

English 1020E (002)
Understanding Literature Today
2014-15

Jonathan Boulter

Office: Arts and Humanities 3G20

Office Hours: Tuesday: 11:30-12:30; Thursday: 11:30-1:30

Email: jboulte@uwo.ca

Class: Tuesday: 10:30-11:30; Thursday: 10:30-11:30; Tutorial

TA: Meghan O'Hara: Tutorials 024 and 025

TA: George Ramos: Tutorials 026 and 038

“Literature,” writes Ezra Pound, “is news that stays news.” Our task in this course will be to give serious attention to the question of literature. What precisely do we mean when we speak of literature? If literature is, as Pound says, some kind of “news” what can this mean? (and why does literature remain “new”?). Our approach will be to analyze various forms of literature (prose, poetry, drama) and ask specific questions: Is literature some kind of specialized language? What demands does literature place on its reader? What happens when we read? Does literature teach us something about what it means to be human? Does literature offer us some kind of truth? How can we, as serious students of literature, speak—and write—effectively about our experience of these great works of art?

Required Texts:

The Norton Introduction to Literature, Portable 11th Edition. Ed. Kelly J. Mays.

Endgame and Act without Words. Samuel Beckett

Sexing the Cherry. Jeanette Winterson

Rules for Writers, 7th Edition. Eds. Hacker and Sommers

September

4 Introduction

9 Introduction. *Interpretation*

11 Melville. “Bartleby, The Scrivener”

16 Melville. “Bartleby, The Scrivener”

18 Hawthorne. “The Birth-Mark”

23 Hawthorne. “The Birth-Mark”

25 Gabriel Garcia Marquez. “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings”

30 Franz Kafka. “A Hunger Artist”

October

2 Art Auden “Musee des Beaux Arts”

7 Heaney. "Digging"
 9 Yeats "Leda and the Swan"
 14
 16 Charlotte Perkins Gilman "The Yellow Wallpaper"
 21 Charlotte Perkins Gilman "The Yellow Wallpaper"
 23 Ezra Pound "In a Station of the Metro"
 28 *In-class passage analysis*

November

4 *Desire*
 6 Shakespeare. "Not marble, nor the gilded monuments"
 11 Shakespeare. "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun"
 13 John Donne. "The Flea" "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" (*Essay One due in class*)
 18 John Donne. "Batter my heart, three-personed God"; Andrew Marvell "To His Coy Mistress"
 20 John Keats. "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
 25 William Faulkner. "A Rose for Emily"
 27 William Faulkner. "A Rose for Emily"

December

2

January

6 *Loss*. Sophocles. *Antigone*
 8 Sophocles. *Antigone*
 13 Sophocles. *Antigone*
 15 Sophocles. *Antigone*
 20 John Keats. "Ode to a Nightingale"
 22 Matthew Arnold. "Dover Beach"
 27 Dylan Thomas. "Fern Hill"
 29 Phillip Larkin. "Church Going" (*Essay Two due in class*)

February

3 *Pathologies and Character*. Robert Browning "My Last Duchess"
 5 Alfred, Lord Tennyson. "Ulysses"; T.S. Eliot. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
 10 T.S. Eliot. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
 12 T.S. Eliot. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
 24 Sylvia Plath. "Lady Lazarus"; "Daddy"

26 Heaney. "Punishment"

March

3

5 *In-class passage analysis*

10 Beckett. *Endgame*

12 Beckett. *Endgame*

17 Beckett. *Endgame*

19 Beckett. *Endgame*

24 Jeanette Winterson. *Sexing the Cherry*

26 Jeanette Winterson. *Sexing the Cherry* (*Essay Three due in class*)

31 Jeanette Winterson. *Sexing the Cherry*

April

2 Jeanette Winterson. *Sexing the Cherry*

7 Review

Assignments

Essay One: 500 words (due in class November 13, 2014): 10%

Essay Two: 1500 words (due in class January 29, 2015): 15%

Essay Three: 2500 words (due in class March 26, 2015): 20%

Two in-class passage analyses (October 28, 2014; March 5, 2015): 5% x 2

Participation/Tutorial grade: 10%

Final examination: 35%

Extensions and Late Penalties: Extensions will not be granted. Late essays will be penalized 2% per day including weekends. After seven days the essay will be given a grade of zero.

NOTE

- **Students must earn a passing grade in each of the term work and the final examination, taken separately, in order to pass the course. If you fail the term work, you fail the course regardless of how well you might do on the final exam. If you fail the final exam, you fail the course regardless of how well you did on the term work.**

- You are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergrad/info-forstudents.html>
- A Note on Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. (We will be discussing plagiarism later in the term. Please see the Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar 2012-2013:

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2012/pg113.html>

- **Plagiarism Checking:** The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.
- **Academic Accommodation:** Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The necessary form and further information regarding this policy can be found at the Student Services website: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>.
- Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Course Objectives:

Successful students who complete the course will be better able to:

- Develop further their ability to analyze texts critically, and formulate and produce essays which have an effective thesis with a clear, well-articulated intent, and a logical argument supported by adequate evidence from the text(s) under discussion;
- Explain the various theoretical and rhetorical approaches to literature, with specific attention both to their concepts, their

historical, cultural and intellectual contexts, and their application to different texts;

- **Develop research and writing skills which will not only augment their knowledge of the field of study, but will also be able to incorporate the results of this research into their essays and other assignments; among the basic research skills are the ability to collect relevant bibliographic material on a prescribed topic (online and in the library), and critically engage with the scholarly literature with an assessment of the relative merits of an argument in essays and other written/oral assignments, and articulate their own positions within a particular scholarly discussion;**
- **Develop further their written/oral communication skills in the clear and organized presentation of an argument/hypothesis within the prescribed word limits of the research essays and other written/oral assignments.**