

Department of English & Writing Studies

Understanding Literature Today
English 1020E (650)
Summer 2019

Instructor: Dr. Kate Stanley
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Office Hours: by appointment

Antirequisites: English 1022E, English 1035E.

Prerequisites: 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 takes you on a journey through the genres, historical periods, and critical approaches to English literature. In online lectures and online discussions, you will study major works of poetry, prose, and drama with attention to their use of literary form and the cultural contexts in which they were written. The written assignments for the course will provide you with training in literary analysis, logical and rhetorical argumentation, and strong skills in grammar and composition.

This course is recommended to students who may be considering either a Major or Minor in English Language and Literature, and who are interested in reading poetry, prose, and drama.

Prerequisite: Grade 12U English or permission of the Department.

Objectives:

Students who complete the course successfully will be able to:

- Identify and analyze basic elements of literature, such as plot, character, point of view, theme, setting, imagery, diction, tone, figures of speech, syntax, and rhythm;
- Recognize connections between course texts;
- Write an essay about a work (or works) of literature, containing a clear and effective thesis supported by adequate evidence from the original text(s);
- Research critical commentary on literary works;
- Evaluate the relevance, reliability, and usefulness of research sources, especially those obtained through the Internet;
- Integrate secondary research materials and references to the original text(s) into an essay;
- Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively in writing;
- Document essays using MLA Style.

Course Materials

Please use the following editions of each book so that we all have the same page numbers (available at the Western Bookstore):

1. Austen, Jane. *Northanger Abbey*. Ed. Claire Grogan. Peterborough: Broadview, 2002.
2. *Elements of Literature*. 5th Canadian Edition. Ed. David Staines et al. Toronto: Oxford UP, 2014. (the 4th edition is also fine)
3. Larsen, Nella. *Passing*. New York: Modern Library-Random House, 2002.
4. Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi*. Toronto: Vintage, 2002.
5. Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016. (other editions from reputable publishers such as Penguin or Pelican are fine)
6. Custom Course Pack. Available for order from the UWO Bookstore.
7. A current writing handbook is strongly recommended, such as *The Brief Penguin Handbook* or *The Little Seagull Handbook*.

Methods of Evaluation

COMPONENT	WEIGHT	DUE DATE	LENGTH
Participation	15%	Every Unit (see course Timetable)	2 discussion posts per unit
Essay 1	15%	June 8	1000 words
Midterm Test	10%	June 18-20	1 hour – completed online
Essay 2	25%	July 22	2000 words
Reflection	5%	July 25	500 words
Final Exam	30%	TBA (Exam period – July 29-August 1)	3 hours

Class Format

Each week you will be responsible for reading the assigned text(s), the associated lecture, and the discussion postings of your peers. You are expected to contribute to these discussions on a regular basis.

Discussion Forums

The success of this class depends on the quality of the discussion forums and it is essential that you keep up. Your participation in these discussions is worth 15% of your grade; your contributions to the forums are equivalent to the work you would do in an in-person tutorial. Missing discussion is the same as skipping tutorial and will have a similar impact on your participation grade.

Discussion Goals

These discussion board posts are meant to do a few things:

- (a) ensure that you're all keeping pace and finishing the readings in a timely way;
- (b) encourage you to think dynamically about the texts and lecture materials (and each others' ideas) and to bring this thinking into conversation with your classmates (and perhaps help to spark ideas for your essays);
- (c) direct your attention to specific passages in the texts that are particularly important;
- (d) develop the skills of textual analysis and close reading.

Discussion Instructions

In preparation for each discussion forum, you should:

- (1) first read the required text(s);
- (2) then read the lectures;
- (3) then read what other students have already posted;
- (4) then post your own response.

Discussion Expectations

These discussions replace in-class discussions and should therefore be analytical, thoughtful, and textually-based. **Your posts must directly quote a passage, excerpt or line from the text you are discussing. Make sure you cite page numbers (in parentheses).** You may also paraphrase, but you should always be grappling directly with the specific language of the text. You may use this textual evidence to support or develop your claim, or to draw attention to something specific about the author's style or form. Your goal is to keep the discussion rooted in the text and to show your process of reading. Try to move beyond observations around *what* the author is saying in order to analyze precisely *how* they are saying it. Specificity is preferable to generality.

Your discussion postings will build on your observations and ideas about a particular text. Consider making notes in the margins or highlighting as you read to keep track of your ideas, to mark key passages, and to flag anything you find particularly challenging or interesting. As you read, pay careful attention to details, including literary devices and connections between texts. **Ideally you will read a text more than once.**

Please read other students' postings carefully (you should be devoting at least an hour a week to this task), and make an effort to build on what they say. The aim is to build a conversation around a given text. Avoid using the forums just to state whether you liked or disliked a text or to simply agree or disagree with a previous post. Your aim should be to provide textual support (cited with page numbers) for all of your claims and comments.

