

**English 1027F (001): The Storyteller's Art I: Introduction to Narrative**

Department of English  
University of Western Ontario

Fall 2014

*Lectures: UC 142 ~ Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-10:30*

<https://owl.uwo.ca/>

**Instructor**

Dr. Christopher Keep

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30-11:30 and Thursday 1:30-2:30 (or by app't)

**Tutorial Leaders**

Farrah Nakhaie

Tutorial 003: Thursday 12:30, UC 274

Tutorial 006: Monday 1:30, UC 274

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Office Hours: Monday 2:30-4:30, Arts & Humanities 3B11

Cameron Fediuk

Tutorial 004: Thursday 11:30, UC 274

Tutorial 005: Thursday 10:30-11:30, UC 282

Email:

Office Hours: Thu 3:30-4:30, Arts & Humanities ON15

Paul Zinaka

Tutorial 007: Wednesday 12:30, UC 274

Tutorial 008: Monday 3:30, UC 274

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Office Hours: Monday 12:00-2:00, Arts & Humanities 3B11.

Jonathan Doering

Tutorial 009: Thursday 12:30, UC 282

Tutorial 010: Wednesday 12:30, UC 282

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30-12:30, Somerville House 2349

**Course Description**

Storytelling is a central feature of every aspect of our lives. We use stories to entertain and educate, to argue and debate, to confess and understand. This course studies the rich variety of stories we tell, and the ways we tell them. From *Gilgamesh*, the first narrative to be recorded in

written form, to Sophocles' tragedy of Oedipus, and from Sylvia Plath's classic tale of coming of age, *The Bell Jar*, to Daniel Clowes's celebrated graphic novel, *Ghost World*, we will study some of the major genres of storytelling: epic, myth, tragedy, allegory, and romance. What are the formal elements that make for a great story? How do character, theme, plot, perspective, and style contribute to our understanding of the text? How does a story's medium, as an oral, visual, or print-based text, change or alter our sense of its place and importance in our society? And what of the cultural work of storytelling? What hopes and desires, needs and anxieties, does it answer to? How do the representations of gender, sexuality, race, and class inform the art and practice of story-telling?

The weekly course schedule consists of two hours of lecture and a third hour of tutorial discussion facilitated by a teaching assistant. In addition to providing opportunities for the discussion of reading and lecture materials, tutorials will also provide substantial instruction in effective essay writing and research methods.

English 1027F is a course in its own right. It need not be taken in combination with any other course. Students who subsequently take English 1028G (The Storyteller's Art II), will have completed the 1.0 credits in first-year English necessary to take senior-level courses in the program.

### Learning Outcomes

Successful students who complete the course will be able to:

- Identify and analyze basic elements of narrative literature, such as plot, character, point of view, theme, setting, imagery, diction, and tone.
- Write an essay about a work of narrative literature, containing an effective thesis supported by adequate evidence from the original text;
- Research critical commentary on literary works;
- Evaluate the relevance, reliability, and usefulness of research sources, especially those obtained through the Internet;
- Integrate outside research materials and references to the original text into an essay through use of quotations and paraphrases;
- Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively;
- Document essays using MLA format.

### Required Texts

(Available in the English section at the Campus Bookstore in the University Community Centre)

Aaron, Jane E. and Murray MacArthur. *The Little Brown Compact Handbook*. Fourth Canadian Ed. (Pearson)

Bausch, Richard, and J.V. Cassill (eds.), *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*. Shorter Seventh Ed. (Norton)

Mitchell, Stephen. *Gilgamesh: A New English Version* (Free Press)

Clowes, Daniel. *Ghost World* (Fantagraphics)

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar* (Harper Perennial)

Sophocles. *The Three Theban Plays* (Penguin)

### **Assignments and Grade Distributions**

Four Quizzes: The Best Three (5% each): 15%

Passage Analysis (1000 words): 15%

Essay (2500 words): 25%

Tutorial Group Participation: 10%

Final Exam: 35%

*Note: Students must pass both term work and the final examination in order to pass the course. Students who fail the final examination (regardless of their term mark) automatically fail the course.*

### **Quizzes**

Four short quizzes will be conducted during the lecture hours on randomly selected dates. Each quiz will be made up of five questions testing your comprehension of the assigned texts and recent lecture materials. Of these four quizzes, we will choose the best three (each worth 5%), to count toward your final grade, for a total of 15%.

