

## Course Outline for ENG 4

### CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

Effective: Fall 2008

#### I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

ENG 4 — CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE — 0 units

Develops critical thinking, reading, and writing skills as they apply to the analysis of fiction, poetry and drama; literary criticism; and related non-fiction from diverse cultural sources and perspectives. Emphasis on the techniques and principles of effective written argument as they apply to literature. Some research required. Prerequisite: English 1A with a grade of "C" or higher. 3 hours

#### Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

#### Discipline:

	<b>MIN</b>
<b>Total Hours:</b>	<b>0.00</b>

#### II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT:

#### III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

#### IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

**Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:**

- A. demonstrate critical thinking skills in class discussion and written essays:
  1. understand the relationship between meaning in literature and language manipulation—including literal and figurative language, connotation, and denotation
  2. evaluate and analyze the relationship between meaning and the use of sophisticated literary forms and strategies, including parody, satire, etc.
  3. identify unstated premises and hidden assumptions which arise from the social, historical, moral, cultural, psychological, or aesthetic contexts in which the primary texts and the critical writings which apply to them exist
  4. evaluate the pattern of reasoning present in a literary argument and related critical evaluation, including induction and deduction
  5. identify logical fallacies, including appeals to authority, fear, and pity, in the arguments of literary works and criticism and particular literary fallacies, such as evaluating a work purely in terms of aesthetics, emotional effects, etc.
  6. recognize the similarities and differences between the intentions, biases, assumptions, and arguments of an author and his/her character(s)
  7. distinguish between fact, inference, and judgment, recognizing that many reasonable inferences can be derived from the same facts
  8. draw and justify inferences about a work, the intention of the author or the effect of the text based on the theme, setting, characterization, point of view, symbol, imagery, use of irony, structure, sound, and other elements of literature
  9. evaluate arguments in literary criticism and related nonfiction in terms of fairness, accuracy, completeness, and effectiveness
- B. demonstrate composition skills:
  1. explore a line of inquiry and limit the topic appropriately
  2. establish and state clearly a unifying thesis or proposition
  3. select examples, details, and other evidence to support or validate the thesis and other generalizations
  4. use detail, example, and evidence to develop and elaborate upon subtopics
  5. use principles of inductive and deductive logic to support and develop ideas
  6. avoid logical fallacies in the presentation of argument
  7. organize main parts of the essay and define a sequence that contributes to clarity
  8. achieve coherence
  9. use precise diction that communicates unambiguously
  10. write with a sense of an audience in mind
- C. use appropriate research techniques to produce an acceptable research paper
  1. demonstrate facility with library resources for literary research, including print, database, and Internet sources
  2. identify and evaluate sources
  3. formulate a productive research question
  4. understand the role of summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation in note-taking
  5. efficiently gather and record information on note cards
  6. organize information
  7. integrate source material into the paper
  8. correctly utilize systems of documentation (MLA) and bibliography

#### V. CONTENT:

- A. Instruction focused on critical thinking, reading, and writing:

1. stressing the connection between thinking, reading, and writing, and the importance of using each as a reinforcement for the other;
  2. reflecting the diversity in subject matter, cultural perspective and gender perspective, national or geographic background, time period, structure and theme;
  3. distinguishing between fact and inference;
  4. developing logical inferences;
  5. avoiding logical fallacies;
  6. recognizing denotative and connotative language;
  7. evaluating diction;
  8. exploring rhetorical uses of elements of literature;
  9. responding to aesthetics and style;
  10. constructing sound arguments;
  11. avoiding fallacies;
  12. supplying sufficient support for claims;
  13. using outside sources;
  14. refuting objections;
  15. writing with grace and style.
- B. Instruction focused on revision of written arguments:
1. to improve effectiveness of argument;
  2. to demonstrate progressive improvement and refinement of writing style, structure, coherence, and emphasis;
- C. Instruction focused on elements of literary analysis:
1. for fiction and drama: characterization, plot, conflict, setting, tone, point of view, theme, word choice; figurative language, symbol, irony, historical/social/philosophical context;
  2. for poetry: word choice, imagery, figurative language, rhythm and meter, structure, symbol, sound devices, irony, historical/social/philosophical context.

## VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. Instructor conferences
- B. **Lecture** -
- C. **Discussion** -
- D. B. Group work and collaborative learning 1. Small group activities may include brainstorming, enactment, problem solving, role playing, advocacy, peer evaluation, reading strategies
- E. Reading two full-length works in addition to five shorter works
- F. **Audio-visual Activity** - Multi-media materials, oral presentations
- G. Peer responses to multiple drafts
- H. F. Writing assignments 1. In-class writing 2. Informal writing, including essay drafts, summary/response writing, prewriting, annotated bibliography, and the like 3. Multiple essays (essay must total at least 6,000 words of "final draft" writing) 4. At least one research paper that posits a logically supported argument and is based on a synthesis and analysis of a variety of primary and secondary sources
- I. Class presentations and responses

## VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Reading: 1. Read part 6 of *Man's Fate*, by Andre Malraux and be prepared to discuss the difference between the satisfaction attained by Kyo and Katov at their deaths. 2. Read Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" and be prepared to discuss how the assumptions of those informing Mrs. Mallard of her husband's death contrast with her actual reaction. Did your assumptions initially match theirs, and were you later surprised to realize that she actually welcomed the news? How does Kate Chopin use Mrs. Mallard's reaction to craft an argument about the circumscribed lives that 19th century women so often led? B. Writing: 1. Read "Battle Royal," by Ralph Ellison. In his dying speech, the narrator's grandfather called himself a traitor and a spy in the enemy's territory. Ellison's narrator comments, "I could never be sure of what he meant." In a 3-5 page essay, use historical criticism (drawing on DuBois's "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" and/or Booker T. Washington's "Atlanta Exposition Address") to interpret the grandfather's dying words and speculate on how Ellison used them to make an argument about how blacks should navigate white racism in their quest to lead fulfilling lives. As you discuss the story in support of your thesis, do not forget to bring in elements of fiction like plot, character, theme, and diction in support of your main points. 2. We have discussed the theme of materialism in this class. As preparation for writing your next essay, read William Wordsworth's "The World Is Too Much with Us" and examine a significant claim in the piece, the evidence offered in support of the claim, and the rhetorical appeals (ethos, logos, pathos) used to move the reader towards acceptance of the claim. Lastly, reflect on how you might defend, refute, and/or qualify each writer's claim. Repeat this exercise for Gary Snyder's poem "After Work." Finally, write a 3-5 page compare/contrast essay in which you discuss how each writer approaches this topic. C. Research: 1. Below are five topics, one of which you should choose to pursue in your research paper. Each topic is accompanied by related poems and thought-provoking questions. You will notice that the questions are numerous and fairly open-ended; I have written them to guide you towards your own thesis, so you need not answer them all. Topic #1 Poems: Joseph Bruhac III's, "Ellis Island"; Lorna Dee Cervantes's "Refugee Ship"; Claude McKay's "The Tropics in New York." Prompt: Immigration has defined our nation like it has defined few others—yet the process of coming to a new land and adapting oneself to its demands, whether physical, emotional, or social, is not an easy one. All these poets struggle with the mixed legacy of immigration—what do they see as the conflicts engendered by it? If they are speaking of their ancestors' immigration experience, how do their lives continue to be affected by the immigration experience? If they are speaking of their own immigration experience, how do they represent this turning point in their lives? What are their attitudes towards the United States, the country that has received them or their families? How are those attitudes informed by their race and/or their country of origin? Essay requirements: 1. find and use at least four sources of four types (reference book, book-length study, article, Web site); 2. develop a thesis that makes an argument and cite both the poem/s you consider and each of your four or more sources to support that thesis; 3. use historical criticism and structural analysis of the poems to support your thesis; 4. properly cite all quotations and paraphrases of the literary texts and outside sources in MLA Style; 5. upload your essay to Turnitin.com by the final essay due date.

## VIII. EVALUATION:

### A. **Methods**

1. Other:
  - a. Informal writing assignments might include summaries, prewriting, book reviews, in-class essays, or informal annotated bibliographies. Informal writing exercises like these may not count towards the 6,000 required words of final draft writing.
  - b. Reading responses, class discussion, and quizzes or exams to demonstrate comprehension and analysis of reading materials.
  - c. Essays and research paper graded A-F, according to performance. Evaluation of students' achievement of the course objectives will be based on both critical thinking and writing skills, specifically the following:

1. clarity and effectiveness of writing and the degree to which it successfully incorporates principles of composition and of logical reasoning taught in the course;
2. clarity of understanding of assigned literature and other readings and the degree to which students are successful in using logical reasoning principles and sound exemplification to support an argument about the works considered;
3. the degree to which students go beyond critical reasoning or straightforward literary criticism to assess the arguments of authors and literary critics

#### B. Frequency

1. Informal writing assignments will be assigned and evaluated throughout the course of the term
2. Reading responses, class discussion, and quizzes or exams will be assigned and evaluated throughout the course of the term
3. Essays will be assigned and graded throughout the course of the term

#### IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Barnet, Sylvan, William Burto, and William E. Cain *An Introduction to Literature: Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. 16th ed., Pearson/Longman, 2010.
2. Hacker, Diana *A Writer's Reference with 2009 MLA and 2010 APA Updates*. 6th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011.
3. James, Missy, and Alan P. Merickel *Reading Literature and Writing Argument*. 4th ed., Prentice Hall, 2010.
4. Schilb, John, and John Clifford *Making Arguments about Literature*, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005.
5. Novel and/or play chosen by instructor. Previous choices include:
  1. Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. Norton Critical Edition. Ed. Francis Abiola Irele. New York: Norton, 2009
  2. Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*.
  3. Castillo, Ana. *The Mixquiahuala Letters*. New York: Anchor-Random House, 1992.
  4. MacCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. New York: Vintage, 2009.
  5. Nafsi, Azar. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. New York: Random House, 2008.
  6. Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. New York: Penguin, 2006.
  7. Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse Five*. New York: Dial Press-Random House, 1999.
  8. Wilson, August. *Fences*. New York: Samuel French, 2010.

#### X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: