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LIT 110L.H1: Introduction to Literature - Hamilton

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LIT 110 Introduction to Literature

Instructor: Matthew Kaler
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Class Dates and Location: This 15-week course runs from August 26-December 4. The class meets Tuesday/Thursday from 2:40-4:00 pm at the BC in Room 2. Students will be responsible for completing course assignments online through Moodle or by submission in class.

Office Hours: You can schedule an appointment with me in class or by email to meet in person or via Skype. I will respond to all emails within a 48 hour period, Monday-Friday.

Rationale for taking this course: If a student is considering a career in writing, education, or in the English field in particular, the reason for studying literature is obvious: It must be studied so that it can be taught and/or emulated. However, even if a student is not interested in these careers, the rewards and insights gained by studying literature are numerous. Getting an education is more than learning information and skills for a career. Studying humanity's rich literary record leads to an understanding of what it means to be human and how literary traditions continue to influence contemporary thought. By analyzing, interpreting, and discussing both literary masterpieces and lesser known works, students can come to understand and embrace the roots of social, philosophical, historical, cultural, and political diversity.

We will study techniques of **analysis** (breaking things down) and **synthesis** (summing things up), **denotation** (things clearly stated) and **connotation** (things inferred or implied) as well as the pressure that context, authority, tradition, and personal identity place on what we read.

Required texts

- *A Writer's Country: A Collection of Fiction and Poetry*. Edited by Jeff Knorr and Tim Schell.
- *New Sudden Fiction*. Edited by Robert Shapard and James Thomas

Class Requirements

Periodic quizzes to measure reading, attention to literary terms and class discussions. Form, diction and grammar of arguments are expected to be at college-level writing. Essays and Writing Assignments must demonstrate an in-depth analysis of texts' form and content while striving for original insight and individual voice.

Take notes during lecture sessions and any time valuable/new information is given to you. Refer to your notes to complete assignments, ask questions, review new concepts and vocabulary.

Grading and Evaluation

Your work and progress in the class will be measured in several ways:

- Participation (in class, answering questions, asking questions, group discussion, quizzes)
20% of the final grade
- Approximately Two Short papers (2-3 pages each)
30% of the final grade
- Final paper on novel of your choice (4 page minimum, MLA format)
50% of the final grade

Grading Scale:

94-100 A	87-89 B+	77-79 C+
93-90 A-	86-83 B	76-73 C
	82-80 B-	72-70 C-

Internet Resources

Norton LitWeb: <http://www2.wwnorton.com/litweb>. This website features a glossary of terms, fiction workshops, and online quizzes that you may find useful.

Diana Hacker *Writers Ref*: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/writersref6e/Player/Pages/Main.aspx>. This site contains all types of information for writers, including research and documentation help.

Adult Content Disclaimer: This course contains adult content, including potentially offensive adult language and themes. If any language or subject matter is offensive to you and you prefer not to study or discuss it, please contact me and I will provide an alternate assignment.

Attendance Policy

You are allotted 3 "free"/"unexcused" absences: you do not need permission, and I don't need an explanation. Use these three wisely. More than three absences will compromise your grade.

4th "unexcused" absence: final grade drops one letter grade; 5th absence: final grade drops two letter grades, and so on. More than 6 "unexcused" absences will result in failure.

Why the policy? Without attending class, you cannot participate as a member of a learning community, and you cannot be a writer and collaborator with your peers. Participation includes taking part in class discussions, asking questions, and contributing to the classroom experience. Of course, this includes doing the required reading and writing assignments.

Excused Absences

What warrants an excused absence? A death in the family, a court or legal issue (for example: jury duty, parole meeting, court date, incarceration), an appointment for public benefits or entitlements that cannot be scheduled at any other time, or a severe health issue. What is a severe health issue? Being contagious (with flu or pink eye, for example), an incident that requires a visit to the emergency room or hospitalization, or having a medical condition requiring an immediate appointment that cannot be scheduled at any other day/time. Upon returning to class, the student must show documentation regarding the exact date of the absence (except in the case of family death). Absences due to a severe health issue can be excused only if, upon returning, the student brings a signed note from his or her attending health care provider (physician or RN, not a member of the secretarial staff) stating that the student was ill the day of the absence and sought medical attention. The note must include: the exact date of class missed and the actual signature of the attending physician or RN and his/her contact information.

