

ENGLISH 181: WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

Dr. Maureen E. St. Laurent

Office: 108 Humanities Hall

Office Hours:

Mon. 2:00-5:00 in the Writing Center
(Lang. 103)

Tue. 2:00-5:00 in Humanities 108
and by appointment

Fall 1998

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Required Texts

Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook for Writers*. 5th edition. Bedford.

Harper, Deanne. *Research Workbook for The Bedford Handbook for Writers*. Bedford.

Meyer, Michael. *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*. 5th edition. Bedford.

Twain, Mark. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Bedford.

"Writing About Literature" Course Pack

A good college dictionary (I highly recommend the *American Heritage Dictionary*)

Course Requirements

1) Write six critical essays and one research paper. 2) Prepare a complete draft for all writing workshop days and a brief oral report on your work-in-progress. 3) Complete all LearnLink conference assignments. 4) Complete all workbook assignments. 5) Complete the final exam. 6) Attend class regularly with assigned text in hand, read all scheduled assignments, and prepare to discuss them. 7) Participate fully in all classroom work.

Essays and Research Project

The six formal essays that you write for this course will be analytical examinations of the literature we will study. I will distribute suggested essay topics for each assignment.

On writing workshop days you must bring to class **two copies** of a complete first draft of your essay: one for my review and one to share with your peer writing group. This writing workshop draft is a **complete** draft, not a "rough" draft or a "working" draft--which means that this draft is your first draft of your entire essay, from introduction through conclusion. I will not accept outlines, fragmentary paragraphs, or incomplete drafts for the workshop. On writing workshop days you should also be prepared to present a brief (5 minute) oral report on your essay to your group.

Your research paper will be a semester-long project that will take you through all the stages of college-level research. To assist you in working through this process, you will have several assignments to complete in the research workbook. A complete description of the research project and suggested topics is included in your course packet.

LearnLink Conference

On days marked with an asterisk on the schedule of assignments, you will post on the class LearnLink conference (**181.9:30 St. Laurent 181.11 St. Laurent**) a 200-300 word response to and reflection on the day's reading (for days with more than one assigned work, you may comment on just one of the works). The aim of this conference is to give you more writing practice, in a different and increasingly important medium. It is also a way for us to continue and expand our classroom discussions. These responses must be posted by 8:00 A.M. on the day of class. All members of the class must log on to the conference before class and read their classmates' responses. I will also be participating in the on-line conversations by providing some of my own responses. Credit for conference responses is based on participation, not content;



however, carelessly or poorly done responses will not receive credit. Missed or late responses cannot be made up, except in the case of excused absence or network outage. The conference is designed to be flexible and interesting, so please expect it to evolve over the course of the semester.

Policies

Late essays: All essays are due at the beginning of class on the date specified. I will accept late work ONLY in the case of major illness or emergency. This means that I WILL NOT accept unexcused late essays. If you fail to prepare an acceptable draft for a writing workshop, I will lower the grade on the final draft of the essay by a full letter grade. If you are absent without an excuse from a writing workshop, I will consider that a failure to prepare a draft and will lower the grade accordingly.

Attendance: You should be present for every class, with assigned text in hand, prepared to participate in the day's planned activity. You may miss two classes without penalty; I will deduct ten points from your final grade for every class missed beyond two. If you are absent from class, you are responsible for informing yourself about any missed assignments or announcements. If you are bodily in class, but clearly unprepared, I will count that class as an absence. I will excuse absences and allow work to be made up only in the case of major illness/emergency or religious observance.

Medical Absence: I will excuse absences for illness or other medical reasons only upon submission of a note from a doctor or from student health. Medical excuse notes will only be accepted up to a week after the last class missed.

Tardiness: I expect you to be on time for every class. If you come to class after we have already begun, I will ask you to leave.

Classroom Demeanor: No eating, drinking, sleeping, or private conversations. First violations will receive a warning. I will exclude from class students who persist in these behaviors until such time as they feel prepared to conduct themselves properly.

Plagiarism

In this course, as in all other courses, you are bound by the Honor Code. Therefore, the work that you submit for this class must be your own. You are free to use, without attribution, any ideas, suggestions, etc. developed in class discussion or in peer group work. If you use any outside sources in your writing for this course, you must acknowledge them by using the MLA system of documentation, which is presented in detail in *The Bedford Handbook*. I will turn over to the Honor Council all papers suspected of plagiarism. If you have any questions regarding the Honor Code as it applies to this course, please consult me or pages 38-40 of the Oxford College catalog. I will be teaching you proper research documentation procedures as part of your semester research project.

