

Literary Analysis 2341.05A – Summer 2008

“Some book are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.”
-- Francis Bacon

Instructor: Jaime Jordan
TR 8:30-1:00
Office: JO 4.120
Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00, and by appointment
Email: jj048000@utdallas.edu

Course Description

The purpose of Lit Analysis is to prepare students for higher level course work within the literature major. Accordingly, it is a skills-driven class where students will be introduced to scholarly modes of thinking, talking, and writing about literature. This class will present an intensive study of the three primary genres of literature: poetry, drama, and prose (narrative). Students will learn to approach literature as an interdisciplinary form of art that connects history, culture, and representation. Students will also become thoroughly acquainted with different literary traditions and literary terms.

Student Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to apply literary vocabulary
- Students will be able to analyze a text using “close reading”
- Students will be able to make an argument about a text using secondary sources

Texts

Required:

Kelly, Joseph, ed. *The Seagull Reader: Literature*. New York: WW Norton and Company, Inc., 2005. ISBN 039392677X

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Ed. Johanna M. Smith. New York: Bedford/St. Martin, 2000. ISBN 031219126X

Recommended:

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th edition. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

NOTE: Your MLA books must be the sixth edition.

Course Expectations

For happiness and success in this course, you'll want to do the following:

1. First, last, and always, read for *pleasure*. This is some of the most beautiful, inspiring, and intriguing literature of the Western world. You'll be happiest if you see your reading not as the last straw on your pile of homework every night but as a *break* from all that mundane stuff like statistics and math (okay, that's an English teacher's prejudice showing through. ☺)
2. Keep up with your reading (including relevant background and biographical information – take initiative and dig some of this up on your own) and attend all class sessions. The reading is exciting, yes, but also demanding, and catching up if you fall behind will be very difficult. Class discussions will proceed on the assumption that you have read the material.
3. Participate in class discussions with attention, thoughtfulness, and respect for our classroom community.
4. Take notes as completely and carefully as possible. Include not only information from lectures but also connections or ideas that occur to you (or your classmates) during discussions – these can be interesting seeds for papers.
5. Plan and prepare your papers before the due date and complete them on time.
6. Write competent prose. We will spend little class time on mechanical issues, so if you feel unsure about your writing skills, you should make an appointment with the UTD Writing Center, form a workshop group with your fellow students, or see me in my office.
7. Understand and avoid plagiarism. If you are uncertain about quoting or citing, ASK.
8. Attend all class sessions on time and let me know well in advance if you must be absent.
9. See me in my office or email me if you have any questions, problems, or issues. I'm glad to talk to you – that's why I'm here!
10. Take responsibility for your own success. Be professional, prompt, and prepared – every day.

Grading

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Paper 1 (Analysis) | 20% |
| Paper 2 (Research) | 25% |
| Reading journal | 15% |
| Midterm Exam | 15% |
| Final Exam | 15% |
| Class Participation | 10% |

Paper Grading Criteria

The characteristics of an “A” paper include the following:

1. A clear, multilayered, and interesting thesis sentence (for example, not just “Mary Shelley uses references to childbirth in *Frankenstein*” but “Mary Shelley’s references to childbirth in *Frankenstein* allow her to express and refigure her own anxieties about pregnancy and parenthood following the death of her first child”). Thesis sentences should answer the implicit question, “So what?” Ask yourself not just how an author has made certain choices but *why* he or she might have made those choices – what cultural or biographical factors, for instance, might be at work?
2. Close, thoughtful, and original readings of a text, supported well by quotations from that text. I want to see that you’ve really read and thought about the work.
3. Attention to the technical details (structure, meter, sound, imagery, et cetera) that help to create a work’s meaning.
4. Support from reputable scholarly sources when needed.
5. Clearly structured paragraphs with clear topic and concluding sentences.
6. Clear, formal writing (minimal “I”) that is free of misspellings, grammatical errors, and citation errors.
7. Typed and formatted with 1” margins and all citations in MLA style.

A paper – outstanding, above-average work

B paper – good work, still a bit above average

C paper – average work, meets expectations

D paper – below average work

F paper – much below average, failed to address the assignment

Papers become late after class ends on the day they are due. If a paper is turned in within the first 24 hours of the late period, its grade will be reduced by one full letter grade. A paper that is between 24 and 48 hours late will be reduced by two full letter grades. Any paper more than 48 hours late will receive an F. In case of absence, papers can be emailed to me as Microsoft Word attachments. Please discuss with me any problems or emergencies related to due dates as soon as possible.

Academic Ethics:

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts, or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work material that is not one's own. Scholastic dishonesty may involve, but is not limited to, one or more of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion, use of annotated texts or teacher's editions, and/or falsifying academic records.

Plagiarism is the use of an author's words or ideas as if they were one's own without giving credit to the source, including, but not limited to, failure to acknowledge a direct quotation.

Cheating is the willful giving or receiving of information in an unauthorized manner during an examination, illicitly obtaining examination questions in advance, copying computer or Internet files, using someone else's work for assignments as if it were one's own, or any other dishonest means of attempting to fulfill the requirements of a course.

Collusion is intentionally aiding or attempting to aid another in an act of scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, providing a paper or project to another student, providing an inappropriate level of assistance, communicating answers to a classmate during an examination, removing tests or answer sheets from a test site, and allowing a classmate to copy answers.

MANY CASES OF PLAGIARISM ARE THE RESULT OF CARELESS DOCUMENTATION OR FAULTY NOTETAKING. Unfortunately, the reader who finds the error, not knowing the writer's intent, can only assume the plagiarism is intentional. Intentional or not, plagiarism in any paper will still carry serious penalties.

Many students overreact when they learn what plagiarism means. They either assume that they should not use any sources (thus avoiding the problem entirely), or they assume they should document every word they have written. Both reactions are in error, for good writing involves the synthesis of your own ideas with the ideas of others. Documentation serves the purpose of clearly indicating which ideas are yours and which are those of other writers. If you are in doubt about that dividing line, ask your instructor or the Writing Center tutors for guidance.

Attendance, Participation, and Related Issues

Because each class period will consist of a mixture of lecture, discussion, group work and journal writing, your thoughtful, attentive, and active participation is ESSENTIAL (and will form a portion of your grade). If you sleep, engage in non-class-related activities (such as reading *Cosmo* or text messaging on your mobile phone), or interfere with your classmates' ability to learn, you will be counted absent for that day. Be on time – class will start promptly at 8:30 am.

Incomplete Grade Policy

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted **only** for work unavoidably missed and if the student has completed 70% or more of the required course work.

Student Conduct, Discipline, Academic Integrity, Handicap, and Religious Holiday Information

This information is contained in the UTD publication *A to Z Guide*, the *Handbook of Operating Procedures*, and the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System*. All of these publications are available online at utd.edu.

Useful Information

Disability Services – SU 1.610 (972-883-2098)

Student Counseling Center - SU 1.608 (972-883-2575)

UTD writing center: McDermott Library, 2nd floor room 2.402 (972-883-6707)

McDermott Library reference librarian: Linda Snow (972-883-2626)

Schedule

**All poems and short stories can be found in the *Seagull Reader*, unless otherwise noted.

**Bring the assigned reading with you to class!!!

May 27 (T):

Part I: Introduction to the course and major (Why read? Why study lit? How is the canon formed? These questions will be revisited throughout the semester)

Part II: Reading- how does one read effectively, and how does one spot what is important? (practice using “The Story of an Hour”)

Part III: Introduction to reading journals

May 29 (Th):

Reading: “What are Stories?” (pages 3-21 in the *Seagull Reader*); “The Telltale Heart” (on WebCT); “Young Goodman Brown”; “My Last Duchess”; “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”

Part I: The vocabulary of close reading, continued

Part II: Writing an Analysis Paper – Assign Essay #1

Part III: Writing Skills for Lit Majors

June 3 (T):

Reading: “What is Poetry?” (pages 365-391 in the *Seagull Reader*); “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day”; “Death be not Proud”; “The Tyger”; “In a Station of the Metro”; “This is Just to Say”

Part I: How does one read poetry?

