

English 775.001, Teaching of Literature in College
Spring 2014, Tuesday, 7:20--10:00 pm, HL 325
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Office Hours: TR, 12-12:30; Tues, 4:30-7:00; Thurs, 4:30-5:00
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Course Description:

English 775, Teaching of Literature in College, will offer you the opportunity to explore the issues, conflicts, and joys of teaching literature at the college level. This course will be run as a collaborative seminar; you might want to think of our collaboration as the bringing together of a cast of players working together to produce a successful movie. I anticipate a diverse group, with some having little or no teaching ("acting"/"directing") experience, and others with limited to extensive experience. Much of what we do will be "hands on" and practical as we read and discuss texts and as we talk about and devise methods for teaching literature in the college classroom. We will have some guest presentations, discussions of teaching "issues," and possibly some opportunities for some of you to teach one literature class or do a group presentation. The size and collaboration of those in the class will help to determine how much we can accomplish.

The course is intended to be an exchange of ideas about theories and practices related to teaching literature ("texts") to undergraduates. Through your comments and questions, your observations of literature classes, comments of guest presenters, we will analyze why we teach literature, to whom we teach, and various pedagogical heuristics. Topics for discussion might include: teaching critical thinking, University Studies requirements, reading and writing assignments, use of and research on the internet, teaching on line, pedagogically-focused journals and newsletters, textbook selections and assigned readings, censorship, discipline, assessment/evaluation methods, classroom dynamics (including room layout), students with disabilities, presentation format (lecture, discussion, group work, on-line), and other topics you might suggest.

In addition to text-based content and approaches to teaching literature, we all encounter issues ("challenges") that arise related to teaching literature. These issues might be standard fare, such as how to evaluate students, learning outcomes assessment, or it might be more sensitive/hot topic issues such as religion, race, language, politics, and personal beliefs and their impact on our teaching. During the semester, we will have the opportunity to discuss and respond to some of these issues as you look forward to and prepare for your many years of teaching literature in the classroom.

I see my role as a mentor, moderator, or, if we continue with the film analogy, as a director, who guides, not as someone who says, "This is how to teach this work." Your role as actor or collaborator, or director is to bring to class (to the making of our "movie") ideas and questions, approaches, and various strategies on how to teach texts that you have used, researched, or wonder about, or those assigned. I will, as the occasion arises, say how I might teach a text and why, and you will be asked to do the same, but the focus will be on, what I hope will be diverse, practical and theoretical approaches to the teaching and reading of texts in a junior college or university setting. For those who have taught literature (at any level), we will be asking for your suggestions and heuristics (strategies) for teaching texts to various audiences.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- 1) To gain an understanding of "nuts and bolts" issues related to organizing and teaching literature
- 2) To gain insights and knowledge from diverse perspectives related to the teaching of literature
- 3) To apply heuristics to the teaching of a variety of texts through application in a classroom situation
- 4) To prepare materials appropriate for teaching a sophomore literature survey class

Required Textbooks:

Angus, Douglas and Sylvia Angus. *Great Modern European Short Stories*. New York: Fawcett, 1967.
ISBN: 9780449912225

Foster, Thomas C. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. New York: Harper, 2003. ISBN: 9780060009427

Other readings:

McCormick, Kathleen, Gary Waller, and Linda Flower. *Reading Texts: Reading, Responding, Writing*.
Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1987. (on reserve, under English 2326, Gee Library)

Handouts (articles, poems, etc.)

King Lear, or Ibsen's *A Doll House*. (on reserve), or Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* or *Wilson*, or
Wilson's Fences (To be determined later)

Poetry – Choose from: Elizabeth Bishop, Ana Castillo, Robert Frost, Langston Hughes, Pablo Neruda,
Marge Piercy, or Ann Sexton.

Books On Reserve under Duchovnay, English 2326 include:

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP,
1997.

Ibieta, Gabriella. *Latin American Writers: Thirty Stories*. New York: St. Martin's,
1993.

Kelly, Joseph. Ed. *The Seagull Reader*. New York: Norton, 2005.

McCormick, Kathleen, Gary Waller, and Linda Flower. *Reading Texts: Reading,
Responding, Writing*. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1987. (on reserve)

Literature anthologies and pedagogical texts may be distributed to you in class
or secured through ILL.

