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Description of the Course

The short story, that appealing and deceptively tricky genre, is our subject this semester. But rather than anatomize the story's "elements" per se, we shall view them from the perspective of authorial strategies and reader responses.

For example, we shall consider how an author's strategies in shaping a narrative—its direction, voice, perspective, as well as its relative degree of exposition or dramatization—manipulate our perceptions and responses as readers. Similarly, various modes of fiction, e.g., allegory, fantasy, and mimesis—each allow for different handlings of the story's materials to achieve equally various intentions. These differences in ends and means demand correspondingly diverse modes of reading. Finally, we shall consider various styles in the story's historical development (e.g., romantic, realist, modernist, self-reflexive) and how these styles shape our expectations and responses as readers.

Required ReadingsPickering, *Fiction 50*

packet of readings

Course Requirements

Students will write three short analytical papers (c. 5 pp. each) on different short stories: the first (25% of grade) interprets a story's meaning; the second (25%) analyzes how a particular element contributes to the story's overall effect; the final one (30%) can be either an interpretation or an analysis. Class participation and completed exercises compose the remaining 20% of the grade.

LIT 3312 SYLLABUS

<u>Date due</u>	<u>Topic / Reading / Writing</u> (Readings are in <i>Fiction 50</i> unless noted as packet)
8/18	Introduction to course
	<u>I. Interpreting Stories</u>
8/23	"Theme" in "Reading and Studying the Short Story" Flannery O'Connor, p. 96 from <i>Mystery and Manners</i> (packet) <u>Theme vs. moral: the parable and fable</u> "The Emperor's New Clothes" (packet) parable of the prodigal son (packet) <u>Themes: explicit, implied and absent</u> Jewett, "The White Heron"
8/25	Mansfield, "The Fly" (packet)
8/30	Lessing, "Wine" Wright, "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" "Writing About the Short Story"
9/01	<u>Theme and symbol</u> "Symbol and Allegory" in "Reading and Studying the Short Story" Traditional symbolic associations (packet) Archetypes in literature (packet) Anderson, "Hands" (packet) Porter, "The Grave"
9/06	<u>Theme and allegory</u> Kafka, "A Hunger Artist" (packet)
	<u>II. Constructing Stories: Authorial Strategies and Reader Responses</u>
9/08	<u>A. Shaping and Tracing Narrative direction</u> "Plot" in "Reading and Studying the Short Story" <u>Manipulating time</u> Boyle, "Astronomer's Wife"

Chopin, "The Storm"

9/13 Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" **Theme #1 (interpretation) due**

9/15 Endings: Open, Closed, Surprise
Jackson, "The Lottery"
Glaspell, "A Jury of Her Peers"

9/20 Hemingway, "In Another Country" (packet)

9/22 **B. Narrative Voice and Perspective: Whose voice, from which angle?**
"Point of View" in "Reading and Studying the Short Story"
Authorial choices: 3 drafts of Hemingway's "Chapter VII" (packet)

Character narrators (first-person): central and peripheral
Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" (review)
Updike "A&P"

9/27 External narrators (third-person): omniscient, limited omniscient, objective
Beattie, "Janus"
Godwin, "Dream Children"

9/29 Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"

10/4 Reliable and unreliable narrators, authorial intrusion, narrative frames
Jewett, "A White Heron" (review)
Wetherall, "Wherever That Great Heart May Be"

10/6 **C. Developing characters directly (telling)**
Kafka, "The Hunger Artist" (review--packet)
Beattie, "Janus" (review)

Developing characters indirectly (showing)
"Character" in "Reading and Studying the Short Story"
Carver, "Cathedral"

10/11 Faulkner, "Barn Burning"

Blending showing and telling

Anderson, "Hands" (review--packet)

- 10/13 D. Narrative Texture: density vs. sparseness Theme #2 (analysis) due
 "Style and Tone" in "Reading and Studying the Short Story"
 James, from "The Beast in the Jungle" (packet)
 Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants" (review)

- 10/18 Rhythm
 Hemingway, "In Another Country" (review--packet)
 Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" (first page)
 Dos Passos, "Longlegged Jack of Isthmus" from *Manhattan Transfer* (packet)
 Fitzgerald, from "Winter Dreams" (packet)

III. Narrative Modes and Genres

- 10/20 Fantasy, Sci-fi, Magic Realism
 Le Guin, "Horse Camp"
 Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains" (packet)
 Marquez, "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World" (packet)

- 10/25 Marquez (cont.)
Self-reflexive fiction, Metafiction
 Paley, "A Conversation with My Father" (packet)

- 10/27 Barth, "Lost in the Funhouse" (packet)

- 11/01 The long story and novella
 Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener"

IV. Narrative Contexts

- 11/03 Biographical and philosophical
 Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"
 ———, "Why I Wrote 'The Yellow Wallpaper'" (packet)
 O'Connor: excerpts from various lectures (packet)
 O'Connor: "A Good Man is Hard to Find"

