

**English 1020E**  
**Understanding Literature Today**  
**2020-21**

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Class: Monday: 1:30-2:30; Wednesday: 1:30-2:30; Tutorial

Lectures will be delivered asynchronously, online.

“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 12<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Ed. Kelly J. Mays.  
*Endgame and Act without Words*. Samuel Beckett  
*Sexing the Cherry*. Jeanette Winterson  
*Rules for Writers, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Eds. Hacker and Sommers