Assignments: Almost all the written work will be brief analytic commentaries. These will include responses to the readings and discussions, an observation document, a review, a cv and cover letter; there will also be one formal focused analytical paper (6-10 pages) and sample syllabi . What will be required of you in this course is will prepare you for teaching a sophomore literature survey and possibly for job market applications and interviews. Prior students have returned to tell me how what they did in their class helped in job interviews and on-the-job. If you have concerns as a group as we move through the semester, we can discuss modifications.

Evaluation/Grades: Your evaluation in this course will be based on your written work and class discussion. Depending upon the group dynamics and how the course progresses, these percentages may change, as might the specific assignments, but not extensively.

Formal Paper=25% Responses=15% Class Discussion=10% Sample Syllabi=10%
Book Review=10% Textbook Evaluation=10% Observations=10% CV/Cover Letter/Teaching
Philosophy=10%

Incompletes: For long semester courses, incompletes are given only in rare circumstances and only related to emergency situations that arise in the last two weeks of class. In my experience, more than fifty per cent of graduate students who take incompletes never finish the work. As a result, the grade in the course becomes an "F." Such a grade has significant consequences related to GPA, "good standing," and financial aid.

Examination Policy: If there is an exam, most likely it would involve one or two questions to be answered in take-home format.

Attendance: You should try to not miss class. Discussions cannot be duplicated, no matter how thorough someone's notes may be. In some quarters there is the notion that some absences are excused and others are not. I consider any absence an absence--car trouble, a doctor's appointment, a family emergency, etc. Excessive absences (beyond two) will contribute to the lowering of your grade. Four absences--unless for extraordinary circumstances and appropriate notification to your instructor--will result in your being dropped from the class. Those who are dropped from class without having attended regularly and who are on financial aid may be required to repay their financial aid.

Common Decency: All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. In addition, you are requested to turn off your cell phones before entering the classroom. Tablets (iPads, etc.) and other forms of technology may remain on as long as they are available for classroom activities, but not personal use. Common courtesy says you do not receive or answer calls during class. If you are expecting an emergency call, please sit close to the exit and take the call outside the classroom.

Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services / Texas A&M University-Commerce/ Gee Library, Room 132 / Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148 StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu**

Academic Honesty: Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3])

Plagiarism: Our word plagiarism is derived from a word that means "to kidnap." Plagiarism is a form of kidnapping someone else's ideas, opinions, arguments, or research, and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism "includes (but is not limited to) failure to indicate the source with quotation marks or footnotes where appropriate if any of the following are reproduced in the work submitted: 1. A phrase, written or musical; 2. A graphic element; 3. A proof; 4. Specific language; 5. An idea derived from the work, published or unpublished, of another person" or group.

Much of the confusion and unintentional dishonesty in undergraduate and graduate papers results from ignorance or carelessness with regard to attribution of sources. When you borrow from what others have said, you are obligated to acknowledge your sources. We all solicit opinions about our writing from family, friends, or colleagues. Your indebtedness to others for sharing ideas with you about your paper or for reading and commenting on it can be indicated in an acknowledgements page accompanying formal assignments. If you go beyond conversations with friends or colleagues to other outside sources, you need to acknowledge these sources in your paper and in a Works Cited page. If you are uncertain about your documentation, please see your instructor before you submit your paper. Intentional plagiarism will result in a zero for the work and appropriate disciplinary action.

Schedule: Because there will be several guest speakers, bad weather, technological snafus, conferences, and a variety of other unexpected happenings, please be flexible. THIS SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE, but I will try to stay as close to the schedule as possible, especially with regard to your key written assignments. BE FLEXIBLE.

Week 1 -Jan 14 Course Introduction
Teaching and Analyzing Fiction: "Love in LA"

Read for next time:

Finish *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*

--Written assignment: List---3- key talking points/ideas (one sentence each, plus page reference) from the book that you found useful or debatable or worth discussing

On reserve: *Reading Texts*, Chpt. 1, 1-31.

--Written Assignment--a 3-4 paragraph RESPONSE--take a position with regard to one of the checkpoints (p. 31) or an idea emphasized in the chapter

Jim Reynolds, on Cognitive Development Theories--access:

<http://faculty.tamu-commerce.edu/jreynolds/p-wwk.html>

: GMESS, "Her First Ball" (Mansfield), "Araby" (Joyce), "Horse Dealer's Daughter" (Lawrence)

: on reserve in Kelly, "A Worn Path," Welty

: three talking points for each story by Joyce, Lawrence, & Welty

: read and bring to class, brief article by Jim Reynolds, "Cognitive development theories...."

