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## LIT 110L.50: Introduction to Literature

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**Joseph Campana**

**LIT 110L-50: Introduction to Literature (Online)**

**Term: Autumn, 2018**

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### **Overview**

The class is designed to be an introduction to literature, focusing on the reading and interpretation of short stories, novels, plays, poems, and non-fiction, especially with reference to their themes and internal forms.

### **How Work Will Be Posted Each Week**

I will post assignments by 7:00 pm on Monday each week. Unless otherwise noted, you will have until 5:00 pm the following Monday to complete that week's assignment, usually either a post to a Discussion Board or a formal paper. Due dates will be modified for the first post of class. See course site for specific dates.

### **Readings and Films**

Please purchase copies of the books on the reading list, either at the UM bookstore or from another provider of your choice. I recommend that you rent the movies rather than purchase them. All of the movies can be rented from Amazon. Some may be streamed on Netflix. Not all films listed below are required.

### **Books**

- *The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Short Stories*—Tobias Wolff, editor
- *Between the World and Me*—Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *The Secret Agent*—Joseph Conrad
- *The Woman Upstairs*—Claire Messud
- *How I Learned To Drive*—Paula Vogel
- *The Flick*—Annie Baker
- Various short stories and a play posted as pdf files on the course website
- Various poems, posted on the course website

### **Films**

- *O.J.: Made in America*, Episode 2 (2016)—Ezra Edelman, director
- *Citizenfour* (2014)—Laura Poitras, director

### **Discussion Boards**

I will post a Discussion Board prompt almost every week. You must respond to the prompt and to at least two other student postings each week. Please post thoughtful, thorough responses to the prompts and to each other's posts. ***In total, there will be 10 Discussion Boards, each graded out of ten points for a total of 100 points.*** I recommend that you not miss Discussion Boards. You will have an opportunity to make up only one

missed Discussion Board. The makeup Discussion Board will be discussed in more detail below.

Your response to the week's prompt *should be a minimum of 500 words* and should demonstrate that you've read the week's assignment closely. The goal each week should be to write a thorough, interesting post. Substantiate your remarks by referring specifically to events in the story you're writing about. *You must quote from the story at least once in your response, and you must format your quotation properly. One of the key goals for the semester will be to master the practice of incorporating quotations into your writing about literature.*

Your responses to other students' posts need not be as lengthy as your response to the prompt, but these responses to your classmates' work should not be cursory either. I hope it goes without saying that insults and rude remarks are impermissible. You must be polite when you respond to each other's posts. However, that does not mean you must agree with each other. It is OK, indeed it is recommended, that when you respond to each other you invite your classmates to consider new things about the stories under review. Posts in which we merely pat each other on the back are unlikely to lead to deeper understanding and are therefore of little educational value.

***In order to receive credit for the course you must post a minimum of seven discussion boards.***

#### **Please Note the Following Exception**

For the first week of class there will be two Discussion Boards rather than one. The first of these will ask you to introduce yourself to the class. Please write a post that is similar to my introduction. You do not need to respond to each other's introduction posts. Please do respond to others' posts for the second prompt. *Your introduction post will not be graded. The other discussion board for this week will be graded out of ten points.*

#### **Formal Papers**

There will be four formal papers, each of which should be no less than 1,500 words. Prompts for the papers will arise out of Discussion Board conversations. Each paper will ask you to respond to the class readings, and some will give you the opportunity to discuss feature films and documentaries as well. I will post paper assignments at least two weeks before each paper is due. I will post guidelines and formatting instructions (these will be simple and straightforward) when I post the assignment for the first paper. *Each of the formal papers will be graded out of 100 points.*

#### **Formal Papers will be due on the following dates:**

- Paper One: Monday, October 8 by 5:00 pm.
- Paper Two: Monday, November 5 by 5:00 pm.
- Paper Three: Monday, December 3 by 5:00 pm.
- Paper Four: Friday, December 14 by 5:00 pm.

## **Final Grade**

In total, there will be a maximum of five hundred points awarded for the semester: ten discussion boards for ten points each (100 total points) and four formal papers for 100 points each (400 total points).

Discussion Boards: 20 percent of final grade

Each of Four Formal Papers: 20 percent (4 x 20% = 80% of final grade)

***You must submit all four formal papers in order to receive credit for the course.***

## **Grading Scale**

This course will be graded with traditional letter grades A-F. I will also use + (plus) and – (minus) ratings within each of the letter ranges when issuing final grades. The grading scale is as follows:

- A: 95 – 100
- A-: 90 – 94
- B+: 87 – 89
- B: 83 – 86
- B-: 80 – 82
- C+: 77 – 79
- C: 73 – 76
- C-: 70 – 72
- D+: 67 – 69
- D: 63 – 66
- D-: 60 – 62
- F: Below 60

## **Late and Insubstantial Work (Formal Papers)**

You must submit each of the formal papers (and those papers must meet the prescribed word count) in order to receive credit for the course. If your paper does not fall within the designated range of the word count, the paper may be returned to you without a grade and you may be asked to resubmit an appropriately thorough paper.

Please contact me in advance if you have difficulty making any of the deadlines listed above. If you give me enough lead time, we will likely be able to make an arrangement that suits your needs and gives you an opportunity to produce your best work.

## **Late and Insubstantial Work (Discussion Boards)**

Responses to Discussion Board prompts must be posted by the prescribed deadline. Grades for Discussion Boards that fall below the prescribed minimum word count (500 words) may be reduced from the maximum possible score for the post. Grades may also be reduced if you post after the deadline for the Discussion Board. If you fail to post altogether you will receive a 0/10 for that week's Discussion Board.

