Poe’s Single Effect.
18. The initial problem and its development.

NOTE: I urge you to submit your essays electronically. E-mail them to me at terrancemillet1@comcast.net as attached documents in Microsoft WORD format only and in Courier 12 font. These assignments are due by midnight on the due dates. You will get them back sooner than written work (which is due in class), and have the opportunity to get more feedback on them. Electronic submissions must be attached files that are named with your last name, the class days, and the assignment. For example: Smitheng104TResay#1. However, this option requires that you send your work only in Word format (not WordPerfect or Works) and that the subject line of your mail follow the protocol above. Otherwise, the work will be returned unread.

Resources:
- My Web Page (http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/english/milletl/web.cfm?pgID=54) has a list resources and templates.
- See pages 18-19 in the General Catalogue for a list of campus resources. The Writing Desk is an excellent place to get professional help with your essays.
Tentative Schedule
(Subject to revision, with notice)

**Week 1:** Course Introduction: *Who Writes This Stuff, and Why?* Syllabus and overview

**Tuesday**
What is short fiction and who writes it? Who cares?
- Fiction through the ages has been more than an art form. People have been killed for writing it. Russia shot writers until the 1970’s, and some South American countries until the 1980s. What was that all about? And here’s a question worth 10 bonus points: What modern writer in England had a contract on his life by a national government for writing a novel? Name the novel, the writer, the country, and the circumstances.

**Thursday:** Poe’s Single Effect and the short story.
- The Heart of the story
- A little bit about you: What’s your name; where do you come from; where are you going; what time is it?
- Writing Exercise #1: Who Speaks? Point of View. An autobiographical short-short story. First person POV, then a rewrite from third person POV. Think of a significant event that stands out in your life, and write a one-page story about it. Then rewrite it in the 3rd person POV: “he” or “she.” Give the character a name.

**Week 2:** Ray Bradbury. *The Veldt.*

T Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to talk about it.
- We’ll discuss these stories using the workshop model.
- We read and share the polished freewrites. Hand both versions in to me.

R • *Summary Response due from Writers on Writing: Raymond Carver. On Writing*
- Creative Writing Exercise: *Seeing is Believing.* Significant detail.

**Week 3:** Raymond Carver. *Cathedral*

T • Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.
- We read and share the polished freewrites.

R • *Summary Response due from Writers on Writing: Ernest Hemingway. An Interview*
- Creative Writing Exercise: *Characterization.* Appearance and action.
Week 4: Kate Chopin. *The Story of an Hour*

T • Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.
  • We read and share the polished freewrites.

R • *Summary Response due from Writers on Writing: Henry James. The Art of Fiction*
  • Creative Writing Exercise: Place and Atmosphere.

Week 5: Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *The Yellow Wallpaper*

T • Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.
  • We read and share the polished freewrites.

R • *Summary Response due from Writers on Writing: D.H. Lawrence. Why the Novel Matters*
  • Creative Writing Exercise: Theme. Ideas and morality.

Week 6: D. H. Lawrence. *The Horse Dealer’s Daughter*

T • Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.
  • We read and share the polished freewrites.

R • *Summary Response due from Writers on Writing: Doris Lessing. An Interview*
  • Creative Writing Exercise: Is and is not. Symbol and allegory.

Week 7: Tim O’Brien. *The Things They Carried*

T • Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.
  • We read and share the polished freewrites.

R • *Summary Response due from Writers on Writing: Alice Munro. What is Real?*
  • Creative Writing Exercise: Structure. Form and the arc of the story.
Week 8: John Stienbeck. *The Crysanthemums*

T • Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.
   • We read and share the polished freewrites.

R • *Summary Response due from Writers on Writing: Joyce Carol Oates. The Art and Craft of Revision*
   • Creative Writing Exercise: *Winging it*. The writer as creator.

Week 9: Alice Walker. *Everyday Use*

T • Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.
   • We read and share the polished freewrites.

R • *Summary Response due from Writers on Writing: Flannery O’Connor. The Nature and Aim of Fiction*
   • Creative Writing Exercise: *The Full Monty*. Using your arsenal.
   • Final exam handed out Last day of class this week. You have one week to complete it.

Week 10: Eudora Welty. *A Worn Path*

T • Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.
   • We read and share the polished freewrites.

R • Final Exam due Thursday, your last day of class.

