

English 1027F (002)

The Storyteller's Art I: Introduction to Narrative

Department of English & Writing Studies
Western University
Fall 2026

Instructor

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Tutorial Leaders

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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 share 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 Sally Rooney's recent award-winning novel *Normal People*, we will study some of the major genres of storytelling: epic, tragedy, autobiography, and realist novel. What are the formal elements that make for a great story? How do character, theme, plot, narrative perspective, and literary style contribute to our understanding of the text? How does a story's

medium, as an oral 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.

Objectives

Successful students who complete the course will be able to:

- Identify and analyze basic elements of narrative literature, such as plot, story, character, point of view, 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.

Class Schedule

N.B. All selections marked *NASF* refer to *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*

September 9: Introduction

September 14: Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher” (*NASF* 674-87)

September 16: Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher” (*NASF* 674-87)

September 21: Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher” (*NASF* 674-87)

September 23: Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephants” (*NASF* 349-53)

September 28: Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephants” (*NASF* 349-53)

October 5: Bierce, “An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge” (*NASF* 78-84)

October 7: Bierce, “An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge” (*NASF* 78-84)

October 19: Kafka, “The Metamorphosis” (*NASF* 399-433)

October: 21: Kafka, “The Metamorphosis” (NASF 399-433)

October 26: *Gilgamesh*

October 28: *Gilgamesh*

November 2: *Gilgamesh*

November 4: *Gilgamesh*

November 9: Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*

November 11: Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*

November 16: Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*

November 18: Douglass, *Narrative*

November 23: Douglass, *Narrative*

November 25: Douglass, *Narrative*

November 30: Rooney, *Normal People*

December 2: Rooney, *Normal People*

December 7: Rooney, *Normal People*

December 9: Review

Course Materials

Bausch, Richard, and J.V. Cassill (eds.), *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*. Shorter Eighth Ed. (Norton) \$89.75

Casson, Leslie E. *A Writer's Handbook*. Fourth Ed. (Broadview) \$18.90

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Broadview) \$17.60

Mitchell, Stephen. *Gilgamesh: A New English Version* (Free Press) \$27

Rooney, Sally. *Normal People* (Knopf) \$23

Sophocles. *The Three Theban Plays* (Penguin) \$23

Print copies of the required texts for the course are available at the Campus Bookstore in the University Community Centre (includes option for delivery): https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2026A&courses%5B0%5D=002_UW/ENG1027F.

Digital versions (where available) can be found at the following online vendors:

Gilgamesh: A New English Version \$1.99

The Three Theban Plays \$11.99

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass \$9.99

Normal People \$13.99

A Writer's Handbook \$9.99

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Electronic Devices

Please switch off cell phones and remove earbuds or earphones during class. Laptop computers 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 for any purpose other than note taking will be asked to leave the class. No electronic devices of any kind (including calculators, cell phones and smart watches) are permitted for in-class assignments or the final exam.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this course, the use of AI tools such as ChatGPT is prohibited. If AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

Methods of Evaluation and Assessment Dates

Three Quizzes: Best Two (5% each): 10% / Due Sept 28, Oct 28, Dec 2

Two In-Tutorial Passage Analyses (500 words, 10% each): 20% / Due Oct 5-8, Nov 9-12

Research Essay (2500 words): 30% / Due Nov 27

Tutorial Participation: 5%

Final Exam: 35%

Quizzes

Three short quizzes will be conducted in class at the beginning of class; please arrive on time, with paper and pen. Each quiz will be made up of five questions testing your comprehension of

the assigned texts and recent lecture materials. Of these three quizzes, we will choose the best two (each worth 5%), 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.

One week prior to the assignment date, we will post an excerpt from a longer work previously studied in class. Read this passage carefully several times and take note 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?

On the date of the assignment you will bring paper and pen to your tutorial meeting, together with one page of notes. You will have the whole of the tutorial to write up your analysis. In-line citations (i.e. page numbers) are not required, but you should be quoting directly and frequently from the passage. Avoid plot summary; your concern here is not with the story so much as with how it is told. You can, of course, refer to portions of the text that appear either before or after the assigned passage.

You will submit the assignment at the end of the tutorial; if you finish early, please hold your seat until the tutorial has concluded in order to avoid disturbing your classmates.

Each passage analysis will be 500 words, or two-three pages words in length and will constitute 10% of your final grade.

Research Essay

Students will choose from one of four essay topics, Each topic will provide an opportunity for students to develop their 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, 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.

Tutorial Participation

In addition to lectures, all students will be assigned to a tutorial group of approximately twenty to twenty-five 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.

Participation includes 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. It can also mean listening attentively to others, and allowing them to speak, and being supportive of their contributions.

Tutorial Participation counts for 5% of your final grade.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:
<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:
<https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation: Passage Analysis.

Evaluation Scheme for Missed Assessments

Quizzes

Students who are granted documented or undocumented academic consideration for a quiz may write a make-up during the instructor's office hours the week following the original due date.

Passage Analysis

Please note that this assessment is central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for this assessment will be required to provide formal supporting documentation. Students who are granted academic consideration will be allowed to write the assignment during a fifty minute make-up session on the Monday following the week in which the assignment was originally due.

Research Essay

Students who are granted documented or undocumented academic consideration for the essay will be provided with a 48-hour extension.

Final Exam

When a student misses the **Final Exam** and their Academic Consideration has been granted, they will be allowed to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam). See the Academic Calendar ([Special Examinations](#)), especially for those who miss multiple final exams within one examination period.

Academic Integrity Module

Incoming undergraduate students are required to complete Western's Academic Integrity Module. Information about the module, including access instructions, and completion deadlines, is available at: https://vpacademic.uwo.ca/Academic_Integrity_Module.html.

This training is part of the required training suite for all incoming students. Students who do not complete the Academic Integrity Module by the deadline will have an academic seal placed on their records and will not be able to add/drop courses, obtain a transcript, or Intent to Register the following year.

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, here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software

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>).

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#) . Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Religious Accommodation requests for final exams should be submitted via the Student Absence Portal.

Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.” <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students” <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessibleeducation/index.html>

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Support Services

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.