ENLT 120.02: Introduction to Critical Interpretation

Kathleen Kane

The University Of Montana

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Policy Statement

Texts: Beaty, Jerome, and J. Paul Hunter, *The Norton Introduction to Literature*
Hacker, Diana, *A Pocket Style Manual*

NB: Your texts are currently available in the UC Bookstore. You **must** bring the *Norton Intro to Lit* with you to class.

Course Description:

In this introductory course in the study of literature and the discourse of interpretation, we will examine, explore, and challenge various literary terms, concepts and genres. Additionally, we will strive to develop a practical and critical reading vocabulary—a skill that will enable rigorous engagement with the literary texts of our syllabus.

One of the tasks of the course will be to ask and attempt to answer such compelling and complex questions as "What precisely is literature?" "Is the category of 'the literary' the same across space and time?" "What is the value of literature in the late-twentieth century?" "Can a reader simultaneously examine the political and aesthetic implications of texts?"

In addition to talking about and learning how to talk about literary texts, another task of the course will involve learning how to formalize interpretive responses through the activity of writing. We will learn how to assert and support analytic claims in well-crafted, grammatically tight essays.

In short, since this course is a "Writing Course for General Education," you can expect to do a good deal of writing this semester.

Coursework: Final grades will be determined by your performance in five separate categories of coursework:

1. quizzes 10%
2. midterm 20%
3. final 20%
4. 3 critical meditations @ 10 pts each 30%
5. 1 final essay 20%

I will be happy to discuss grades with you during my office hours. However, please give yourself twenty-four hours after receiving your grade before coming to see me.

**Reading Quizzes**: Over the course of the semester you will take a number of quizzes designed to ensure that you have read and thought about the readings for that day. I will administer these short quizzes at the beginning of the class, and there will be no make up quizzes held for those who are absent or late on the day when they are administered. You are responsible for the task of completing your reading every day. *(N.B.: Reading Quizzes will include questions on ALL materials you read to prepare for class.)*

**Critical Meditations**: While this class is primarily engaged in the development of critical and interpretive skills in a discussion format, you will also spend a significant amount of time working to individualize and formalize your responses to literary texts. To that end, you will write and submit 3 two page responses to the texts we will read this semester. Because of their formal nature your critical meditations must be well crafted, to length, supported with brief textual citation, and free of mechanical and syntactical errors. The specific due dates for these mini-essays are as follows: Monday, Sept 17; Friday, Oct. 5; Friday, Nov 2.

**Final Essay**: This last written essay will involve your selection of one of the three Critical Meditations and subsequent revision of it into a 5-7 page essay. In particular the formal requirements of quotation and documentation will be at stake in the assessment of the essay. The due date for this essay is Monday, Nov. Again, we will discuss the precise details of the assignment later in the semester.

**Midterm**: You will take your midterm over two days on Monday the 15th and Wednesday the 17 of October. The exam will consist of questions from the following categories:
1. short answer
2. identification
3. explication of text/essay questions
Prior to the exam, we will spend class time discussing the precise nature of these three categories.

**Final Exam**: You will take your final exam on the day scheduled by the University for that purpose. Like your midterm, this exam will consist of questions from the following categories:
1. short answer
2. identification
3. explication of text/essay questions

**Attendance**: Attendance is required and will be recorded: four or more unexcused absences are grounds for failure of the course itself. Late arrivals and early departures will, if they occur frequently, count as absences. If you do arrive late you will be responsible for letting me know after class that you were present for the day. Absences due to medical and family emergencies will be excused, provided you come and discuss the situation *(ASAP)* with me.
September

Week One:  **Beginnings**  
(All schedule entries from the *Norton Introduction to Literature*)

**W 5:** Introduction to the Course

**F 7:** Holst, “The Zebra Storyteller,” 2-3; Pages 3-5 & 12-14; De Maupassant, “The Jewelry,” 14-20.

**Week Two: Plot & Point of View**


**W 12:** Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues,” 47-71.

**F 14:** “Point of View,” 72-75; “The Cask of Amontillado,” 75-80.

**Week Three: Characterization**

**M 17:**  
**Critical Meditation #1 Due.**  

**W 19:**  

**F 21:** Baxter, “Fensted’s Mother,” 116-126.

**Week Four: Setting & Symbol**

**M 24:**  

**W 26:** Chekov, “The Lady with the Dog,” 175-186.

**F 28:** “Symbols,” 188-190; Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown,” 190-199.

October

**Week Five: Symbols & Theme**

**M 1:**  

**W 3:** Mansfield, “Her First Ball,” 212-216.

**Week Six: The Whole Text**

- **F 12:** Vander Haeghe, “The Watcher,” 274-299.

**Week Seven: Midterm & Initiation Stories**

- **M 15:** *Midterm part I*
- **W 17:** *Midterm part II*
- **F 19:** “Literary Kind as Context,” 359-360; Cade Bambara “Gorilla, My Love,” 360-365.

**Week Eight: Initiation Stories & The Short Short Story**

- **M 22:** Munro, “Boys and Girls,” 365-375.

**Week Nine: Culture as Context &**

- **M 29:** Laurence, “The Rain Child,” 411-428.

**November**

- **F 2:** Bronson, “Like the Sand of the Hourglass,” 439-442; Rodgers, “we all said, ‘she will kill herself,’” 442-450. *Critical Meditation #3 Due.*

**Week Ten: The Case of “A Rose for Emily” & Evaluating Fiction. CM #3 Due**

Game’ is not Good Literature,” 565-567.


**Week Eleven: Evaluating Fiction**

M 12: No Class: Veterans’ Day


**Week Twelve: Evaluating Fiction & Holiday**


W 21: No Class: Holiday

F 23: No Class: Holiday

**Week Thirteen: Evaluating Fiction & Drama**


F 30: “The Little Foxes,” 1028-1051 (this is a rough page estimate)

**December**

**Week Fourteen: Evaluating Drama**


**Week Fifteen: Evaluating Drama**


F 14: Final Essay Due: LA 111 by 5:00
Week Sixteen: Finals Week

Final Exam: