

Department of English & Writing Studies

Understanding Literature Today English 1020E (003) Fall/Winter 2016-17

Instructor: Dr. Alison Conway

Location: Talbot College 309

amconway@uwo.ca

519-661-2111 x85818 **Date/Time**: Tuesday 5:30pm–7:30pm

Office hours: Wed 1-4pm or by appt, AHB 3G16

Teaching Assistants: TBA

Prerequisite(s): Grade 12U English or permission of the Department. For part time students who have been admitted without the OSSD, this permission will be granted as a matter of course.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

This course invites students to consider what it means to read literature today. How does literature help us to understand the realities governing our lives in the early twenty-first century? We will consider literature's engagement in history and politics and our role, as readers of literature, in conversations that shape the worlds in which we live. Through readings of prose, poetry, and drama, we will interrogate how the trauma of war, the advent of civil rights movements, and the legacy of colonial and postcolonial governance have shaped British, American, and Canadian literatures. We will also consider, more specifically, aesthetic questions, such as: What is literature? How do literary texts speak to one another? How do the formal properties of a text engage its thematic preoccupations? Finally, students will engage intensively in the development of their own writing and oral communication skills through a series of assignments.

We will read prose, poetry, and drama primarily, but not exclusively, from the twentieth- and early twenty-first century.

This class meets once a week for lecture and tutorial.

Objectives:

By the end of the academic year, successful students will be able to:

- Develop a critical reading of a text and write essays that have an effective thesis and a logical argument supported by evidence from the text(s);
- Engage in research and properly document their essays using the MLA guidelines;
- Converse in the language of the discipline, using literary terms and concepts, both in written and oral forms.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

The Norton Introduction to Literature, 12th Edition—bundled with Nicole Krauss, Great House Andree Alexis, Fifteen Dogs Rules for Writers (Bedford)

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

Response Paper (600 words)	5%
Essay 1 (1200 words)	10%
Essay 2 (1800 words)	20%
In-class analysis	10%
Poetry memorization	5%
Vodcast	5%
Participation	10%
Final exam	35%

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note**: The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade.

Attendance: Students who miss more than 15% of classes (4 for the year) may, according to university regulations, be barred from the final exam.

E-mail: This is not a distance studies class. We want to meet with you to discuss ideas during office hours. If our hours conflict with other classes, please make an appointment to see us at another time. E-mail should be used only to set up appointments and to notify us of anticipated absences. All e-mail correspondence should respect the rules of style and grammar valued by English instructors.

Laptops: I do not permit the use of laptops in the classrooms (lecture and tutorial) unless a student has been granted accommodation by the Student Learning Centre. (Phone use in class is also prohibited. Please turn off your phones before class begins.)

Timetable:

Sept. 13: Introduction to English 1020E (What is art? Why write essays? Why write essays

about literature?); How to write a sentence.

Tutorial: meet & greet

Fiction

Sept 20: plot Munro, "Boys and Girls"; Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"

Tutorial: Writing 1: What is a thesis?

Sept 27: **point of view** Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"; Egan, "Black Box"

Tutorial: Writing 2: paragraphs

Oct 4: character Morrison, "Recitatif"; O'Brian, "The Things They Carried"

Tutorial: Writing 3: evidence/citation

Oct 11: setting O'Connor, "A Good Man is Hard to Find; Chekhov, "Lady with the Dog"

Tutorial: Writing 4: developing an outline

Oct 18: symbol Marquez, "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"; Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily"

RESPONSE PAPER DUE IN CLASS

Tutorial: review (short fiction)

Oct 25: theme Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street;"; review

Tutorial: discussion

Nov 1: Fifteen Dogs

Tutorial: Writing 5: first drafts and revision

Nov 8: Fifteen Dogs

Tutorial: Writing 6: introductions and conclusions

ESSAY ONE DUE IN CLASS TUESDAY NOV. 15

Poetry

Nov 15: Intro. to poetry; sonnet: Milton, "When I Consider How my Light is Spent";

Shakespeare, "Let me not to the marriage of true minds"

ESSAY ONE DUE IN CLASS

Tutorial: discussion

Over the weekend, choose Poet Companion/poem for recitation exercise.

