

Department of English & Writing Studies

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

Fall 2016

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

Instructor: Dr. Christopher Keep
Room 3G24, Arts & Humanities
Email: ckeep@uwo.ca
Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30-11:30 and
Thursday 1:30-2:30 (or by appt)

Location: Middlesex College 105B

Date/Time: Tuesday, Thursday 9:30am-10:30am

Tutorial Leaders: TBA

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.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

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

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

Casson, Leslie E. *A Writer's Handbook*. Third Ed. (Broadview)

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

Clowes, Daniel. *Ghost World* (Fantagraphics)

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar* (Faber)

Sophocles. *The Three Theban Plays* (Penguin)

Methods of Evaluation

Assignments and Grade Distributions:

Four Quizzes: Best Three (3.33% each): 10%

Passage Analysis (1000 words): 15%

Essay (2500 words): 30%

Participation and Attendance: 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>.

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 3.33%), to count toward your final grade, for a total of 10%.

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 30% 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.

Participation and Attendance:

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 Participation and Attendance grade will be divided between attendance in both lectures and tutorials (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: 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 Casson's *A Writers 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](#).

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 submitted late without prior permission will be deducted 2 per cent per day late, including weekends. Papers submitted 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, drop box, or other form of back up media. Retain all returned, marked assignments until you receive your final grade 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 Eighth Ed.

September	8	Introduction
	13	Fundamentals Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" (<i>NASF</i> 661-74)
	15	Fundamentals Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" (<i>NASF</i> 661-74)
	20	Fundamentals Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants" (<i>NASF</i> 335-39)
	22	Fundamentals Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants" (<i>NASF</i> 335-39)
	27	Fundamentals Bierce, "An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge" (<i>NASF</i> 51-57)
	29	Fundamentals Bierce, "An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge" (<i>NASF</i> 51-57)
October	4	Fundamentals Kafka, "The Metamorphosis" (<i>NASF</i> 386-418)
	6	Fundamentals Kafka, "The Metamorphosis" (<i>NASF</i> 386-418)
	11	Epic Mitchell, <i>Gilgamesh</i> Passage Analysis Due
	13	Epic Mitchell, <i>Gilgamesh</i>
	18	Epic Mitchell, <i>Gilgamesh</i>
	20	Epic Mitchell, <i>Gilgamesh</i>
	25	Tragedy Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i>
	27	Study Break
November	1	Tragedy Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i>

3	Tragedy Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i>
8	Bildungsroman Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i>
10	Bildungsroman Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i>
15	Bildungsroman Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i>
17	Bildungsroman Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i>
22	Graphic Novel Clowes, <i>Ghost World</i>
24	Graphic Novel Clowes, <i>Ghost World</i>
29	Graphic Novel Clowes, <i>Ghost World</i> Essay Due
December 1	Graphic Novel Clowes, <i>Ghost World</i>
6	Review

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.

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>.

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.

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://westernusc.ca/services/>

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.