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LIT 110L.50: Introduction to Literature (Online)

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

Term: Autumn, 2017

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Overview

The class is designed to be an introduction to fiction, 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

- *Between the World and Me*—Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *The Secret Agent*—Joseph Conrad
- *The Woman Upstairs*—Claire Messud
- *Fool For Love and Other Plays*—Sam Shepard
- Various short stories, posted as pdf files on the course website
- Various poems, posted on the course website

Films (not all films are mandatory; you have plenty of choices here)

- *O.J.: Made in America*, Episode 2 (2016)—Ezra Edelman, director
- *The Central Park Five* (2012)—Ken Burns, director
- *Citizenfour* (2014)—Laura Poitras, director
- *Risk* (2017)—Laura Poitras, director
- *What Happened, Miss Simone?* (2015)—Liz Garbus, director
- *Amy* (2015)—Asif Kapadia, director
- *Whiplash* (2014)—Damien Chazelle, 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.

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 9 by 5:00 pm.
- Paper Two: Monday, November 6 by 5:00 pm.
- Paper Three: Monday, December 4 by 5:00 pm.
- Paper Four: Monday, December 18 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)

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. If you miss the deadline for a Discussion Board, 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.

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 or 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). ***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 Tuesday, September 5)

"A Vintage Thunderbird"—Ann Beattie (pdf posted on course website)
"Rock Springs"—Richard Ford (pdf posted on course website)
"Reunion"—John Cheever (pdf posted on course website)

Week 2 (Week of Monday, September 11)

"Cathedral"—Raymond Carver (pdf posted on course website)
"The Wavemaker Falters"—George Saunders (pdf posted on course website)
"How I Met My Husband"—Alice Munro (pdf posted on course website)

Week 3 (Week of Monday, September 18)

"Dazzle"—Truman Capote (pdf posted on course website)
"The Garden Party"—Katherine Mansfield (pdf posted on course website)
"Dog Heaven"—Stephanie Vaughn (pdf posted on course website)

Week 4 (Week of Monday, September 25)

"Car Crash While Hitchhiking"—Denis Johnson (pdf posted on course website)
"The Fat Girl"—Andre Dubus (pdf posted on course website)
"Lawns"—Mona Simpson (pdf posted on course website)

Week 5 (Week of Monday, October 2)

Paper #1: Paper must be submitted by 5:00 pm Monday, October 9.
Between The World and Me (Ta-Nehisi Coates), pp 5-71

Week 6 (Week of Monday, October 9)

Between The World and Me, pp 73-152

Episode 2 of *O.J.: Made in America* (film, Ezra Edelman), or

The Central Park Five (film, Ken Burns)

Week 7 (Week of Monday, October 16)

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

Week 8 (Week of Monday, October 23)

The Secret Agent, chapters 8-13

Citizenfour (film, Laura Poitras), or

Risk (film, Laura Poitras)

Week 9 (Week of Monday, October 30)

Paper #2: Paper must be submitted by 5:00 pm Monday, November 6.

The Woman Upstairs (Clair Messud), pp 3-97

Week 10 (Week of Monday, November 6)

The Woman Upstairs, pp 98-205

Week 11 (Week of Monday, November 13)

The Woman Upstairs, pp 205-304

Week 12 (Week of Monday, November 20)

Fool for Love (Sam Shepard), pp 18-57 – from *Fool for Love and Other Plays*

Week 13 (Week of Monday, November 27)

Paper #3: Paper must be submitted by 5:00 pm on Monday, December 4.

Suicide in B Flat (Sam Shepard), pp 191-230 – from *Fool for Love and Other Plays*

Week 14 (Week of Monday, December 4)

“Chopin in Winter”—Stuart Dybek (pdf posted on course website)

“Testimony of Pilot”—Barry Hannah (pdf posted on course website)

Week 15 (Week of Monday, December 11)

Paper #4: Paper must be submitted by 5:00 pm Monday, December 18.

What Happened, Miss Simone? (film, Liz Garbus), or

Amy (film, Asif Kapadia), or

Whiplash (film, Damien Chazelle).

You will have the opportunity to include a discussion of one of the films in Paper #4.

Week 16 (Week of Monday, December 18)

Paper #4 Due: Paper must be submitted by 5:00 pm Monday, December 18.