At the end of the semester, I will post an extra Discussion Board to give you an opportunity to clear your lowest Discussion Board score from your record. In other words, there will be one make-up Discussion Board. Thus, you need not worry if you become overwhelmed for one reason or another at some point in the semester and miss a post. You can make it up later. However, please be aware that regularly missing Discussion Boards is the surest way to impair your standing in the class and to lower your final grade.

### **To Repeat**

As noted above, you must satisfactorily complete a minimum of seven discussion boards and you must submit all four formal papers to receive credit for the course.

### **Contacting Me**

Please feel free to email me any questions you may have regarding any aspect of the course. I can be reached at either [joseph.campana@mso.umt.edu](mailto:joseph.campana@mso.umt.edu) or [joseph.campana@umontana.edu](mailto:joseph.campana@umontana.edu). Both addresses point to the same place. I check email regularly, and in most cases you can count on a response within 48 hours. If you do not get a response from me, it is very likely that your email did not get through. This happens at least once a semester, sometimes more. If you think it has happened to you, please send me a text message at the Skype address below. I will then email you from my UM account and your emails to me should then get through the university's filter. I apologize in advance if you encounter any difficulty of this sort.

Please do not try to contact me through the quickmail link on the course web site or any other messaging links you may find there. For the sake of organization and efficiency I manage all university correspondence through my UM inbox ([joseph.campana@mso.umt.edu](mailto:joseph.campana@mso.umt.edu)). *Do not contact me at my gmail address. That is a personal account that I reserve for my affairs outside of the university.*

I am currently working from Lebanon and will be out of Missoula for the entire semester. If you would like to meet to discuss an issue, we can arrange to speak via Skype. Please do not hesitate to arrange a meeting if you wish to discuss your work on one of the formal papers. *I can be found on Skype at joseph.campana.* You'll also find that Skype address at the top of this page.

### **University-wide Program-level Writing Assessment**

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 following writing learning outcomes:

- 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;
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage.

This assessment in no way affects either your course grade or your progression at the university. Please carefully consider the one assignment you choose to submit. The assignment should be one you have revised after receiving feedback. Plan to submit the assignment (via Moodle) sometime during the final weeks of the course. You will get a number of reminders toward the end of the semester.

### **University Policy on 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. The Code is available for review through a link posted at <http://www.umt.edu/vpesa/Dean%20of%20Students/default.php>.

### **University Plagiarism Warning**

Plagiarism is the representing of another's work as one's own. Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion. (See pages 7 and 8 of the Student Conduct Code.)

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.

### **Reading and Formal Paper Schedule**

#### **Week 1 (Week of Wednesday, August 29)**

- “A Vintage Thunderbird”—Ann Beattie (*Vintage* collection, pp 29-47)
- “Aunt Granny Lith”—Chris Offutt (*Vintage* collection, pp 385-398)

#### **Week 2 (Week of Monday, September 10)**

- “Cathedral”—Raymond Carver (*Vintage* collection, pp 108-124)
- “The Wavemaker Falters”—George Saunders (pdf posted on course website)
- “Emergency”—Denis Johnson (*Vintage* collection, pp 274-285)

#### **Week 3 (Week of Monday, September 17)**

- “How I Met My Husband”—Alice Munro (pdf posted on course website)
- “The Garden Party”—Katherine Mansfield (pdf posted on course website)
- “Dog Heaven”—Stephanie Vaughn (*Vintage* collection, pp 509-520)

#### **Week 4 (Week of Monday, September 24)**

- “The Fat Girl”—Andre Dubus (*Vintage* collection, pp 125-140)
- “Lawns”—Mona Simpson (*Vintage* collection, pp 445-466)

**Week 5 (Week of Monday, October 1)**

Paper #1: Paper must be submitted by 5:00 pm Monday, October 8.  
*Between The World and Me* (Ta-Nehisi Coates), pp 5-71

**Week 6 (Week of Monday, October 8)**

*Between The World and Me*, pp 73-152  
Episode 2 of *O.J.: Made in America* (film, Ezra Edelman), or

**Week 7 (Week of Monday, October 15)**

*The Secret Agent* (Joseph Conrad), chapters 1-7

**Week 8 (Week of Monday, October 22)**

*The Secret Agent*, chapters 8-13  
*Citizenfour* (film, Laura Poitras)

**Week 9 (Week of Monday, October 29)**

Paper #2: Paper must be submitted by 5:00 pm Monday, November 5.  
*The Woman Upstairs* (Clair Messud), pp 3-97

**Week 10 (Week of Monday, November 5)**

*The Woman Upstairs*, pp 98-205

**Week 11 (Week of Tuesday, November 13)**

*The Woman Upstairs*, pp 205-304

**Week 12 (Week of Monday, November 19)**

*How I Learned To Drive* (Paula Vogel)

**Week 13 (Week of Monday, November 26)**

Paper #3: Paper must be submitted by 5:00 pm on Monday, December 3.  
*Fool for Love* (Sam Shepard), pdf posted on course website

**Week 14 (Week of Monday, December 3)**

Paper #4: Paper must be submitted by 5:00 pm Friday, December 14.  
*The Flick* (Annie Baker)

**Week 15 (Week of Monday, December 10)**

Paper #4: Paper must be submitted by 5:00 pm Friday, December 14.