Discussion Requirements

You are required to post at least **two responses for every unit** (2 times per week). You must answer at least one of the assigned discussion questions for every lecture and make sure at least one of your responses speaks directly to one of your peer's contributions. You may post more than two times if you want to, but remember: quality is valued over quantity. For that reason, there is no specific word count to adhere to (but most well-developed responses are around 200 words—and no longer than 300 words). To receive a passing participation grade, you must contribute to at least twenty discussion topics (out of **a total of twenty-four**), either by responding directly to the discussion prompt or to one of the comments made by a classmate—or ideally both!

Discussion posts that replicate the work of your peers without acknowledgment will receive a failing grade. Respectful and considerate behavior and language is required on the discussion forum and in all assignments.

Discussion Deadlines

One week before the scheduled start of each unit, questions will be posted on the discussion board that cover the next unit's readings. You will have a week from the first day of each week's unit to complete your responses. **The discussion forums for each unit will close at 11:55pm on the Monday following the completion of that unit. I will not reopen the forums for late**

responses. Specific dates are listed in the syllabus timetable. This means that you must complete the reading well before the end of the unit to give yourself enough time to post on the discussion board. Please don't leave your response to the last minute because it will hinder the development of the discussion.

Discussion Grading

You'll receive a cumulative grade on your posts before the mid-term and another grade at the end of the semester. Your final participation grade will be an average of those two marks. I will weigh in on the forums if I see a discussion going off course or want to correct an error. If you have any questions about the best way to proceed in the discussion forum please don't hesitate to ask me—the sooner the better. I'm eager to help you to develop the skill of textual analysis, which is at the heart of this course.

Communication

To ask questions or to discuss issues that may arise, please contact me through OWL "Messages" by sending an email to "Instructor Role." Remember to tick the box next to the line that reads: "Send a copy of this message to recipients' email address(es)." I try to respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, 48 hours on weekends or holidays. I'm happy to make an appointment for an office hour by request. Please avoid emailing questions if the answers are available within the course content: answers to many administrative questions can be found in the syllabus, the assignment folder, or in the learner resources folder.

Email is best for short questions; if your question(s) require more involved or lengthy responses please request an appointment, which can take place over the phone or through OWL using "Collaborate." Please note that I can't return long-distance calls.

You are expected to check the "Announcements" page on OWL regularly as you work your way through the course.

Essays

Essays must comply with MLA (Modern Languages Association) citation style guidelines. The UWO Library explains the basics of MLA formatting: <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/files/styleguides/MLA.pdf> (you will find a link to this site in the Academic Resources folder through the "Learner Resources" tab).

Further information about your essay assignments will be announced later in the course. I encourage you to discuss your papers with me as you work on them. I am happy to give feedback to works-in-progress during appointments.

Assignments must be submitted online. Go to the "Assignments" tab and click on the appropriate assignment to see the attachment with instructions and essay topics. To submit your essay upload an attachment via OWL using a **Word format (not a pdf)**. Check to ensure your paper has uploaded properly. It is your responsibility to ensure its delivery.

Late Policy

Essays and other assignments are to be submitted via the OWL "Assignments" tab by the due dates listed above (and on the Course Timetable). Assignments sent as email attachments will not be accepted.

Papers handed in late without prior permission will be deducted 5% per day late, including weekends. Essays submitted more than one week after the due date has passed will not be

accepted without academic accommodation. Late essays will forfeit instructor feedback.

Please note that instructors cannot grant accommodation or extensions. If you have a medical or personal emergency please see the “Academic Accommodation” section below.

Extensions will not be granted for computer or upload problems.

For English Department regulations governing term work, faculty office hours, academic relief (appeals, petitions, complaints), and other matters, please consult the “Undergraduate Student Information” section on the English Department website at:

<https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>

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.

