

ENGL 266W (3 hrs)—Readings in Literary Genres  
Reading & Writing in a Critical Context  
Fall 2007

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Office Hours: T & Th 2:00-3:00  
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Section: 15  
Class Time: T & Th 9:30-10:50  
Location: EV 356

Section: 17  
Class Time: T & Th 12:30-1:50  
Location: EV 358







**Course Description:**

In its broadest sense, this class serves as a brief introduction to literature and literary analysis. To guide and narrow our inquiry, we will focus on two questions: how do we make meaning from literary texts? And how does literature contribute to our understanding of the world in which we live?

In order to address these questions and in hopes of fostering connections between literary genres, movements, and authors, I have organized course readings into three thematic units. Unit One will interrogate the social meaning and consequences of “Family, Relationships, & Their Making.” The readings in Unit Two underscore the power and limitations of “Community & Belonging.” Unit Three, “Myth, History, & Memory,” will explore the narratives that individuals and communities use in order to explain and shape the world. These readings and thematic units are not discrete and separate; rather, they come together in ways that should contribute to our inquiry across the semester.

Finally, beyond the questions we seek to address, this course hinges on close and careful reading, fruitful and open discussion, and the articulation of clear and compelling arguments.

**Course Goals:**

-  Foster an understanding of literary terms and devices.
-  Explore methods for literary analysis.
-  Hone critical thinking and close reading skills.
-  Make connections between literature and the outside world.
-  Fashion clear and concise writing.
-  Develop, articulate, and support cogent arguments.

**Required Texts:**

X. J. Kennedy & Dana Gioia, *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing* (New York: Pearson and Longman, 2007).

X. J. Kennedy, Dana Gioia, & Mark Bauerlein, *Handbook of Literary Terms: Literature, Language, Theory* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005).

**Semester Grading Rubric:**

Quizzes & daily work	10%
Microtheme #1	20%
Microtheme #2	20%
Microtheme #3	20%
Exam #1	15%
Exam #2	15%

**Grading Plan:**

Your numerical grade for the semester will correspond to the following alphabetical grading scale: 100%-90% = A, 89%-80% = B, 79%-70% = C, 69%-60% = D, 59%-0% = F.

**Quizzes & Daily Work**

These are minor assignments that are geared to foster and evaluate learning throughout the semester. They cannot be made up except in the cases of religious holidays and excused absences, as defined by me.

**Exams:**

This course will have two in-class examinations. These exams will evaluate comprehension of course readings and class discussions. Both the mid-term and the final will consist of short-answer and essay questions. While I will discuss the content and format of the exams in class a week beforehand, I recommend that you come to me should you have any questions. If you miss an exam, you must contact me and schedule a time to make it up within one week. Please know that the make-up examination will be different from the original.

**Microthemes:**

While we will discuss these in more detail as the semester develops, microthemes are short writing assignments that emphasize concision, argument, and evidence. Like all writing assignments, these are the result of a process. I highly recommend that you begin thinking about, organizing, and drafting these papers soon after I hand out the writing prompts. Moreover, please feel free to see me or the writing lab for assistance.

**Late Work Policy:**

I do not accept late work unless you have a serious, legitimate reason (as determined by me). For example, missing a deadline because your appendix has ruptured may be an acceptable justification but “computer problems” that miraculously occur in the wee hours of night (or any time for that matter) are not. Ultimately, I reserve the right to refuse late work.

**Classroom Climate:**

In order for discussion and learning to flourish, this class needs to foster a climate of respect. Whether dealing with opinions on culture or the literature itself, please listen respectfully to the views of others. This does not mean that discussion and argument should not take place; rather, discussion and argument are most useful when views are shared openly. If you feel that you are not being listened to or showed due respect, please come talk to me. For the university's official statement, see section 5.2.22 of the "Code of Student Conduct and Discipline."

**Open Door Policy:**

You are welcomed and encouraged to visit me whenever you wish to discuss a paper or a problem as it relates to this class. If you cannot come during my office hours, schedule an appointment with me. The easiest and best way to contact me outside of my office hours is to e-mail me. I try to read my e-mail on a daily basis and will send you a prompt reply.

**Attendance Policy:**

Regular and punctual attendance is imperative for your success in this course. If you miss more than three class periods, your grade will be lowered. Moreover, if you do not attend, you will miss our enthralling discussion and the ever-important quizzes. Thus, any absences will indirectly affect your grade. Note: tardiness of more than 10 minutes will be considered an absence.

