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LIT 110L.02: Introduction to Literature

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Introduction to Literature (LIT 110): “Wild Things”

Mon/Wed/Fri 12-12:50 NAC 105

Spring 2018

Professor Louise Economides

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Office Hours: (LA 119): MWF 10:30-11:50 am and by appointment

This course introduces students to the challenges and pleasures of studying literature at the college level. It should also be seen as an opportunity to engage with fundamental questions about the meaning of life, what you value and why others may have very different answers to these questions than you do. On a fundamental level, literature asks us to consider the human experience in all of its variety, complications, uncertainties, flaws, and occasional moments of epiphany. It also asks us to think deeply about the *contexts* that shape who we are – the identities we forge in relation to others. Social and environmental forces shape who we are, whether these be national, regional (place-based), familial, religious, economic, ethnic, racial, gender-based or to do with sexual orientation. Thematically, we’ll use ideas of “wildness” and/or “wilderness” as a framework for investigating these issues. Historically, wildness/wilderness have played central roles in shaping American identity, but in our contemporary era (when many thinkers are declaring the “death of nature”) is this still the case and will this continue to be the case in the future?

As an introduction to the discipline of literary studies, our focus will be strategies for how to interpret texts. What makes a text “literary” in the first place? How should genre—a text’s adherence to the conventions of fiction, poetry, or drama—affect the way we go about making sense of a work? What do the most basic elements of literature (figurative language, voice, sound, and structure) contribute to a text’s potential meanings? How do personal experiences and perspectives affect what each of us sees in a work of literature and the ways we each interpret what we see? Discussion and writing are two of the most effective ways we have for thinking through our engagements with texts, ideas, and the world beyond ourselves. For this reason, LIT 110 is both discussion-oriented and writing-intensive. The course will provide guidance through the process of writing clear and interesting essays about literature.

Required texts:

- *The Norton Introduction to Literature – Portable 11th Edition*
- Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*
- Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*: Norton Critical Edition.
- Jon Krakauer. *Into the Wild*.
- Cheryl Strayed. *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*.
- William Shakespeare. *The Tempest* (Pelican Edition).

COURSE POLICIES

1. An important requirement of this class is that you have with you in class a physical paper copy of the literature we’re reading for each day. This includes the required texts listed just above and all the poems/short stories listed on our schedule. Any texts accessed from Moodle *need to be printed out and brought to class on the day(s) they’ll be discussed*. Our culture is on the cusp of print and electronic technologies, but until electronic texts can allow us to mark them up with the same facility as we can *annotate* a paper text with a pencil they’re not sufficient for our purposes. A physical text is a basic tool that can enable you to read literature more engagingly.

Annotation: Some of the major writing assignments for the course *will require you to turn in a photocopy of your annotations of the literary text you are working with* (points will be deducted for not doing this). I will also be making notes regarding students whose texts don't show annotations during in-class group work. If you do not annotate this will reduce your "participation" grade for the class. So please get in the habit of *always annotating* what you read for this course.

Vocabulary: You should take it upon yourself to learn each word that's new to you in the literature we read. Keep a dictionary by your side as you read (most dictionaries, including dictionary.com, are perfectly fine), circle words you don't know and write definitions for them in the margins.

2. No electronic devices are allowed during class time. Please turn off your phones and leave other electronic devices at home. If you have special needs that require you to type out class notes on a computer, please see me in advance so that we can make arrangements for this (you may be asked to provide doctor's evidence re. a disability, etc.). Bringing electronic devices to class and attempting to use them will reduce your grade for the course.

3. Revising writing assignments: opportunities to revise your writing are part of this course. Successful approaches to the revision process are *active* rather than passive. That is, you must be willing to carefully *read, think about and act upon* your instructor's feedback on drafts of papers. **If your instructor indicates you are having difficulty with grammar, punctuation, citation or other basic writing skills you must look up information about these issues in *Hacker's A Pocket Style Manual* and revise your writing accordingly.** You should also come to office hours if you have questions about such issues and/or about other feedback on your drafts. First drafts will receive a grade in order to indicate how successful your initial attempt has been to meet the assignment requirements, *so always take the time to put forward your best first attempt.* Final drafts will also receive a grade, and will reflect how effective your revisions have been. Be sure to turn in your first and final drafts of all revised writing assignments.

4. Participation and Attendance: Exploring literature in the company of other readers is an opportunity to learn about the texts in ways that we never could as solitary individuals. Our classes will be successful to the extent that each of you keeps up with the readings and contributes to our discussions. *Regular attendance* (no more than **2** absences) and active participation are vital to your success in this course. If you miss more than 2 classes this session, you can expect a maximum grade of "C" for your participation grade (less if you failed to meet participation guidelines listed here). *Successful participation includes:* 1) coming to class having carefully read and *annotated* assigned texts 2) sharing your thoughts about the readings during our class discussions 3) asking focused questions concerning the readings 4) responding at length to questions posed by your peers and/or instructor 5) actively participating in group work 6) coming to office hours to discuss issues we don't have time to cover in class.

5. Late Papers: Papers turned in more than **one class period** late will not be accepted. Late papers may result in you receiving less feedback from your instructor, so please try to turn in your work on time.

6. Academic Honesty: Plagiarism is a violation of trust. According to the Provost, "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. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>." Violators of the Student Conduct Code will receive an "F" for the offending paper and may receive an "F" for the course.

7. Accommodation: The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

Specific objectives of the course:

1. To gain an appreciation for literature's social and aesthetic merits.
2. To gain understanding of the distinguishing characteristics of the major literary genres (poetry, fiction, drama)

and to analyze specific examples in light of these characteristics.