Week 11
Finals Week. No Classes
APPENDIX

LEARNING OUTCOMES: When you’ve successfully completed this ENG 104 class, you should be able to:

1. Understand and appreciate the range of human questions and issues that fiction (and most art) explores.
2. Assess the value of a story: did it accomplish something worthwhile? Did it create a worthwhile experience?
3. Understand the different critical methods of reading and interpreting fiction.
4. Apply an insight or awareness from your reading of stories to an issue or question you face in your life (that is, recognize how literature helps in understanding the human condition).
5. Form an overall impression of a story’s meaning or impact.
6. Analyze the ways different structural elements help create meaning, and awareness.
7. Write and speak confidently about your own and others’ ideas.
8. Demonstrate how literature enhances personal awareness and creativity.
9. In other words--interpret literary works, poetry, and some visual art, through critical reading.

COURSE THEMES AND CONCEPTS: To demonstrate our learning outcomes, you’ll need to understand these Themes and Concepts:

1. Identifying author intent in fiction: the choice of message and form
2. Identifying and understanding the Human/Personal significance of literature
3. Applying a non-defensive posture in critical analysis
4. Understanding of fictive structure, meaning, and form.
5. Theme
6. Audience
7. Genre and form
8. Types of critical posture such as Feminist, Marxist, Freudian, etc. used in literary analysis

SKILLS: To reach our learning outcomes, you’ll need to master the following skills:

1. Interpreting stories through critical reading
2. Analyzing literature using the above themes and concepts in writing responses
3. Researching sources and the use of bibliographic standards
4. Connecting fiction to our own lives and sharing these connections in discussions and writing
5. Understanding structure and meaning of fiction
6. Writing some fiction to appreciate form and process
7. Working collaboratively in groups
FORMAT: We will use the Chicago Manual of Style in this class, and all submitted work must follow that style correctly. There is a section in your handbook explaining it, and there is a template on the class website illustrating how it is done. Additionally, we’ll circulate a handout in class and go over the mechanics of setting it up. We’ll hone this down is the first two weeks of class; after that, work that does not follow the style correctly will be returned ungraded for correction and late credit.

ATTENDANCE: It’s important that you attend all classes. Every class will entail points towards your grade. Much of the work will be in-class writes and discussion (class participation)—and you’ll be graded on this. The revision process occurring in class is crucial in developing skills in writing, and your team members will depend on you. Also, material is covered in class that is not in your texts.

CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE: Writing is an intense process, a skill acquired through diligence and work. It is a personal act as well that demands honesty, focus, and openness. To help each other in this process, it’s important that an attitude of civility, a habit of positive suggestions, and a posture of support be the rule.

Grades:
A — 90-100
B — 80-89
C — 70-79
D — 60-69

A = You perform consistent and excellent work on time. You come to class having read the material actively and thoughtfully. Your writing makes insightful connection between the literature and the issues involved.
B = You show consistent work, but you may not have always understood the literature and your writing might not express clarity all the time. Minor errors impede the writing.
C = Also means consistent work, but you have occasionally struggled with the reading and your writing shows recurring errors. You missed an occasional assignment.
D = You fall behind, miss an assignment, and attempt to turn in work late. You attend class irregularly and do not contribute to class or group work.
F = You complete less than 2/3rds of the work. Most students fail because they stop trying or don’t seek help before it’s too late.
Y = Means you complete so little work (less than 25%) that there is no basis for a grade.

Plagiarism Statement:
Using someone else’s work as your own or using information or ideas without proper citations (which is called plagiarism) can lead to your failing the assignment of the class. Bibliographies
(called Works Cited) AND in-text citation are required whenever you use outside sources, including Internet sources.

Disability statement:
If you have emergency medical information for your instructor, need special arrangements to evacuate campus, or have a documented disability, please meet with your instructor, by appointment, no later than the first week of the term, to discuss your needs and present your ODS accommodation letter. If you have a documented disability that will impact you at college and you have yet to seek accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) for intake and to document your disability with LBCC. Only students who document a disability and present an accommodation letter to an instructor are entitled to academic accommodation. Each term, when you register for classes, and at least 2-3 weeks prior to the start of the term, submit your “Request for Accommodations” form to ODS. During Week 1, pick up letter for your instructors and deliver in person to each instructor during office hours or by appointment. Instructors may need time to arrange your accommodations. ODS may be reached from any LBCC campus/center by email to ODS@linnbenton.edu or by calling 917-4789. Letter pickup is available at each LBCC campus/center. Additional instructional services beyond classroom instruction and instructor consultations are available for all students at the Learning Center and the Support Lab at HO-114.

Waitlist Policy:
Students who are registered but not present for the first class, unless they have given the instructor prior notice, will be dropped from the class and their place assigned to students on the waitlist.

Late Work Policy:
Late work is actively discouraged unless critical circumstances justify an exception. There is no guarantee that late work will earn a grade more than “excused.”