Timetable

Unit 1.1: Creation Stories (May 6-8)

Margaret Laurence, "Where the World Began" (course pack); "Fiction, Fact, and Truth,"
Elements of Literature (henceforth abbreviated as EL) 3-4; Discussion 1.1

Unit 1.2: Creations Stories (May 9-11)

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, from Book 4 (course pack); "Approaching a Poem" EL 372-73; Discussion 1.2
*Discussion forum for Unit 1 locks on **Monday, May 13 at 11:55 pm EST**

Unit 2.1: The Natural World (May 13-15)

Frost, "Design" and "Birches" (EL), Page, "Planet Earth (course pack), "Music" EL 361-72;
Discussion 2.1

Unit 2.2: The Natural World (May 16-18)

Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" (EL), Thomas, "The Force that through the Green Fuse Drives the
Flower" (EL); "Description and Meditation" EL 347-49; Discussion 2.2
*Discussion forum for Unit 2 locks on **Monday, May 20 at 11:55 pm EST**

Unit 3.1: The Reading Self (May 20-22)

Austen, *Northanger Abbey*; "Plot and Character" EL 7-9; Discussion 3.1

Unit 3.2: The Reading Self (May 23-25)

Austen, *Northanger Abbey*; Discussion 3.2
*Discussion forum for Unit 3 locks on **Monday, May 27 at 11:55 pm EST**

Unit 4.1: Art and Life (May 27-29)

Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (EL), Rossetti, "In an Artist's Studio" (course pack); Discussion 4.1

Unit 4.2: Art and Life (May 30 -June 1)

Avison, "Snow" (EL), Walker, "Everyday Use" (course pack); "Themes" EL 9-11; Discussion 4.2
*Discussion forum for Unit 4 locks on **Monday, June 3 at 11:55 pm EST**

Unit 5.1: Dreams and Nightmares (June 3-5)

Blake, "London" (EL), Lampman, "The City of the End of Things" (EL), T.S. Eliot, "The Hollow
Men" (EL); Discussion 5.1

Unit 5.2: Dreams and Nightmares (June 6-8)

LeGuin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (course pack); Page, "Unless the Eye Catch
Fire" (course pack); Discussion 5.2
*Discussion forum for Unit 5 locks on **Monday, June 10 at 11:55 pm EST**

ESSAY 1 DUE JUNE 8th at 11:55PM EST

Unit 6.1: Love and Loss (June 10-12)

Shakespeare, "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; "Elements of Drama" EL 707-12; Discussion 6.1

Unit 6.2: Love and Loss (June 13-15)

Shakespeare, "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; Discussion 6.2

*Discussion forum for Unit 6 locks on **Monday, June 17 at 11:55 pm EST**

Unit 7.1: Love and Loss (June 17-19)

Donne, "Holy Sonnets" (EL); Discussion 7.1

MIDTERM TEST (June 18-20 ONLINE)

Unit 7.2: Love and Loss (June 20-22)

Shakespeare, "Sonnet 18, "Sonnet 73" and "Sonnet 130" (EL); Edna St. Vincent Millay, "I Being Born a Woman and Distressed" (course pack); Discussion 7.2

*Discussion forum for Unit 7 locks on **Monday, June 24 at 11:55 pm EST**

Unit 8.1: Love and Loss (June 24-26)

Burns, "My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose" (course pack); Atwood, "Variations on the Word Love" (EL); Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" (link on OWL); Discussion 8.1

Unit 8.2: Love and Loss (June 27-29)

Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" (EL); Yeats, "When You Are Old" (course pack); Auden, "Funeral Blues" (course pack); Discussion: Vacation – Happy Canada Day!

*Discussion forum for Unit 8 locks on **Monday, July 1 at 11:55 pm EST**

Unit 9.1: Public and Private Selves (July 1-3)

Nella Larsen, *Passing*; Discussion 9.1

Unit 9.2: Public and Private Selves (July 4-6)

Nella Larsen, *Passing*; Discussion 9.2

*Discussion forum for Unit 9 locks on **Monday, July 8 at 11:55 pm EST**

Unit 10.1: Public and Private Selves (July 8-10)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (EL); "Point of View: Perspective and Language" EL 11-14; Discussion 10.1

Unit 10.2: Public and Private Selves (July 11-13)

Munro, "Family Furnishings" (OWL); Heaney, "Digging" (course pack); Discussion 10.2

*Discussion forum for Unit 10 locks on **Monday, July 15 at 11:55 pm EST**

Unit 11.1: Storytelling (July 15-17)

Barnes, excerpt from *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* (course pack); Discussion 11.1

Unit 11.2: Storytelling (July 18-20)

Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess" (EL); Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (EL); Discussion 11.2

*Discussion forum for Unit 11 locks on **Monday, July 22 at 11:55 pm EST**

ESSAY 2 DUE 11:55 pm on July 22 EST

Unit 12.1: Storytelling (July 22-24)

Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*; "The Spectrum of Fiction" EL 4-5; Discussion 12.1

REFLECTION DUE 11:55 pm on July 25 EST

Unit 12.2: Storytelling (July 25-26)

Life of Pi. Discussion 12.2.

*Discussion forum for Unit 12 locks on **Monday, July 28 at 11:55 pm EST**

Final Exam TBA (somewhere between July 29 and August 1)