Nov 22: carpe diem; Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"; Olds, "Sex Without Love"; aubade: Donne,

"The Good-Morrow," Plath, "Morning Song"

ESSAY ONE DUE IN CLASS

Tutorial: discussion; sign up for poetry performance

Nov 29: concrete poetry; Herbert, "Easter Wings"; dramatic monologue: Browning, "My

Last Duchess"; Bruce Springsteen, "Nebraska"

Tutorial: discussion

Dec 5: **sestina**: Bishop, "Sestina"; **lyric**: Dickinson, "Because I could not stop for Death";

villanelle: Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night"

Tutorial: discussion

DECEMBER BREAK

Jan10: **symbol** Blake, "The Sick Rose"; Parker, "One Single Rose";

theme Auden, "Musée des Beaux Arts"

Tutorial: discussion

Jan 17: theme, cont. Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow"; Rich, "Diving into the Wreck"

Tutorial: discussion

Jan 24: poetry review Tutorial: vodcast instruction

Prose Fiction II

Jan 31: **TEST: poetry analysis**; Krauss, *Great House*

Tutorial: vodcast instruction

Feb 7: Krauss, Great House

Tutorial: discussion

Feb 14: Krauss, Great House

Tutorial: Writing 7: Writing a Research Essay

Vodcasts due Friday Feb 17 by 4 pm

Feb 18-26: reading week: choose your final essay topic

Feb 28: library instruction: meet in Electronic Instruction Room, Weldon Library Tutorial: Writing 8: How to prepare a list of works cited/annotated bibliography

Drama

Mar 7: Sophocles, Antigone

Tutorial: Preliminary bibliographies due (and provisional thesis)

Mar 14: Sophocles, Antigone

Tutorial: discussion

Mar 21: Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* **peer-editing, final essay**

Mar 28: Hansberry, A Raisin in the Sun

ESSAY TWO DUE IN CLASS (with annotated bibliographies)

Apr 4: review Tutorial: review

Assignments:

All written assignments must be submitted to Turnitin.com. For instructions, go to our class Web page. Please include a Word Count at the bottom of the last page of your assignments.

RESPONSE PAPER

Answer, in around 600 words (2 pp.), one of the SQs for class on Oct 18th. The response should advance a cogent thesis, and it must draw on the text for evidence to support its claims. NO SECONDARY SOURCES MAY BE USED FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT.

ESSAYS

Extensions may be granted with permission of the instructor, but no essays will be accepted more than one week after the due date without documentation from the Academic Counselling office of your home faculty. Papers coming in late without an extension will be docked 2%/day, including weekends. No assignments will be accepted after the last day of class.

Essay 1: due NOV 15 IN CLASS. Write a 1200-word (4+ pages) essay on one of the following topics. Use the MLA format guidelines and provide a Works Cited.

NO SECONDARY SOURCES MAY BE USED FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT—No browsing the Internet! (You may draw on the Norton anthology to review your key term: plot, symbol, etc.; and you may draw on the OED and the Oxford Classical Dictionary, both available online through Weldon, for definitions of key terms.)

- 1. (point of view) How are humans characterized in Fifteen Dogs? How does seeing them through the eyes of dogs challenge common assumptions about the dog/human relationship?
- 2. (setting) What role does Toronto play in this novel? How do its various spaces shape the narrative and ideas about "home"?
- 3. (character) Analyze the character of Benjy. What insights does he contribute to our broader understanding of the dogs? How does he serve as a foil to Majnoun?
- 4. (symbol) What does the intertwined thread that binds the lives of Nira and Majnoun tell us about their relationship?
- 5. (plot) We know, from the start, how the story of all fifteen dogs will end. But death serves as more than an endpoint in the narrative. How does it shape the meaning and arc of the novel?

1020E Bibliography Assignment (Essay 2) This research project consists of two parts: Part A (due in-class, Mar 7):

- i. An introduction in which you define your topic (loosely). What critical conversations are you entering into? Who are the most important critics on your subject/author? Why have you chosen this topic? What contribution do you hope to make to discussions of your topic?
- ii. A preliminary bibliography: Make up a list of at least ten sources. This bibliography should list both newer studies of your subject and older, frequently-cited sources. Use MLA format for your bibliographic entries.

Part B (due, with final essay, Mar 28): Your annotated bibliographies. A complete list of the sources you are using for your essay in a Works Consulted, attached to your essay, as well as three 100-word summaries of **three** of your sources. Each summary needs to address the author's argument and its theoretical outlook and/or research orientation. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument? How has it shaped the thesis governing your essay?

