

SYLLABUS

ENG 301 Introduction to Literary Analysis & Critical Theory

Prof. Paul R. Petrie

Fall 2009

COURSE GOALS & RATIONALE

In essence, this course is boot camp for English majors, providing instruction and extended opportunity for practice of the methods, modes, and habits of thought that students of literature employ to make meaning out of literary texts. The course topics include:

- Overview of basic literary genres and modes
- Use of rhetorical and literary-critical terms and concepts
- Close reading
- Developing meaningful interpretive questions and hypotheses
- Using the writing process to move your thinking from first response to meaningful inquiry to thesis-based literary-interpretive essay

Class will be discussion-based, with minimal lecture and an ongoing expectation that students *always* come to class well prepared to discuss current reading and interpretive thinking. Students should expect a heavy and continual writing load, with assignments ranging from the very informal to the formal, revised, and polished.

ASSIGNMENTS

Essential Literary Terms (ELT) Log (40%). Following the further instructions on the assignment sheet, students will keep an ongoing written record of assigned exercises from the primary course text, *Essential Literary Terms*. You will use the “Assignments” link on the SCSU Vista course site to complete this assignment, posting your work before the beginning of class each day there is a new ELT assignment. Always bring your cumulative hardcopy of this assignment to class meetings with you.

Literary Interpretation Portfolio (45%). Following the further instructions on the assignment sheet, a series of short essays in literary analysis and contextual study, culminating in a multi-draft, revised, 5-7-page, formal essay in literary interpretation of a short story that the class has studied together.

Ad Hoc Individual and Group Assignments, Preparation, & Participation (15%). Full preparation for every class meeting is expected, including completion of all reading and writing assignments and any ad hoc assignments due for the day. All class members are expected to participate actively: listening attentively, contributing regularly to discussion, and taking substantive notes. Unannounced spot checks, quizzes, and in-class writing may happen at any time, and the results will constitute part of my holistic assessment of this portion of your course grade.

REQUIRED BOOKS

The following books have been ordered for SCSU’s bookstore. (Online sources like Amazon, Tower, and Alibris often have deals on used copies—but *make sure* to get the *new 7th edition of the MLA Handbook*; it includes substantive changes from its predecessor.) ISBNs are provided for easy searching of online book sources. Do *purchase* course books rather than borrowing them; they’re not that expensive, and you’ll need to be able to write in them to fully do your job as an active reader.

- *Essential Literary Terms*. Sharon Hamilton. (WW Norton 9780393928372)
- *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed., Ed. Joseph Gibaldi. (MLA 9781603290241)
- Other readings for the semester will be made available as PDF, Word, or HTML documents for you to print from the course Vista site or the world-wide web.

READING & ASSIGNMENTS CALENDAR

Details regarding specific reading and other assignments will be posted to the calendar on the SCSU Vista site on a rolling basis as the semester proceeds. Plan on checking that calendar frequently to keep your work up to date.

COURSE POLICIES

Website & Email	You are responsible for all information posted to the course website and SCSU Vista. You are also responsible for checking your Southern email address regularly for course-related communications.
Plagiarism	Pay particularly close attention to the plagiarism policy posted on the course website.
Attendance	Attendance is required. Per English Department policy, students who miss the equivalent of three weeks of class (3 classes on a once-weekly schedule, 6 classes on a twice-weekly schedule, or 9 classes on a thrice-weekly schedule) will automatically fail the course, no matter what the reason for your absences. Since this policy makes no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" absences, no documentation of the reasons for your absence is necessary.
Lateness to Class	Lateness will be recorded as an absence, so plan to arrive BEFORE the scheduled start time.
Absences	If you miss class, it is your responsibility to catch up on missed work BEFORE returning to class for the next meeting. Check with one or (preferably) more than one of your classmates for class notes, new assignments, etc. DO NOT rely on the instructor to catch you up on missed course content.
Late Assignments	A late assignment will be penalized by a grade step (eg. C+ to C) for each day it is late. "Late" is defined as any time after the class meeting on any given assignment's due date. However, extensions are freely granted in most instances provided you communicate with me BEFORE the due date. (Extensions are not applicable to the Reading Log.)
Cell Phones, Etc	All cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off before class begins. Laptop computers are permissible only for use directly related to the class work of the moment.
Completion of Coursework	All assignments must be completed and submitted in order for you to receive course credit.
Disability	If you are a student with a disability, you will need to make an appointment with the Disability Resource Center in order to receive accommodations in this class. Please speak to me right away about your situation and/or other information, such as emergency medical information or arrangements in case the building must be evacuated.
Writing Expectations	<p>To study literature is to write about literature. If you cannot communicate your ideas fully and clearly in written form, readers will have no way of knowing what those ideas are—no matter how amazing and astute they promise to be. In other words, content and form are not separable qualities; if a reader can't understand what you're saying, he or she can only assume that you <i>don't</i> in fact know what you're saying. Therefore, plan on devoting ample time and effort to drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading <i>all</i> your writing for this course—no "one-offs," please. Plan, as well, on consulting other readers—me, your classmates, and/or the Writing Center—about your writing <i>before</i> submission.</p> <p>You are responsible for both the intellectual content of your written work and for its "clean, " professional presentation. I expect all writing to be edited and proofread for grammatical and mechanical correctness and clarity, according to standard, "edited" English usage. All formal writing for the course must be typed and double-spaced. Formal essays (as opposed to informal in-class or online writing) must follow MLA formatting and documentation rules, including a Works Cited page.</p> <p>Familiarize yourself with, and, as applicable, make routine use of, the following resources posted on the course website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essay Notations• Essay Protocols• Grading Guide• MLA Essay Format• Peer Review Guide• Research Guide