

Introduction to Literary Genres and Ideas: English 266W.08 Summer I, 2008

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Office Hours: 2:00-3:00, Monday-Thursday **and by appointment**

Class Meets: Noon Monday-Friday in Room 356 of the Evans Building

Texts: Thomas Foster, How to Read Literature Like a Professor
Kennedy and Gioia, Literature: an Introduction to Fiction, Poetry,
Drama, and Writing
Williams, A Streetcar Named Desire
Stoppard, "The Real Inspector Hound" and Other Plays
Gibaldi and Franklin MLA Handbook
Electronic Reserve Password:

Introductory Thoughts:

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines "genre," a word we're told is etymologically related to "gender," as,

- 1 : a category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content
- 2 : Kind, Sort.

Such a definition suggests a way of studying literature that is as old as the Greek philosopher Aristotle: reading a literary work to determine what categories it can be placed in. And in this course, that's part of what we will be doing as we consider

literature by its broadest genres – fiction, poetry, and drama – as well as by much narrower ones such as short story, lyric poem, farce, or tragedy. In doing so, we'll put much effort into learning literary terms – the formal elements of literature – and how they operate to distinguish (if such as thing is even possible) the literary from the non-literary. This will require us reading a great deal, writing a fair amount, and perpetually thinking about literature's relation to the ordinary world in which you and I drive to work, buy nuggets at McDonald's, and worry about gas prices. For those who like lists of goals, let me enumerate these ideas in that form:

- Develop an understanding of and ability to distinguish major literary categories or genres which are used to classify events and works.
- Develop an understanding of some of the sub-genres that are particular to literary studies.
- Develop knowledge of the major formal elements of literature and how they operate in writing.
- Develop a habit of connecting the reading of literature to daily life.
- Improve the scope of each student's reading experience.

Grading:

Of course, you're probably wondering, "How am I going to earn my grade for this class?" The answer is that each student's grade for the course will be determined by **three** major factors.

First, we will have **three in-class writing which will take the place of formal exams**. Each of these will consist of several prompts from which students will select one to write an essay dealing with one of a list of works provided to students on the syllabus. Collectively, a student's grades on these writing will determine **one third** of his/her course grade.

Second, on 12-14 class days throughout the semester, class will begin by students being given a 10-point quiz over the reading assigned for that class. These quizzes are designed to reward students who come to class prepared and punish those who do not. This will include a take-home syllabus quiz. A few times, an announced assignment may replace a quiz, but quizzes will be the norm. At the end of the term, I will add up each student's points and assign a grade based on that total using the familiar 0-100 grading scale (90-100+ = A; 80-89 = B, etc.). Students will also earn one point for each day they attend a full class session. These points will be added into their total. When calculated, this quiz/attendance grade will determine **one third** of a student's course grade.

Third, on two class days near the end of the semester, students will give a brief 5-7 minute presentation to the class involving a literary work in our assigned textbooks. The specifics of this assignment are on pages attached to this syllabus and titled "Presentation Assignment." The grade on this presentation will determine **one third** of a student's course grade.

The only other factor that could affect a student's grade is attendance. Generally, I try to use attendance as a positive inducement – something reflected in my giving extra credit points for each day a student is in class. However, excessive absences will not be tolerated. They discourage other students and me. Anyone missing more than 3 days of class will see a lowering of his/her course grade by a minimum of one letter.

Please note: any student who has major problems fulfilling the requirements of the course (family crisis; unexpected health issues; severe emotional turmoil) should contact the office of Frank Parker, the Assoc. V.P. for Student Services and Dean of Student Life. His phone number is 936-294-1785. This office will help you deal with all your instructors and makes it unnecessary for you to bring me documentation concerning such crises.

Legal Matters the University Requires Me to Include:

These are policies that cover the University as a whole. For a more detailed discussion of the five items below, go to this link: <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>.

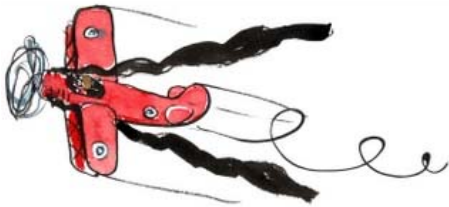
(1) Academic Dishonesty: Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experience both in and out of the classroom. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines at the above link.*

(2) Classroom Rules of Conduct: Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students are to treat faculty and students with respect. Students are to turn off all cell phones while in the classroom. Under no circumstances are cell phones or any electronic devices to be used or seen during times of examination. Students may tape record lectures provided they do not disturb other students in the process.