Essay 2: Due Tues Mar 28 IN CLASS: Write a1800-word (6+ pages) essay on one of the following topics, using MLA format and documentation.

1) Write an essay comparing two of the poems of your Poet Companion. You may **not** write on a poem we have discussed in class.

Please note: If you are using a poem not included in our anthology, please note that you must use a standard, scholarly edition of poems; do not download poems from the Internet. Your job, in this essay, is to provide a close reading of the poems, advancing a thesis regarding one (or more) of their central concerns, either formal or thematic. You also need to engage with critics who have written on the poems, or poet, using their observations to support your own, or to serve as points of departure.

1. The characters in *Great House* often make reference to works of art, including poetry, film, photography and painting. Choose one of the following references and discuss the relationship between the reference and the chapter in which it appears, **as well as its significance for the novel as a whole**:

Garcia Lorca ("All Rise" and elsewhere)

Nicanor Parra ("All Rise")

Rembrandt, Self-Portrait (Kenwood House) ("Swimming Holes")

R.B. Kitaj ("All Rise")

Wim Wenders, Wings of Desire ("Lies Told by Children")

T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" ("Swimming Holes")

Krzysztof Kieślowski, Red ("Lies Told by Children")

- 2. Discuss the representation of masculinity in *A Raisin in the Sun*. What hopes and aspirations do the various male characters represent? How do conflicts arise from competing understandings of masculinity?
- 3. Discuss the chorus as a character in *Antigone*. What insight does the chorus offer into the central concerns of the play?
- 4. Read Tim O'Brien's "The Lives of the Dead." How do stories keep the dead alive? What role does O'Brien assign memory and the imagination in commemorating the dead?
- 5. In what ways does "Everything that Rises Must Converge" pick up threads woven into "A Good Man is Hard to Find"?

Poetry memorization: to be performed in tutorial sometime between Nov. 29 and Jan. 17 Choose a poem, or a selection from a poem, of between fourteen and twenty lines from one of the works of your Poet Companion and memorize the lines. You will be asked to recite the lines in your tutorial during one of the weeks we are working on poetry. You will also be asked about your reading of the poem and how your understanding of the poem's meaning informs how you recite it. If reciting lines in front of the class makes you feel self-conscious, you may make an appointment to see your instructor for a private performance.

Your Poet Companion is a poet of your choice whose last name has the same first letter as your last name. An alphabetized list of the poets who appear in our anthology is available on our class Web page. In the event that your letter is missing (I, U, V, X, Z) or the pickings are slim, feel free to choose a poet one letter up or down.

*Group Work: A vodcast, to be posted to submitted via email by 4 p.m., Fri. Feb 17.

Create an eight to ten minute vodcast, in groups of 4 or 5, that introduces a general audience to *Great House.*

Your vodcast should be aimed at interested general readers who have not read the novel. In this vodcast, you should provide information that will help them to get the most out of the novel while motivating them to read it. These vodcasts are designed to develop your skills at oral presentation and your ability to present relevant, interesting material about literature to a general audience.

You will use iMovie to record your vodcast. You will receive vodcast instruction and have a chance to work on your vodcasts in tutorial in January. You should also plan to work on this vodcast outside of class, of course.

Vodcast work will require four stages: a) research and preparation; b) writing a script; c) practicing; and d) production.

- a) During research and preparation, consider what kinds of information you want to include to develop your analysis.
- b) During the writing of the script, compose your information into a graceful presentation. Make sure you have a catchy opening and a good conclusion. Make sure that you cite all the sources that you use. You may want to use googledocs to write collaboratively.
- c) As you practice, make sure that you can pronounce all the words and read the script fluently. Experiment with pace and style to make your podcast as engaging as possible. Time yourself to make sure that you fall within the length limits. All members of the group must speak during the podcast.
- d) During production, record your vodcast. Revise, fine-tune, and modify if necessary. Adjust the volume of your voices and other music and sounds (if you use them).

Finally, please submit, on the podcast due date, a short report of your group work: note who was responsible for which tasks and how evenly the workload was divided.

*This assignment borrows from and adapts that of Professor Siobhan Phillips, Dickinson College, with her permission, for or English 101-03, "Contemporary American Fiction."