### **Passage Analysis**

A Passage Analysis is an assignment in which students get to develop their close reading and interpretative skills in preparation for the longer essay assignment at the end of term.

Students will be assigned an excerpt from a longer work previously studied in class. Read this passage carefully several times and provide a well-documented analysis of its structural features (its use of character, plot, setting, point of view, etc.) and its narrative style, including attention to word choice, figurative language, and use of symbolism. How does this passage contribute to the work's overarching themes and patterns of imagery? What makes this passage important to our understanding of the work as a whole?

The Passage Analysis should be approximately 1000 words or three-four pages in length. It will constitute 15% of your final grade. Further details regarding format and how to submit the assignment (including late penalties), can be found in the **Course Assignments** section below.

### **Essay**

Students will choose from one of four essay topics to be circulated four weeks prior to the assignment's due date. Each topic will provide an opportunity for the student to develop his or her analytical and research skills, combining a close and detailed reading of the text in question with a knowledge of the secondary criticism related to its study.

You will be expected to use at least two secondary sources, but the essay is not to be a review of such secondary literature. Rather, you should use your secondary sources to either support aspects of your own argument, or to show places in which your analysis differs from that of the critics upon whom you are drawing. The essay is, first and foremost, an account of your interpretation of the text, and should read as such. Please consider using an electronic search tool, such as the MLA Bibliography or the Humanities and Social Sciences Index, to find journal articles.

Your essay should be approximately 2500 words or eight-ten pages in length. It will constitute 25% of your final grade. Further details regarding format and how to submit the assignment (including late penalties), can be found in the **Course Assignments** section below.

### **Tutorial Group Participation**

All students will be assigned to a tutorial group of approximately fifteen students, facilitated by a Teaching Assistant. These tutorial groups are, in many ways, the heart and soul of a large lecture course such as English 1027F, affording students opportunities to raise questions and pursue issues introduced in the weekly lectures, and to share their insights with their fellow students. The tutorial groups will also provide a venue for instruction regarding researching, organizing, and writing an effective, university-level research essay, complete with secondary criticism and a list of works cited.

The Tutorial Group Participation grade will be divided between attendance (5%) and participation (5%). Participation means arriving for your tutorial on time, having read the assigned materials, and regularly volunteering informed, thoughtful, and helpful replies to questions and/or leading group discussions, as arranged by the Teaching Assistant.

In order for the tutorial groups to promote a free exchange of ideas and opinions, all students are expected to treat each other and their Teaching Assistants with dignity and respect. This means listening carefully to each others' contributions to the group discussion, and allowing each group member an opportunity to express his or her own point of view, with the objective of sharing and enriching our understanding of the literature we are studying.

### **Course Assignments**

Essay and Passage Analysis assignments will be written according to standard essay style: typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, and margins will be 1." A title-page is not necessary, but the first page must include the title of the essay, your name, the course number, the professor's name, teaching assistant's name, and the date.

Originality of argument, the ability to support the argument with reference to the primary text, rhetorical persuasiveness, syntax, grammar, spelling, and accurate bibliographic citation will *all* be factors in the grading of the essay.