Week 2-- Jan 21

Critical Thinking, General Education, Teaching Students with Disabilities, & University Studies Requirements Guest: Rebecca Tuerk

Teaching and Analyzing Fiction – Critical Approaches

Fiction vs Non-Fiction: Do We Need Literature?

A: *RT*, Chpt 6, Fiction, 181-213.

Written assignment: Response (2-4 paragraphs) on one of checkpoints

GMESS: Journey Through the Night" (Lind), "Gogol's Wife" (Landolfi)

"The New Apartment" (Huber)

--Written assignment: 2-3 talking points on each story

Week 3 --Jan 28 How Work Informs Teaching & Diverse Audiences

Teaching Honor Students

Teaching at Different Types of Schools – Other Voices

Discussion of stories and teaching strategies

A: *RT*, Chpt. 2, Language, History, Culture, 32-54

: 2-4 paragraph response to one of the checkpoints (p. 54)

: literature – TBA

due next time: cv/cover letter/teaching philosophy

Week 4--Feb. 4 The Challenges of Teaching British

A: *RT*, Chpt. 3, Reading to Write Response Statements, 55-90

For next class: Bring to class a total of two relatively short poems of your choice from one of the poets listed on page 2 of the syllabus. Bring enough copies for everyone, or send ahead of time or send everyone web addresses to find them.

Also write up 3 talking points and three response statements for each poem that would be appropriate for an Introduction to Literature class. Be prepared to explain how you would teach the poems you have selected.

Due Next Time: Textbook Review

Week 5 –Feb. 11 Approaches to Texts –Critical and Practical--Poetry. Guest: Kathryn Jacobs

A: Chpt. 5, Poetry, 151-180

: poems (most in Kelly)--"Sir Patrick Spens," "Ballad of Birmingham" (handout), "My Last Duchess" (Browning), "Red Wheelbarrow" (Williams), Billy Collins poems (Kelly, 432-436), "Mending Wall" (Frost), "My Papa's

Waltz" (Roethke), "Barbie Doll" (Piercy), Langston Hughes poems (Kelly, 502-505), "Study of Reading Habits" (Larkin, handout)

- Week 6--Feb. 18 Why Poetry Matters
 For Next Time, Read:
RT, Chpt. 4, Response to Formal Papers, 92-147
 Literature: ["The Circular Ruins" by Jorge Luis Borges, "The legend of "El Cadejo" by Miguel Angel Asturias, "Strange things happen here" Luisa Valenzuela "El arbol" by Maria Luisa Bombal [on reserve]]
Due Next Time: Pedagogical Review Teaching/Approaches to Literature
- Week 7--Feb. 25 Teaching Latin American Lit/Culture & Issues of Translation & Research,
 Guest: Inma Lyons
 Writing Assignments, Tests, Quizzes, Response Assignments
 : TBA--Ibsen's *A Doll House* (Kelly or on line) or *King Lear*
 : *RT*, Chpt. 7, Drama, 215-241
- Week 8--March 4 Teaching Drama: Guest: Dr. John Hanners
 Subtext, Motivation, & Commanding Image –
 A: *RT*, Chpt. 8, Reading Media Texts, 243-265
 : *GMESS*, "Gimpel the Fool" (Singer) + Langston Hughes poems]. &
 other text(s) (TBA)
 See a movie before March 18
- Week 9 --March 11--Spring Break
- Week 10 --March 18 Approaches to Teaching Film/ Multi-Ethnic Literature (as time permits)
- Week 11 – March 25 Using Film in the Classroom: Why/How are You Using Films?
 A: Readings, TBA
- Week 12--April 1 Teaching / Using Critical Theory in Undergraduate Classes
 Discussion: Sample Syllabi/Syllabuses
- Week 13--April 8 Topic:: Open
 Discussion – Observations
Due Next Time: Observation Commentaries
- Week 14-- April 15 Presentations or TBA
Due Next Time: Sample Syllabi/syllabuses
- Week 15 --April 22 Presentations/Observations
Due Next class meeting: Formal Paper
- Week 16-April 29 Discussion/Presentations
 Due today: Formal Paper
- Week 17 – May 6 Exam Week