English 1020E: Assignments at a Glance

Tues Oct 18: Response Paper due, in class (and to Turnitin, before class)

Tues Nov 15: Essay 1, in class (and to Turnitin, before class)

Nov 29-Jan17: Poetry memorization/recitation Tues Feb 11: Test: In-class poetry analysis

Fri Feb 17: Vodcasts due by 4 pm

Tues Mar 7: Preliminary bibliographies and provisional theses

Tues Mar 28: Final essays due, in class (and to Turnitin, before class)

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade 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 UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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. Student will be asked to provide electronic versions of their papers for submission to *turnitin.com*. See also http://uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html

Any paper suspected to have been plagiarized will be sent directly to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Students should be aware that submitting the same paper in two courses is considered plagiarism.

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 for such checking 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 The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com http://www.turnitin.com.

Support Services

Registrarial Services http://www.registrar.uwo.ca
Student Support Services https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login
Services provided by the USC http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/student-psy.login
Student Development Centre http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/

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.

APPENDIX I: ESSAY GRADING CRITERIA

A + (90 and up)

- Forceful development of a distinctive and fresh thesis, with proper paragraphs
- Sentence structure correct, with full range of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound complex), with full range of punctuation (including semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses)
- Exceptional style, rhetorically impressive and few if any errors
- Close engagement with primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; carefully distinguishes the author's argument from those of sources. Quotations seamlessly integrated into text, with proper documentation
- Careful attention to conceptual and / or linguistics subtleties and ambiguities, qualifications and concessions, relations to other subjects, etc.

A (80 and up)

- Clear development of a specific and challenging thesis, with proper paragraphs
- Sentence structure correct, with full range of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound-complex), with full range of punctuation (including semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses)
- Graceful style, neither pompous nor breezy, and few errors
- Detailed reference to appropriate texts, with evidence of individual response
- · Quotations well integrated into text, with proper documentation
- Ability not only to expound subject but to see it around—subtleties and ambiguities, qualifications and concessions, relations to other subjects, etc.

B (70 to 79)

- Clear development of a specific thesis, with proper paragraphs
- Sentence structure correct, with reasonable range of sentence types and full range of punctuation
- Style not too wordy, with errors relatively few and minor
- · Adequately detailed reference to texts
- Quotations well integrated into text, with proper documentation
- Ability to expound reasonably sophisticated ideas with clarity

C (60 to 69)

- Reasonably clear development of a thesis, with proper paragraphs
- Sentence structure correct, but perhaps overly simple, with tendency to avoid punctuation besides period and comma
- Errors relatively few, but occasionally serious, with evident misunderstanding of some point of elementary grammar (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)
- Effort to support points with references to the text, with reasonable effort at documentation
- Basic ability to expound ideas

D (50 to 59)

- Inadequacy at one of the following levels:
- · Difficulty with paragraphing or consecutive thought
- Errors of grammar or diction frequent enough to interfere with understanding
- Ideas inchoate, but clouded by weak expression
- Overgeneralization with inadequate support, or with examples that run to lengthy irrelevant paraphrase

F (49 and down)

- Inadequacy on several levels at once
- Ideas too simple for level of course
- Content largely "borrowed" from sources with no individual distillation, but no apparent attempt to deceive

0 (Report to Department)

• Plagiarism with intent to deceive

APPENDIX II: WRITING INSTRUCTION

From High School to University Writing

- Williams and McEnerey, "From High School to College," http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/resources/collegewriting/high_school_v_college.htm#_Toc43153
 8571
- Headrick, "Audience and Literary Analysis Essay," 1-6
- Griffith, "What is Interpretation?" 8-13

Writing 1: What is a thesis?

- Williams and McEnerey, "But What's a Good Point?" http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/resources/collegewriting/high_school_v_college.htm#_Toc43153
 8571
- Booth and Mays, "Interpretive versus Evaluative Claims," http://wwnorton.com/college/english/litweb10/writing/B2a-interpretive.aspx
- Hacker and Sommers, "Drafting a Working Thesis," 18-19

Writing 2: Paragraphs

- Hacker and Sommers, "Build Effective Paragraphs," 50-68
- Headrick, "Analytical Paragraphs," 7-16