Grade breakdown:

Essays	50%
Research Paper	20%
Responses, Workbook Assignments, and Class Participation	15%
Final Exam	15%

All grades for this course will be recorded using the plus/minus scale described on page 32 of the Oxford College catalog.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1

Aug. 27 Introduction and Objectives

WEEK 2

Sept. 1* Plot and Character: 60-68; 97-102. Andre Dubus, "Killings" 81-93; Flannery O'Connor, 369-373 (biographical note); "A Good Man is Hard to Find" 381-392
Sept. 3* Setting and Point of View: 143-145; 174-179. Alice Munro, 430-433 (biographical note); "Miles City, Montana" 458-471; Bi Shumin, "Broken Transformers" 609-616

WEEK 3

Sept. 8* Symbolism, Theme, and Style: 215-217; 243-246; 268-272. Alison Baker, "Better Be Ready 'Bout Half Past Eight" 617-631; Bessie Head, "The Prisoner Who Wore Glasses" 586-590
Sept. 10 Writing Workshop--complete draft of fiction essay #1 due (two copies); *Bedford Intro.* 2063-2080 and *Bedford Handbook* 46-48

WEEK 4

Sept. 15* Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
FICTION ESSAY #1 DUE
Sept. 17 *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

WEEK 5

Sept. 22* *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
RESEARCH WORKBOOK EXERCISE 46-3 DUE
Sept. 24 Writing Workshop--complete draft of fiction essay #2 due (two copies)
PROJECT CONFERENCES COMPLETED

WEEK 6

Sept. 29 Introduction to Research Methods--**class meets in the library**; *Bedford Handbook* 520-562
FICTION ESSAY #2 DUE
Oct. 1* *Bedford Intro.* 1316-1326; William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 1327-1381
RESEARCH WORKBOOK EXERCISE 46-5 DUE

WEEK 7

Oct. 6 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH WORKBOOK EXERCISE 46-8 DUE
Oct. 8* *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
RESEARCH WORKBOOK EXERCISE 47-3 DUE

WEEK 8

Oct. 13 Mid-Semester Break--No Class Meeting
Oct. 15 Writing Workshop--complete draft of drama essay #1 due (two copies)
RESEARCH WORKBOOK EXERCISE 50-3 DUE

WEEK 9

Oct. 20* *Bedford Intro.* 1559-1563; Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll House* 1563-1612; "A Nineteenth-Century Husband's Letter to His Wife" 1627-1629

DRAMA ESSAY #1 DUE

RESEARCH WORKBOOK EXERCISE 48-2 DUE

Oct. 22 *A Doll House*; Barry Witham and John Lutterbie, "A Marxist Approach to *A Doll House*" 1630-1632

RESEARCH WORKBOOK EXERCISE 49-1 DUE

WEEK 10

Oct. 27* David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly* 1672-1721; "A Plot Synopsis of *Madame Butterfly*" 1722-1723; Bernstein, "The News Source for *M. Butterfly*" 1723-1724

PRELIMINARY REPORT DUE

Oct. 29 *M. Butterfly*; Savran, "An Interview With David Henry Hwang" 1727-1728; Writing a Research Paper, *Bedford Handbook* 562-583

RESEARCH WORKBOOK EXERCISE 49-4 DUE

WEEK 11

Nov. 3 Writing Workshop--complete draft of drama essay #2 due (two copies)

RESEARCH WORKBOOK EXERCISE 50-2 DUE

Nov. 5* Word Choice, Word Order, and Tone: 711-712; 717-724. Ruth Fainlight, "Flower Feet" 724; Wilfred Owen, "*Dulce et Decorum Est*" 763-764

DRAMA ESSAY #2 DUE

RESEARCH WORKBOOK EXERCISE 49-2 DUE

WEEK 12

Nov. 10* Images: 752-754. Maxine Kumin, "Woodchucks" 727; David R. Slavitt, "Titanic" 739-740; Yusef Komunyakaa, "Facing It" 1162

INITIAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Nov. 12* Figures of Speech: 775-784. Sharon Olds, "Sex Without Love" 740-741; Charles Martin, "Victoria's Secret" 867; William Shakespeare, "That time of year thou mayst in me behold" 1117

WEEK 13

Nov. 17 Writing Workshop--complete draft of poetry essay #1 due (two copies)

Nov. 19* Symbol, Allegory, Irony: 797-806. Langston Hughes, "Dinner Guest: Me" 1033; Marge Piercy, "Barbie Doll" 1112; Gregory Djanikian, "When I First Saw Snow" 1088-1089

POETRY ESSAY #1 DUE

WEEK 14

Nov. 24* Sounds: 826-831. Galway Kinnell, "Blackberry Eating" 832; Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach" 757-758; Helen Chasin, "The Word *Plum*" 851

RESEARCH PAPER DUE

THANKSGIVING RECESS NOVEMBER 25-27

WEEK 15

Dec. 1 Writing Workshop--complete draft of poetry essay #2 due (two copies)

Dec. 3* Richard Wilbur, "Love Calls Us to the Things of This World" 1124-1125; Langston Hughes, "Theme for English B" 1027-1028; Margaret Atwood, "Spelling" handout

POETRY ESSAY #2 DUE

WEEK 16

Dec. 8 Review and Last Thoughts

Final Exam: 7:00-10:00 P.M. Monday, Dec. 14 (9:30)

Final Exam: 9:00-12:00 Monday, Dec. 15 (11:00)