How to be absent

If you must be absent for a class, email one of your classmates, (even if you don't know them very well) asking him/her to pick up missed handouts, announcements and homework assignments. Also ask if you can copy his/her notes. **You are responsible for all missed material and the homework assigned during your absence.** You may make an appointment with me to go over notes that you got from a classmate to see if they are complete. Unless we have previously agreed to some other arrangement, all assignments are due on the announced due dates regardless of your class presence.

Registration Issues

If you miss the first two class meetings (and haven't communicated with me in advance about extenuating circumstances), you need to drop the course on Cyberbear and enroll another semester. The reason for this policy is that important groundwork for the semester is put in place in the first couple of class meetings, and students without that foundational framework are better served by taking the course when they can give it the attention it deserves. Note: Important dates can be found on Cyberbear.

Late Paper Policy

Papers turned in after their due date will be deducted 1 full letter grade per class day until received. I also reserve the right not to accept any late work after its due date.

Late Paper Extensions

Extensions on assignment due dates will only be granted for good reason (I reserve the right to determine this) and if you contact me prior to the due date. No extensions will be granted if you fail to communicate any issues with me prior to the assignment due date.

Communication

I am available to speak with you and answer questions after class, by scheduled appointment in person at the BC (or via Skype), and through email. By University policy, all email communication must be conducted to my UM email account through your UM email account. I will only communicate with registered members of this course.

I am available to discuss any problems or needs for accommodation, but you need to come and talk to me beforehand. That includes letting me know if you have children or any obligations outside of class that will affect your presence in the class.

Required Technology: Campus E-mail Accounts and Moodle:

Please activate your campus e-mail account right away. Every student is issued a university e-mail account, and there is no cost. Go to any technology help desk on campus for assistance. *You will need to activate your email before you can access Moodle.*

This course requires essential computer skills so that you can access email and negotiate Moodle. *Early in the semester, UM offers a number of Moodle workshops. If you are unfamiliar with Moodle or if you have limited computer experience, please attend these workshops. You will be expected to work with computers for appropriate class assignments, and most correspondences will be conducted via email/Moodle. Most class materials and instructions will be posted in Moodle. With the exception of some initial explanations during our first classes, please do not expect extra time in class for any learning curve you might face with technology. Likewise, please do not expect any extensions on due dates for an assignment because of any technical difficulties you have not conquered. Backup all work.*

Civility Clause

I will tolerate neither disruptive language nor disruptive behavior. Disruptive language includes, but is not limited to, violent and/or belligerent and/or insulting remarks, including sexist, racist, homophobic or anti-ethnic slurs, bigotry, and disparaging commentary, either spoken or written (offensive slang is included in this category).

While I do not disagree that you each have a right to your own opinions, inflammatory language founded in ignorance or hate is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately.

Disruptive behavior includes the use of cell phones, pagers or any other form of electronic communication during the class session (e-mail, web-browsing). Disruptive behavior also includes whispering or talking when another member of the class is speaking or engaged in relevant conversation (remember that I am a member of this class as well). This classroom functions on the premise of respect, and you will be asked to leave the classroom and a formal process of Student Conduct Code violation will be pursued, if you violate any part of this statement on civility. **Remember that you will need to send me an e-mail that indicates you have read and understand this policy before Week Two of class.**

Academic Honesty

In this class, we function as a community of writers and thinkers, sharing ideas and critiquing each other's work. So while no one goes through an assignment completely alone, it is important that you experience writing as a personalized, individual learning objective. If you are feeling overwhelmed, come see me.

UM's official policy on Plagiarism (from UM Course Catalogue):

"Plagiarism is the representing of another's work as one's own. It is a particularly intolerable offense in the academic community and is strictly forbidden. Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion.

Students must always be very careful to acknowledge any kind of borrowing that is included in their work. This means not only borrowed wording but also ideas. Acknowledgment of whatever is not one's own original work is the proper and honest use of sources. Failure to acknowledge whatever is not one's own original work is plagiarism."

Course Accommodations Statement (DSS): Students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodations

in this course. To request course modifications, please contact me as soon as possible. I will work with you and Disability Services in the accommodation process. For more information, visit the Disability Services website (<http://life.umt.edu/dss/>) or call 406.243.2243.

Disclaimer

Please be advised that I reserve the right to change and/or modify any of the aforementioned points within this Syllabus, details of the Papers and Projects, Important Due Dates, and the course Weekly Plans. If I do, I will verbally announce any changes in class as well as post them to Moodle immediately.