- 11/08 Historical and literary-historical
 Frank, "The Key Game" (packet)
 Hardy, "The Man He Killed" (packet)
 O'Brien, "The Man I Killed" (packet)

V. Short Story Evolution and Theories

- 11/10 Poe and the single effect
 Poe, "On the Aim and Technique of the Short Story" (packet)
 —, "The Cask of Amontillado"
- 11/15 Checkhov, mood and indirection
 Checkhov, "The Darling"
- 11/17 Modernist aesthetics **Theme #3 due**
 Joyce, "Araby"
- 11/22 Post-modern aesthetics
 Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths"

General Course Information and Policies

Syllabus

Items on the syllabus (due dates, readings, etc.) are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Reaction Papers

R.P. encourage you to express your views of the assigned work or a particular element of it (character, theme, style, etc.). R.P. are evaluated with a $\sqrt{+}$ (effort above expectations), $\sqrt{}$ (meets expectations), or $\sqrt{-}$ (below expectations). A missing r.p. counts as a two $\sqrt{-}$. These marks are averaged at the end the semester. Straight $\sqrt{}$'s over the semester = B.

Class Participation

C.P. is part of your final grade, though the exact percentage varies from course to course. It represents your active contribution to class discussion. Quality, not quantity, of contributions is what matters.

C.P. is computed as follows. At the end of the semester, I assign a participation grade using a "C" base. I.e., if you came to class, but said nothing, you would receive a "C" for c.p. I then adjust that grade based on your attendance. Excellent attendance (0-2 absences in a twice-a-week course) can raise c.p. by 1/3 of a grade; 3-4 absences don't change it; more than 4 absences lower it progressively by the number of absences.

Those students who would sooner face a firing squad than speak in class should contact me after the first class about doing extra written work to compensate for their silence.

Attendance

I do take attendance, and your cumulative absences affect your class participation grade (see above). Absences are excused for medical reasons or family emergencies only and require documentation (e.g., doctor's note, Rx, severed hand, etc.). Grandparents, I've found, have a disturbing tendency to die when major assignments are due (anxiety e.s.p., no doubt); in such cases, bring a signed and dated card from the hospital or funeral home. Leaving after the break in a long class may result in an absence recorded for that class.

Tardiness

Since class typically starts on time, if you come in late, you disturb not only the instructor and your classmates, but the "flow" of the lesson. Coming in late while a student is presenting an oral report is even more disturbing. And leaving early (except in an emergency) really has no justification in a 75 minute class. If you know you must leave early, let me know at the beginning of class and sit near the door. **Cumulatively, two tardies = one absence.**

Late Papers

Graded papers turned in late will be marked down as follows: 1-2 days late = 1/3 of a grade lower; 3-4 days late = 2/3 of grade lower; 5-7 days late = full grade lower; beyond 1 week, paper not accepted. **Late reaction papers are normally not accepted.**

Slide late papers under my door (JO 5.518), but be aware that it's when I receive it, not when you submit it, that determines their lateness.

Secondary Research

Check to see if s.r. is required, optional, or forbidden for the assigned paper. (In reaction papers, for example, s.r. is not allowed.). When used, it should never dominate your paper or control the discussion; your ideas should. Use s.r. to amplify your arguments, to provide contrasting views you will argue against, or (in your introduction) to suggest the range of critical opinion on your topic.

Consider the source's potential validity (and respectability): scholarly books and journal articles have been peer-reviewed and are therefore more reliable (and usually more sophisticated) than material found on the internet. Going into the library stacks also shows more effort than relying on the internet or on material in omnibus collections (e.g., *Poetry [or Short Story] Criticism*). High school-level crib sheets such as *Cliff's Notes* or *Monarch Notes* are never acceptable.

Use quotation marks for all material taken directly from a secondary source. For quoted material and for paraphrased material, **cite your source** parenthetically immediately after the quoted or paraphrased material, using author's last name (or abbreviated book title) and page number: "xxxxx" (Smith 40). At the end of your paper add a "Works Cited" page with complete bibliographical data. See the *MLA Handbook* for correct form.

Using the internet

Internet material is easy to obtain, but did not necessarily pass a quality-control test of peer-review and may therefore contain misinformation or highly dubious claims. **Let the user beware!** Researching books and articles on an author or work shows more effort.

Plagiarism

Passing off someone else's ideas as your own constitutes plagiarism, whether it was done intentionally or inadvertently. Likewise, having someone else write all or part of your paper. Thus, it's essential to show where your ideas came from, using parenthetical citation (see "Secondary Research" above). Be aware that A&H subscribes to "Turnitin.com," which can trace the source of material taken from the internet. UTD takes all forms of academic dishonesty very seriously, as does your instructor. Plagiarism can result—and in my courses has resulted—in an "F" for the course and the incident recorded on the student's permanent record.

Improvement points

In many courses, I review your work over the entire semester, and add a few points to your semester total if your writing has improved. Hence, save all your written work during the semester as I may collect it at the end of the semester.