3. To learn how to perform a meaningful, interesting close reading of a literary text.
4. To engage thoughtfully with a range of different perspectives concerning the central ideas and aesthetic characteristics of a literary text.
5. To learn the stylistic conventions of formatting an essay.
6. To gain proficiency writing well-reasoned and grammatically sound prose.

Graded Work:	Microtheme #1 (summary and application paper)	250
	Microtheme #2 (close reading/handling quotes)	200
	Microtheme #3 (developing a thesis)	100
	Literary Analysis Paper	250
	PARTICIPATION	200
		1000 total possible

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF CLASSES (subject to changes)

“Moodle”: This is where I’ll post copies of poems we’ll be reading, assignment sheets, etc. Here is one route to Moodle: go to UM’s main web page and click on “MY” on the top bar. Click on UOnline/Moodle on the top bar. Log-in with your NetID. Look for our course in your list of courses on the left side of the page. All readings on Moodle will be designated with an (M) on the weekly reading schedule.

According to the pace of our discussions, we will deviate from the following schedule from time to time. Each class I will confirm the assignment for the next class. It’s important that you exchange contact information with one of your classmates. Anytime you miss a class you should get in touch with that person to learn if there have been any changes to the schedule.

WEEK ONE: Wildness/Wilderness in American Culture

- Mon. 1/22: Course Introduction
Wed. 1/24: Thoreau, “Walking” (M)
Fri. 1/26: Thoreau, “Walking”

WEEK TWO: Wildness/Wilderness in American Culture, continued

- Mon. 1/29: Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness” (M)
Wed. 1/31: Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness”
Fri. 2/2: Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (overview) + conventions of drama

WEEK THREE: Historicizing Wilderness – Early Modernism

- Mon. 2/5: Acting/discussion: *The Tempest* (read all of ACT I; focus on ACT I: Scene 2: lines 238-376)
Wed. 2/7: Acting/discussion *The Tempest* (read all of ACT II; focus on ACTII: Scene 2: lines 1-183)
Fri. 2/9: Acting/discussion: *The Tempest* (read all of ACTIII; focus on ACT III: Scene 1: lines 1-96)

WEEK FOUR: Historicizing Wilderness – Early Modernism, continued

- Mon. 2/12: Acting/discussion: *The Tempest* (read all of ACTS IV & V; Focus on ACT IV: Scene 1: lines 1-164)
Wed. 2/14: Writing workshop: Paragraph building and tailoring quotations (homework: write first draft of Microtheme #1 and bring **2 copies** to class on Friday; one with your name + one with pseudonym)
Fri. 2/16: Writing workshop: FIRST DRAFT MICROTHEME #1 DUE

WEEK FIVE: *The Tempest* and Poetry

Mon. 2/19 – NO CLASS (PRESIDENT’S DAY)

Wed. 2/21: *The Tempest*, conclusion; focus on ACT V: Scene 1: lines 1-57 and 250-319 + Epilogue

Fri. 2/23: Lecture on Poetry; “Poetry: Reading, Responding, Writing” (Norton Anthology, pg. 450-452)

WEEK SIX: Wild Poetry

Mon. 2/26: Blake, “The Lamb” and “The Tyger”

Wed. 2/28: Rich, “Diving into the Wreck” + “Symbol” in Norton Anthology (pg. 573-574)

Fri. 3/2: Shakespeare, “My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun”; Wordsworth, “The world is too much with us”;
FINAL DRAFT MICROTHEME #1 DUE

WEEK SEVEN: Wild Poetry, Continued

Mon. 3/5: Browning, “My Last Duchess”

Wed. 3/7: Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”

Fri. 3/9: Heaney, “Digging”

WEEK EIGHT: Wild Poetry, Continued

Mon. 3/12: Bishop, “The Moose” (M)

Wed. 3/14: Coleridge, “Kubla Khan”

Fri. 3/16: Angelou, “Africa”; Walcott, “A Far Cry from Africa”

WEEK NINE: Weird and Wild Prose

Mon. 3/19: “Fiction: Reading, Responding, Writing” (pg. 12-13 in Norton Anthology); “Narration and Point of View” (pg. 102-106 in NA); Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper”

Wed. 3/21: “Symbol and Figurative Language” (pg. 205-210 in NA): Hawthorne, “The Birth-Mark”

Fri. 3/23: Hawthorne, “The Birth-Mark” continued; MICROTHEME #2 DUE

WEEK TEN: 3/26-3/30 -- NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK

WEEK ELEVEN: Weird and Wild Prose, continued

Mon. 4/2: Writing workshop: thesis writing and outlining – the literary analysis paper

Wed. 4/4: O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find”

Fri. 4/6: O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find”

WEEK TWELVE: Weird and Wild Prose, continued

Mon. 4/9: Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Wed. 4/11: Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Fri. 4/13: Writing workshop; FIRST DRAFT MICROTHEME #3 DUE

WEEK THIRTEEN: Wilderness in Fiction/Non-Fiction

Mon. 4/16: Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Wed. 4/18: Krakauer, *Into the Wild*

Fri. 4/20: Krakauer, *Into the Wild*; FINAL DRAFT MICROTHEME #3 DUE

WEEK FOURTEEN: Wilderness in Contemporary Non-Fiction

Mon. 4/23: Krakauer, *Into the Wild*

Wed. 4/25: Strayed, *Wild*; Rich, "Power" (M)

Fri. 4/27: Strayed, *Wild*

WEEK FIFTEEN: Wilderness in Contemporary Non-Fiction

Mon. 4/30: Strayed, *Wild*

Wed. 5/2: TBA

Fri. 5/4: Review, course evaluations. LITERARY ANALYSIS PAPER DUE