(3) Student Absences on Religious Holy Days: Students are allowed to miss class and other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Students remain responsible for all work. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines at the above link.*

(4) Students With Disabilities Policy: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities in the Counseling Center. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines at the above link.*

(5) Visitors in the Classroom: Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.



Needing Help Other than the Professor? Try these:

The SAM Center

The Student Advising and Mentoring Center, also known as the SAM Center, offers a wide variety of services for the students of Sam Houston State University. We offer academic advisement and enrichment services to all undergraduate and graduate students. The SAM Center is a resource dedicated to helping students adjust to academic life at Sam Houston State University. Services available include career testing, aid with time management, and study skills. The center has grown rapidly since we've been open and with new programs being offered, our

students are taking more advantage of our resources. With a great faculty and staff, all students are encouraged to look into any of the programs we have available. The SAM Center is located in Academic Building 4 (AB4) on the second floor, room 210. AB4 is located on the corner of Bowers Blvd. and Ave. I. For more information, go to http://www.shsu.edu/~sam_www/index.html. Or call one of the numbers listed below:

Toll Free: (866) 364-5211
Houston Area: (281) 657-6432
Phone: (936) 294-4444

SHSU Reading Center - Farrington Bdg, Suite 109

The SHSU Reading Center seeks to promote the acquisition of and use of reading strategies and to promote independent learning which will motivate learners to value literacy throughout their lives. The primary goal of the instructors is to empower all students with effective reading strategies and the confidence to excel in their classes. The SHSU Reading Center is staffed and equipped to assist students with their expository reading in a variety of learning environments, such as: individual tutoring sessions, small group tutoring sessions, and computer assisted tutoring sessions. Call the center at 936 294-3114

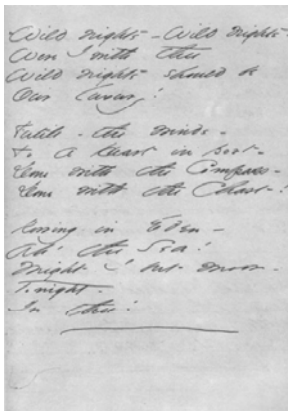
Summer Hours of Operation
Monday - Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Friday 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

SHSU Writing Center - Farrington Bdg, Suite 111

The Sam Houston Writing Center helps SHSU students, staff, and faculty and community members. Our goal is to help people become better writers and so develop more confidence in their writing abilities. To this end, Writing Center tutors provide one-on-one and small group writing instruction. We also offer one-session workshops on various topics relating to writing throughout the school year. Students may come in with any type of writing. We help writers on assignments ranging from English composition essays to science lab reports, résumés, scholarship and job application letters, even M.A. theses and Ph.D. dissertations. We do not offer simply an editing or proofreading service. That is, Writing Center tutors will not merely correct a student's writing. Instead, we will help students learn prewriting, revising, and editing skills by working with them on the writing tasks they bring in. The Writing Center is located in Farrington 111. For more information, go to the Writing Center web page:

<http://www.shsu.edu/~wctr/>. Or call 936- 294-3680. For e-mail contact, use this address: wctr@shsu.edu. The summer hours are:

Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



Emily
Dickinson
manuscript
&
photograph



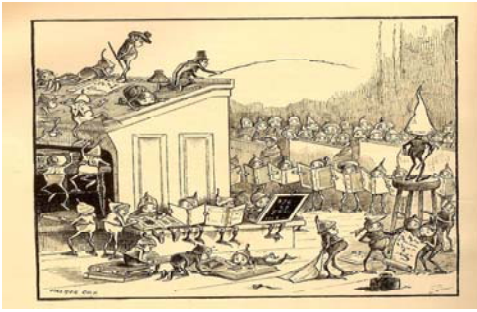


BELOW IS THE DAILY CALENDAR FOR READINGS AND WORK STUDENTS SHOULD PREPARE AND BRING TO CLASS

- Tuesday 6/3 Welcome to Class; what is literature?
- Wednesday 6/4 Chapters 1 & 2 in How to Read Literature Like a Professor
Parable of the Prodigal Son (in Kennedy)
O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (in Kennedy)
- Thursday 6/5 Welty, "A Worn Path"
Faulkner, "Barn Burning"
Syllabus Quiz due
- Friday 6/6 Chapters 5 & 7 in How to Read Literature Like a Professor
Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"
Carver, "Cathedral"
- Monday 6/9 Chapters 16 & 17 in How to Read Literature Like a Professor
Updike, "A & P"
Lawrence, "The Rocking Horse Winner"
- Tuesday 6/10 **In-Class Writing One.** Students will select one of the following works, all in the Kennedy textbook, to write an essay on in class: Borges' "The Gospel According to Mark"; Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown"; Hurston's, "Sweat"; Mason's "Shiloh"
- Wednesday 6/11 **Poetry is Different**
Chapter 4, 8, & 9 in How to Read Literature Like a Professor
Shakespeare, "Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds"
Shakespeare, "When in Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes"
Donne, "Batter My Heart, Three-Personed God"
Wordsworth, "The World is Too Much With Us"
Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"
Bishop, "One Art"
Yeats, "The Second Coming"
Sexton, "Cinderella"
- Thursday 6/12 Chapters 10, 11, & 12 in How to Read Literature Like a Professor
Yeats, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree"
Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium"
Rich, "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers"
Frost, "Out, Out—"
Browning, "My Last Duchess"

- Pound, "In the Station of the Metro"
 Bishop, "The Filling Station"
 Hopkins, "Pied Beauty"
- Friday 6/13 Chapters 13, 19, & 20 in How to Read Literature Like a Professor
 Dickinson, "My Life Has Stood a Loaded Gun"
 Dickinson, "It Dropped so Low - in My Regard"
 Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"
 Houseman, "To an Athlete Dying Young"
 Updike, "Ex-Basketball Player"
 Hayden, "The Whipping"
 Hayden, "Those Winter Sundays"
 Milton, "When I Consider How My Life is Spent"
- Monday 6/16 Hughes, Read all the poems and essays from page 1030-1048 in Kennedy
 Text
 Hughes, "Children and Poetry" (handout)
- Tuesday 6/17 **In-Class Writing Two.** Students will select one of the following works,
 all in the Kennedy textbook, to write an essay on in class: Roethke's "My
 Papa's Waltz"; Eliot's "The Winter Evening Settles Down"; Auden,
 "Musée Des Beaux Arts," Dickinson, "I Started Early - Took my Dog"
- Wednesday 6/18 **Tackling Drama**
 Chapters 19, 20, 21 in How to Read Literature Like a Professor
 Glaspell, "Trifles" Available at
<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/eng384/trifles.htm>
 Foote, "Blind Date" Available on Electronic Reserves
- Thursday 6/19 Chapters "One Story," 23, & 26 in How to Read Literature Like a
 Professor
 Fugard, Master Harold and "the Boys" film to be watched in class
- Friday 6/20 Stoppard, "The Real Inspector Hound"
 Stoppard, "Dogg's Hamlet"
- Monday 6/23 Williams, A Streetcar Named Desire
- Tuesday 6/24 Homer, Book 9 of The Odyssey Available at: <http://www.online-literature.com/homer/odyssey/9/>
 Williams, A Streetcar Named Desire
- Wednesday 6/25 **In-Class Writing.** Students will select one of the works read for the
 drama section of the class to write an essay on.
- Thursday 6/26 **Student Presentations**
- Friday 6/27 **Student Presentations**





Presentation Assignment

Part of what students should take away from an introductory literature course such as this is the discovery of writing that they appreciate, enjoy, and want to share with others. The purpose of this assignment is to give students a chance to do that while also improving their skills at public speaking.

Specifically, this assignment calls for students to do the following:

- **Select** a work of literature from either the Kennedy or the Stoppard text that HAS NOT BEEN ASSIGNED ON THE SYLLABUS. Sign up for that work with the professor. No work can be repeated, so select early to be sure you get your first choice.
- **Prepare a reading** of the work or, if it is long, a crucial section of the work that can be presented to the class. By “a reading,” I mean an oral presentation from a written text of the work itself or the section of the work you have selected. This is your chance to be an actor/orator. This reading should be practiced and contain clear oral inflexion and emphasis. The reading should last 3-4 minutes.
- **Offer an oral explanation** to the class on why this work is particularly meaningful FOR YOU. The explanation you present should be well-thought out and offer insight into the work as well as into the student presenter. You should finish the presentation with the class knowing more fully both you and the literary work.
- **Limit the entire presentation to no more than seven minutes and no less than five.**

The keys to success in this presentation are practice, thought and enthusiasm. Suggest that you have done neither and you can expect a low or even a failing grade. ALSO, students who present on one day of the presentations but fail to attend class on the day they are not presenting, will have their grade lowered by one letter grade.

Be in touch with me if you have any questions or concerns about this assignment. I'll be glad to help.