All bibliographic notation will employ the MLA method of parenthetical notation and a works cited page. Please consult a standard style guide such as that found in the Little Brown Compact Handbook or the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, which is available in the reference shelves of the D.B. Weldon Library. A good online guide to the MLA method can be found here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

**Assignments will be submitted electronically through the owl site, and are due by 4:30 on the due date. Papers submitted late will be returned with a grade but no comments. Papers handed in late without prior permission will be deducted 2 per cent per day late, including weekends. Papers handed in after the assignment is returned will not normally be accepted.**

**Please keep at least one copy of each of your papers. Save each file on a usb key, external drive, or other form of back up media. Retain all returned, marked assignments until you receive your final grade for the course.**

### **Academic Accommodation Policy**

Students seeking academic accommodation for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counseling 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. Further information on how to apply for academic accommodation can be found here: [http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/index.html?academic\\_acc](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/index.html?academic_acc)

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### **Plagiarism**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a 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 (see [Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students](#) in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken in each class. Chronic absences may result in a formal request to be debarred from taking the final exam, as set out in the [Western Academic Calendar](#): “Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class . . . will be reported to the Dean (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination.” Students, of course, who are debarred from taking the exam, automatically fail the course. If circumstances prevent you from attending class regularly for a period, please do let me know so that we can work out some alternative arrangement.

### **Writing Skills**

English 1027F is a course in the academic study of literature. Though it provides instruction in essay style and research methods, it does not offer instruction in grammar and composition. Students who require such instruction are encouraged to visit the Writing Support Centre at the Student Development Centre. Details of their services can be found at: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing>.

### **Email**

Questions and concerns about the course should, in the first instance, be directed to your Teaching Assistant. If you have a question that you feel is best addressed to the instructor, please do feel free to get in touch. I will try to respond within one business day; email over the weekend will be returned the following Monday. Please note, however, that email is not the most ideal medium for the discussion of difficult conceptual material, such as is often the focus of queries regarding an English course. If you miss a class and would like to catch up, or are having difficulties with an assignment, please do consider seeing me during my office hours, or, if those times are not convenient, making an appointment to meet at some alternative time.

### **Electronic Devices**

Please switch off cell phones and remove headphones during class. Laptop computers and tablets may be used for taking notes but not for web surfing, email, social networking or any other non-course related activity. Students who are found to be using their laptops or tablets for any purpose other than note taking will be asked to leave the class.

**Lecture and Reading Schedule**

N.B. All selections marked *NASF* refer to Bausch, Richard, and J.V. Cassill (eds.), *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*. Shorter Seventh Ed.

September	4	Introduction
	9	Fundamentals Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" ( <i>NASF</i> 661-74)
	11	Fundamentals Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" ( <i>NASF</i> 661-74)
	16	Fundamentals Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants" ( <i>NASF</i> 335-39)
	18	Fundamentals Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants" ( <i>NASF</i> 335-39)
	23	Fundamentals Bierce, "An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge" ( <i>NASF</i> 51-57)
	25	Fundamentals Bierce, "An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge" ( <i>NASF</i> 51-57)
	30	Fundamentals Kafka, "The Metamorphosis" ( <i>NASF</i> 386-418)
October	2	Fundamentals Kafka, "The Metamorphosis" ( <i>NASF</i> 386-418)
	7	Epic Mitchell, <i>Gilgamesh</i>  <b>Passage Analysis Due</b>
	9	Epic Mitchell, <i>Gilgamesh</i>
	14	Epic Mitchell, <i>Gilgamesh</i>
	16	Tragedy Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i>

	21	Tragedy Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i>
	23	Tragedy Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i>
	28	Bildungsroman Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i>
	30	Fall Study Break
November	4	Bildungsroman Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i>
	6	Bildungsroman Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i>
	11	Bildungsroman Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i>
	13	Graphic Novel Clowes, <i>Ghost World</i>
	18	Graphic Novel Clowes, <i>Ghost World</i>
	20	Graphic Novel Clowes, <i>Ghost World</i>  <b>Essay Due</b>
	25	Postmodernism Oates, "How I Contemplated" ( <i>NASF</i> 591-602)
	27	Postmodernism Oates, "How I Contemplated" ( <i>NASF</i> 591-602)
December	2	Review