Part II: The mechanics of poetry

Part III : Peer Review

June 5 (Th):

Reading: “What is Drama?” (pages 603-633 in the *Seagull Reader*); *The Importance of Being Ernest*

Part I: History of Drama

Part II: Literature as representation of human actions

Part III: Mid-term review

June 10 (T):

Part I: Mid-term

Part II: watch *The Importance of Being Ernest*

June 12 (Th):

PAPER #1 DUE

Reading: "Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown': Early Nineteenth-Century and Puritan Constructions of Gender" (available on WebCT); "A Rose for Emily"; "The Ghostly Voice of Gossip in Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily'" (WebCT); "Funes the Memorias" (WebCT)

Part I: What is Literary Scholarship? Discussion of popular forms of critical approaches

Part II: Reading the Historical/Cultural Argument in a text

Part III: Writing a Research Paper – Assign Essay #2

June 17 (T):

Essay #2 topics due

Part I: Genre and the Western Literary Timeline

Part II: Discuss *Frankenstein*

Part III: Library Orientation

June 19 (Th):

Part I: Continued Discussion of *Frankenstein*

(Presentations on the critical essays from the back of the Bedford/St. Martin's Press ed)

Part II: History of the Novel

June 24 (T):

First draft of Paper 2 due

Part I: The History of Poetry

Part II: Lyric Poetry

Part III: Modern drama (film) meets prose

June 26 (Th):

Part I: Peer Review

Part II: final exam review

Part III: course evaluations

July 1 (T):

FINAL EXAM

July 3 (Th):

Final draft of Essay #2 due

List of Terms

You should be familiar with the following list of terms and be able to apply these terms for the midterm on June 10.

Alliteration

Allusion

Assonance

Consonance

Diction

Imagery

Irony

Metaphor

Meter (iamb, trochee, dactyl, anapest, etc.)

Metonymy

Narrator

Personification

Representation

Rhyme (masculine & feminine, internal rhyme, near rhyme, eye rhyme, etc.)

Scansion

Setting

Simile

Spectacle

Syntax

Tone

Reading Journal

Journal Entry Due Dates (please post on WebCT by class time):

May 27: “The Story of an Hour” – in class

May 29: ONE of the assigned poems and ONE of the assigned short stories

June 3: Choose two poems from the assigned reading

June 5: *The Importance of Being Ernest*

June 12: “A Rose for Emily”

June 17: *Frankenstein*

June 19: your assigned critical essay from the Bedford edition of *Frankenstein* **

The purpose of the reading journal is to help you remember what you read as well as to encourage you to think critically about what you have read. For each journal entry, write a brief description of the story, poem, novel, etc. (no more than two paragraphs). Then, write your analysis of the literature. This is NOT reader response – ie, do not write whether or not you *liked* the literature. Rather, write any observations you made about the text while reading or any questions you asked while reading. Questions about a text are particularly useful in leading to fruitful paper topics:

What kind of question leads to an effective paper? First of all, you’ll want to avoid questions with easy, obvious answers or answers that don’t require further elaboration. Yes-or-no questions are out. “How” and “why” questions are generally more fruitful than fact-based questions, though this is not always true. A paper addressing a factual question that does not have a generally accepted answer can be very interesting. “When was *Beowulf* written?” is a valid starting point for an analytical essay, since the dating of the poem is still a subject of scholarly debate. The dating of Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market” is not, however, so if you’re interested in talking about it, you’d be better off asking a more detailed questions, such as, “In what way is ‘Goblin Market’ a product of the era in which it was written?” (*A Practical Introduction to Literary Study*)

Feel free to speculate about answers to your own questions, or to note down page numbers to return to for further study.

**When writing a journal entry for a secondary source (June 19), state the author’s claim as well as his or her supporting evidence. Note the strengths and weaknesses in the argument.

See the journal entry below as an example.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890)

The painter Basil befriends the handsome young Dorian Gray and decides to paint his portrait. Basil's friend Harry meets Dorian when Basil is painting his portrait. Harry is drawn to Dorian's youthful innocence as well as his good looks and, against Basil's wishes, views Dorian as a psychological experiment. Harry convinces Dorian that youth and beauty reign supreme, and Dorian subsequently laments that he will grow old. He wishes the portrait would age in his place, and magically this does happen. As a result, Dorian grows increasingly evil as he is able to act however he would like without the consequences showing upon his face. Dorian hides his increasingly disfigured portrait in his attic so no one can know the truth about him.

Meanwhile, Harry encourages Dorian in his selfish lifestyle, and Basil, jealous of Harry's time with Dorian, tries to reason with Dorian. Several years after the portrait is painted, Basil stops at Dorian's house to try to convince him to repent of his evil ways. Dorian takes Basil to the attic and shows him the portrait. Now that Basil knows the truth, Dorian decides to kill him, stabbing him behind the ear. Dorian is driven mad and sees accusing eyes everywhere. He stabs his own portrait, now hideous, and he himself dies. When Dorian is found, the portrait is pristine and Dorian is hideously disfigured.