Writing 3: Evidence/Citation

- Williams and McEnerney, "Ensuring Your Evidence Fits Your Claims," http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/resources/collegewriting/strategy_for_analyzing_and_rev.htm
- Booth and Mays, "Evidence," http://wwnorton.com/college/english/litweb10/writing/B4-evidence.aspx
- MLA Handbook, "Quotations," 92-104
- Headrick, "Integrating Quotations from Literary Texts," 20-3
- Griffith, "Citation of Sources," 276-85

Writing 4: Generating Ideas/Developing an Outline

- Booth and Mays, "Getting Started." http://wwnorton.com/college/english/litweb10/writing/C1-getting-started.aspx
- Griffith, "Talking and Writing Strategies," 241-6

Writing 5: First Drafts and Revision

- Williams and McEnerey, "Preparing to Write and Beginning Your Paper," http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/resources/collegewriting/strategy for analyzing and rev.htm
- Booth and Mays, "Drafting," http://wwnorton.com/college/english/litweb10/writing/C3-drafting.aspx
- Hacker and Sommers, "Revising and editing sentences," 37-9

passive voice: *Rules for Writers* (*RW*), 112-13; over reliance on verb "to be," *RW*, 114; comma splices and run-on sentences: *RW*, 188-95; gender-biased language: *RW*, 167-70. dangling modifiers: *RW*, 131-34; faulty parallelism: *RW*, 116-19. vague pronoun references: *RW*, 212-16.; noun/pronoun agreement: *RW*, 207-11.

- Grammar guides: http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/resources/grammar.htm#quickguides
- Writer's panic setting in? Check out, "Symptoms and Cures for Writer's Block"-http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/567/1/

Writing 6: Introductions and Conclusions

Williams and McEnerney,

- "Effective Introductions" http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/resources/collegewriting/revising_the_introduction.htm#_Toc431538589
- "Effective Conclusions" http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/resources/collegewriting/revising_the_introduction.htm#_Toc431538590
 Booth and Mays,
- "Beginning: the Introduction" http://wwnorton.com/college/english/litweb10/writing/B3a-intro.aspx
- "Ending: the Conclusion" http://wwnorton.com/college/english/litweb10/writing/B3c-conclusion.aspx

Writing 7: Writing a Research Essay/Plagiarism

- Graff and Birkenstein, "They Say," "I Say," 15-98
- Griffith, "Research Papers and the Use of Secondary Sources," 303-19; and "Why/When/Where Should You Give Credit?" 319-24
- MLA Handbook, "Documentation: Citing Sources in the Text," 213-19
- Booth and Mays, "The Research Essay," http://wwnorton.com/college/english/litweb10/writing/D-research-essay.aspx
- Hacker and Sommers, "Citing Sources; avoiding plagiarism, 464-68
- Booth and Mays, "Using Sources Responsibly,"
 http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/litweb10/writing/D4a-using-sources.aspx

Writing 8: Preparing a Works Cited

- Hacker and Sommers, "Writing Papers in MLA Style," 457-532
- MLA Handbook, "The List of Works Cited," 129-212
- MLA Handbook, "The Format of the Research Essay," 115-18
- Williams and McEnerey, "The Last Tasks: Proofreading and Formatting," http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/resources/collegewriting/revising_the_introduction.htm#_Toc431538592
- Booth and Mays, "The List of Works Cited"
 http://wwnorton.com/college/english/litweb10/writing/E2b-list-works-cited.aspx

Works Cited

Booth, Alison and Kelly J. Mays. *LitWeb. The Norton Introduction to Literature Studyspace*. 10th ed. 2012. Web. June 6, 2012.

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. "They Say/I Say": the Moves that Matter in Academic Writing. London and New York: W.W. Norton, 2006. Print.

Griffith, Kelley. Writing Essays About Literature: A Guide and Style Sheet. 8th Edition. Boston: Wadsworth, 2011. Print.

Hacker, Diana and Nancy Sommers. *Rules for Writers*. 7th edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012. Print.

Headrick, Paul. A Method for Writing About Literature. Toronto: Nelson Education, 2010.

Modern Languages Association. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th Edition. New York: Modern Languages Association, 2009.

Phillips, Siobhan. "Contemporary American Literature." Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA. Fall 2012. Syllabus.

Williams, Joseph M. and Lawrence McEnerey. Writing in College: A Short Guide to College Writing. University of Chicago Writing Program, n.d. Web. Sept. 8, 2011.

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