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LIT 110L.01: Introduction to Literature

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Introduction to Literature—LIT 110.01

MWF 9:00-9:50—Spring 2018

Contemporary American Fiction and Poetry

Henrietta Goodman—COR 337—Office Hours—MWF 10:00-10:50 (& by appt)
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Course Description:

This course serves as an introduction to reading and writing about literature. Through close reading, discussion, and critical analysis of fiction and poetry, students will gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of how literary works function, both thematically and structurally, to reflect human experience and engage with cultural and social concerns. The novels and collections of poetry we will read in this course are all contemporary (published within the past fifty years) and share themes and motifs related to coming of age; racial, cultural and gender identity; the “American dream;” and death and loss.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify, analyze, and compare thematic content of contemporary American fiction and poetry.
- Identify, analyze, and compare stylistic approaches to contemporary American fiction and poetry.
- Contextualize a literary text based on awareness of the text’s author and the social/cultural/historical placement of the text.
- Write clearly and coherently in the genre of literary analysis.
- Understand and employ various approaches to literary interpretation and analysis and use literary terms related to the analysis of fiction and poetry.
- Use UM’s library to find critical articles exemplifying ways in which literary scholars discuss the texts under study.
- Use MLA format for citations of primary and secondary texts.

Since this is a UM-approved Intermediate Writing course, students will learn to apply the techniques of literary analysis in well-supported and well-structured critical essays. The learning outcomes for IW courses at UM are:

- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively

- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions (largely style conventions like APA or MLA)
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

Because it is an Intermediate Writing course, this course requires an electronic submission (via Moodle) of an assignment stripped of your personal information to be used for educational research and assessment of the University's writing program. Your paper will be stored in a database. A random selection of papers will be assessed by a group of faculty and staff using a rubric developed from the learning outcomes listed above. This assessment in no way affects your course grade or your progression at the University.

This course counts toward the Literary and Artistic Studies (L) General Education requirement at UM. Upon completion of a Literary and Artistic Studies course, students will be able to:

- Analyze works of art with respect to structure and significance within literary and artistic traditions, including emergent movements and forms
- Develop coherent arguments that critique these works from a variety of approaches, such as historical, aesthetic, cultural, psychological, political, and philosophical.

Texts: *Love Medicine* by Louise Erdrich (2009 edition)

The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison

CivilWarLand in Bad Decline by George Saunders

Imaginary Vessels by Paisley Rekdal

Map to the Stars by Adrian Matejka

When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities by Chen Chen

You must have print copies of all texts for this course. If you order books online rather than purchasing them from the campus bookstore, be sure your order will arrive in time (see the course calendar). *Love Medicine* has undergone several revisions and expansions since its original publication, so be sure to purchase the 2009 edition.

Course Requirements:

- Six brief (1-2 pages) reflective essays contextualizing texts and/or presenting and responding to library research
- Three short analytic essays (3-4 pages)
- One revision/expansion of an analytic essay (essay #1 or essay #2), incorporating comparison of texts (4-5 pages)
- Participation in class discussions and activities (including satisfactory performance on reading quizzes)

All essays must be typed (double-spaced, with 1” margins and 12 pt. font). I will provide detailed written instructions, including due dates and grading criteria, for each assignment. If you would like feedback on an essay draft prior to the due date, feel free to email it to me (the earlier the better: if you send it the night before it is due, I may not have time to respond and/or you may not have time to revise based on my feedback).

This course is most engaging and productive when it is primarily discussion-based, rather than lecture-based. For this reason, preparedness for class and participation in discussions are essential. You will need to bring a physical copy (not an electronic copy) of each text to class, and you will need to keep up with assigned reading in order to do well on the reading quizzes and participate actively.

Grading:

- Brief reflective essays 20% (3.33% each)
- Short analytic essays 40% (13.3% each)
- Revised/expanded analytic essay 20%
- Participation and reading quizzes 20%

Late Paper Policy: Papers should be submitted at the beginning of class on the day they are due. I will accept only printed papers (no emailed papers, please). For each day that a paper is late, the grade for the paper will drop by 5 points (half a letter-grade). On workshop days, you must bring a printed draft of your paper to class. If you do not bring a draft, you will receive a half-absence for the day.

Attendance: You are allowed four absences without penalty. Each additional absence will cause your **course grade** to drop by half of a letter grade (5 points per absence). Under extreme circumstances, please speak with me.

Academic Honesty: All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code: (http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php). Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words or ideas without attribution and is a violation of the Student Conduct Code. Since most plagiarism is accidental, rather than deliberate, we will spend some class time addressing the appropriate use of quoted (and other “borrowed”) material.

Disability Accommodation: The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you have a disability that affects your academic performance, and you are not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson Center 154 or 406.243.2243. I will work with you and DSS to provide appropriate modification.

Course Schedule:

Week 1

Monday 1/22—Introduction to course

Wednesday 1/24—*The Bluest Eye*

Friday 1/26—*The Bluest Eye*

Week 2

Monday 1/29—*The Bluest Eye*, Reflective essay #1 due

Wednesday 1/31—*The Bluest Eye*

Friday 2/2—*The Bluest Eye*

Week 3

Monday 2/5—*The Bluest Eye*

Wednesday 2/7—*CivilWarLand*

Friday 2/9—*CivilWarLand*

Week 4

Monday 2/12—*CivilWarLand*, Reflective essay #2 due

Wednesday 2/14—*CivilWarLand*

Friday 2/16—*CivilWarLand*

Week 5

Monday 2/19—HOLIDAY

Wednesday 2/21—*CivilWarLand*

Friday 2/23—Workshop analytic essay #1

Week 6

Monday 2/26—*Map to the Stars*, Analytic essay #1 due

Wednesday 2/28—*Map to the Stars*

Friday 3/2—*Map to the Stars*, Reflective essay #3 due

Week 7

Monday 3/5—*Map to the Stars*

Wednesday 3/7—*Map to the Stars*
Friday 3/9—*Map to the Stars*

Week 8

Monday 3/12—*When I Grow Up*
Wednesday 3/14—*When I Grow Up*, Reflective essay #4 due
Friday 3/16—*When I Grow Up*

Week 9

Monday 3/19—*When I Grow Up*
Wednesday 3/21—*When I Grow Up*
Friday 3/23—*When I Grow Up*

Week 10—SPRING BREAK

Week 11

Monday 4/2—Workshop analytic essay #2
Wednesday 4/4—*Love Medicine*, Analytic essay #2 due
Friday 4/6—*Love Medicine*

Week 12

Monday 4/9—*Love Medicine*, Reflective essay #5 due
Wednesday 4/11—*Love Medicine*
Friday 4/13—*Love Medicine*

Week 13

Monday 4/16—*Love Medicine*
Wednesday 4/18—*Imaginary Vessels*
Friday 4/20—*Imaginary Vessels*

Week 14

Monday 4/23—*Imaginary Vessels*, Reflective essay #6 due
Wednesday 4/25—*Imaginary Vessels*
Friday 4/27—*Imaginary Vessels*

Week 15

Monday 4/30—*Imaginary Vessels*

Wednesday 5/2—Workshop analytic essay #3

Friday 5/4—Analytic essay #3 due

Final Exam Time—Tuesday 5/8—10:10-12:10--Revision/expansion of analytic essay #1 or #2 due

***Note that you will write three analytic essays for this course and you will revise/expand either the first or second of these essays as your final assignment. We do not have a final exam (and you do not have to attend the full two-hour period), but you will turn in your revised/expanded analytic essay along with the original version during our scheduled final exam time.