**Religious Holidays:**

If you are going to miss class for a recognized religious holiday, please notify me in writing at least one week ahead of time. It will be your responsibility to make up all missed work within a reasonable timeframe.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

If you turn in a piece of writing all or part of which you have plagiarized, you will be dismissed with an "F" in the course. Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of other people's work or ideas without proper citation. If you have any questions concerning this, please come to me. In cases of academic dishonesty, further action within the context of university guidelines may be considered. For more information, see SHSU's "Code of Student Conduct and Discipline."

**Students with Disabilities:**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will cooperate with the Counseling Center & ADA Services to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you will require accommodation, you must advise me of your needs in writing no later than the end of the second week of class.

## Weekly Schedule

### Unit One: Family, Relationships, & Their Making

#### Week One: August 20, 2005

T: course introduction; “Popular Mechanics” Raymond Carver (handout).  
TH: “Interpreter of Maladies” Jhumpa Lahiri, 579-593; “Happy Endings”  
Margaret Atwood, 476-479.

#### Week Two: August 27, 2005

T: *Fences* August Wilson, 1996-2026; “Reading a Play” 1223-1224.  
TH: *Fences* August Wilson, 2026-2047; “A Look into Black America” August  
Wilson, 2047-2048.

#### Week Three: September 3, 2005

T: “Sonny’s Blues” James Baldwin, 43-63; “How Point of View Shapes a Story,”  
71.  
TH: “Everyday Use” Alice Walker, 443-449; “The Black Woman Writer in  
America” Alice Walker 450-451; “‘Everyday Use’ and the Black Power  
Movement” Barbara T. Christian, 453-455.

#### Week Four: September 10, 2005

T: “The Moths” Helena María Viramontes, 649-653.  
TH: “The Mother” Gwendolyn Brooks, 1089-1090.

#### Week Five: September 17, 2005

T: Writing workshop  
TH: “Skunk Hour” Robert Lowell, 1138; “Girl” Jamaica Kincaid, 578-579.  
**Microtheme #1 Due**

### Unit Two: Community & Belonging

#### Week Six: September 24, 2005

T: “The Lottery” Shirley Jackson, 239-245.  
TH: “The Ones Who Walked Away From Omelas” Ursula K. Le Guin, 248-253.

#### Week Seven: October 1, 2005

T: “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” Ernest Hemmingway, 156-60; “Tone and  
Style,” 153-156; “The Direct Style” Ernest Hemmingway, 186.  
TH: “Barn Burning,” 160-172.

Week Eight: October 8, 2005

T: “anyone lived in a pretty how town” E. E. Cummings, 722; excerpt from *The House on Mango Street* Sandra Cisneros, 525-526.

TH: **Exam #1**

Week Nine: October 15, 2005

T: *Trifles* Susan Glaspell, 1225-1236.

TH: *Trifles*; Susan Glaspell “A Jury of Her Peers,” handout.

Week Ten: October 22, 2005

T: “Speaking a Foreign Language” Alastair Reid, 947; “Bilingual/Bilingüe” Rhina Espaillat, 937.

TH: “English con Salsa” Gina Valdés, 725-726; “Legal Immigrant” & “Illegal Immigrant” Pat Mora, handout.

Week Eleven: October 29, 2005

T: “America” Claude McKay, 938; “The New Colossus” Emma Lazarus, 1005.

TH: “We Wear the Mask” Paul Laurence Dunbar, 1004-1005.

**Microtheme #2 Due**

Unit Three: Myth, History, & Memory
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Week Twelve: November 5, 2005

T: *The Glass Menagerie* Tennessee Williams, 1836-1860.

TH: *The Glass Menagerie* Tennessee Williams, 1860-1883; “How to Stage *The Glass Menagerie*” Tennessee Williams, 1883-1885.

Week Thirteen: November 12, 2005

T: “The Things They Carried” 625-636; “Dulce ed Decorum Est” Wilfred Owen, 698-699.

TH: “The Fury of Aerial Bombardment” Richard Eberhart, 720; “The Colonel” Carolyn Forché, 883.

Week Fourteen: November 19, 2005

T: “The Names” Billy Collins, 723-724.

TH: Thanksgiving Break

Week Fifteen: November 26, 2005

T: “Diving into the Wreck” Adrienne Rich, handout.

TH: “I Hear America Singing” Walt Whitman, 1181; “Learning to love America” Shirley Geok-lin Lim, 946.

**Microtheme #3 Due**

Week Sixteen: December 3, 2005

T: “next to of course god america i” E. E Cummings, 736; “I, Too” Langston Hughes, 1032; “Harlem” Langston Hughes, 1037; “Ballad of the Landlord” Langston Hughes, 1034.

TH: “A Voice” Pat Mora, handout (last class meeting).

Week Seventeen: December 10, 2005

**Exam #2**

Note: The readings for this course may be subject to change throughout the semester.