Analysis:

- Is this novel didactic? Compare with Wilde's introduction that the reader who goes below the surface does so at his/her own risk. At what point is Wilde being serious and at what point is he poking fun and being cynical?
- Wilde examines class structure and the frivolous/deviant lives of the upper class. This seems to be the decadent lifestyle gone awry, as beauty is more important than goodness.
- What is the significance of Wilde using "scientific thinking"?
 - Harry treats Dorian like an experiment – without personal consequences. Dorian also lives a life without consequence.
 - Chapter listing Dorian's collections – scientific organization
- Why does Wilde include the chapter of lists? It is boring and slow – seems out of place compared to the fast pace of the rest of the novel.
- Why does Wilde use humorous language and wit to tackle such a serious subject?

Essay #1 – Close Reading of a Text

Email me your claim by **Friday, May 30**

First Draft Due: **Tuesday, June 3**

Final Draft Due: **Thursday, June 12**

Choose any ONE short story from the *Seagull Reader* that we will NOT be reading in class. Alternatively, you may choose one of the following poems: “Kubla Khan” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “La Belle Dame sans Merci” by John Keats, “The Raven” by Edgar Allen Poe, or “Sunday Morning” by Wallace Stevens.

Your first essay will be a 3-4 page argument about one of the short stories or poems, on a topic of your own design. You should make a claim about authorial intention (as the designer of the text). These are not intended to be research papers. The skills I would like for you to practice are those of textual interpretation, and your evidence should come from the text.

I recommend that you avoid compare/contrast arguments (they have weak claims) and that you avoid treating characters as people. Think about the choices the author makes. For example, why did Hawthorne choose the imagery that he uses in “Young Goodman Brown”? What does this tell us about Hawthorne’s intention?

Your goal in this paper will not be to express yourself or to give your impressions of the text, but to convince the reader of something new – something not discussed in class. Your claim can be about any aspect of the story, but it must be framed so as to teach the readers something new or to change the reader’s mind. To sharpen your topic, think about it as either solving some “problem” about the text, or arguing against an interpretation of the text that other people may hold.

For the rough draft: Please submit the clearest, cleanest, fully developed, TYPED rough draft possible. It should be at least 2 full pages long, written out rather than in outline format. Really work on narrowing your claim. Be sure to state your claim and the evidence that you will use.

Citations from the text must be in MLA format.

I look forward to reading your essays!!

Essay #2 – Research Paper

Paper Topic Due: **Tuesday, June 17**

Rough Draft Due: **Tuesday, June 24**

Peer Review: **Thursday, June 26**

Final Draft Due: **Thursday, July 3**

This 8-10 page research paper is a synthesis exercise, an opportunity to pull together the tools the class has given you and your own research to study a topic relating to any literary text. In addition, you will demonstrate that you have mastered the secondary sources related to the topic and have an original contribution to make to the field.

Look over the readings in the class, or any other reading or author that particularly interests you. Frame some questions you would like to investigate further. This could be a specific “case study” of a particular book, author, kind of book, or a bigger issue like gender within the text, etc.

Then begin your research and see what you can find related to the topic. Decide on the kind of secondary sources you will need to consult. For example, the biography of the author, or research on literacy levels of the time, or do you need contemporary reviews of text? The MLA bibliography is going to be very useful for this. Ideally, what you find will give you ideas to respond to, question, challenge, or extend, which will help you focus your topic.

Then formulate a working thesis, an argument or a position that requires defense or support (a reasonable person could disagree with you on this). As you go through texts and articles you found useful while writing the paper, you may realize you want to refine or change the argument in some way – go ahead and do it!

Keep the diagram, which we frequently refer to, in your mind while formulating your thesis. Try to understand where your claim/thesis would fit in the chart. You are also encouraged to use the “yes/but” introductions since they work very well with research papers.

Finally, each student must have a minimum of 6 – 8 research sources in their working bibliography. At least 1 must be a scholarly book while the rest can be articles in peer-reviewed journals. Citations from the text must be in MLA format.

A REMINDER: The purpose of most academic papers is two-fold: 1. demonstrate you know what has been said about this topic in the past and understand it; 2. show that you have an original intervention or contribution to make. (You should attempt to do both).