

## Course Outline for ENG 4

### CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

Effective: Fall 2015

#### I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

ENG 4 — CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE — 3.00 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

3.00 Units Lecture

#### Prerequisite

ENG 1A - Critical Reading and Composition  
with a minimum grade of C

#### Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

#### Discipline:

	<u>MIN</u>
<b>Lecture Hours:</b>	54.00
<b>Total Hours:</b>	54.00

#### II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

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

**Before entering the course a student should be able to:**

A. ENG1A

#### 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. demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between language and meaning in literature, including literal and figurative language, denotation and connotation.
2. evaluate and analyze the relationship between a text's meaning and the use of sophisticated literary forms and strategies, including allegory and parable.
3. identify unstated premises and hidden assumptions which arise from the social, historical, moral, cultural, psychological, or aesthetic perspectives and contexts.
4. explain, analyze, and apply a literary argument and related critical evaluation using logical patterns of reasoning, such as induction and deduction.
5. identify logical and literary fallacies in fiction--in themes, plots, or the perspectives of fictional characters--and/or in student and published literary analysis, fallacies such as hasty generalization, ad hominem, slippery slope, and appeals to authority, fear, pity, aesthetics, or pathos.
6. identify and evaluate 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. create, explain, 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, symbolism, imagery, use of irony, structure, sound, and other elements of literature
9. evaluate arguments in literary criticism and related nonfiction in terms of 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 and elaborate upon subtopics.
4. use principles of inductive and deductive logic to support and develop ideas
5. avoid logical fallacies in the presentation of argument
6. organize an essay logically, in a sequence that contributes to clarity, using strong transitions between stages of thought and paragraphs.
7. create coherence in paragraphs and in the overall focus of the essay

8. Format all major essays according to MLA guidelines.
  9. produce precise diction that communicates unambiguously
  10. compose for an academic audience, using appropriate diction, logic, variety of sentence structure, coherence, citation, and sophistication of ideas, including originality of thought and an avoidance of cliché and repetition.
- 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 refined research question
  4. efficiently gather and record research
  5. compose and integrate summary, paraphrasing, and direct quotation using proper in-text and Works Cited MLA citation

## 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. recognizing denotative and connotative language;
  6. evaluating diction;
  7. exploring rhetorical uses of elements of literature;
  8. responding to aesthetics and style;
  9. reading for ambiguities in text and for author choices;
  10. discovering fallacies in author's writing, including appeals to authority, fear, and pity;
  11. constructing sound arguments;
  12. avoiding fallacies in one's own writing;
  13. supplying sufficient support for claims;
  14. using outside sources;
  15. refuting objections;
  16. 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. **Lecture** -
- B. **Discussion** -
- C. Class presentations and responses
- D. **Audio-visual Activity** - Multi-media materials, oral presentations
- E. Group work and collaborative learning may include brainstorming, enactment, problem solving, role playing, advocacy, peer evaluation, reading strategies, annotated bibliography, oral presentation.
- F. Reading two full-length works in addition to five shorter works
- G. Instructor conferences
- H. Writing assignments will include in-class writing; informal writing, including essay drafts; summary/response writing; pre reading and prewriting; multiple essays (essays must total at least 6,000 words of "final draft" writing); 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. Annotated bibliography may be assigned in addition to research paper but may not replace it.
- I. Peer responses to multiple drafts

## VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Reading
1. Read part 6 of *Man's Fate*, by Andre Malraux, and annotate strong, hard, and weak lines for a discussion about the difference between the satisfaction attained by Kyo and Katov at their deaths.
  2. Read Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" and annotate strong, hard, and weak lines for a discussion about 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 six-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. Write a six-to-eight page essay that investigates and compares real-life parallels to a single issue from George Orwell's novel *1984*, such as surveillance, privacy, groupthink, doublespeak, media manipulation, social and political repression, stultification of the masses, global politics, war, language manipulation, or torture. Using the databases through the LPC Library website, research contemporary parallels to one of these themes in the novel. Your paper should compare issues and specific events in the novel to real life issues and events. Incorporate a minimum of six quotes and three paraphrases from the novel and summaries and six quotes from your research. Your thesis should argue if, why, and or how Orwell's novel is still relevant regarding your chosen theme.
  2. For the research essay, you will be researching an aspect common in dystopian literature (class, gender roles, sexism, race/racism, relationships/love, sex/sexuality, children, family, language, mood altering substances, technology, totalitarian power, collectivism, human nature, religion, propaganda, brain washing, female rebels, or some other aspect common to dystopian literature not named here) and exploring how the aspect tends to function in multiple dystopian texts. You will be drawing at least two-three dystopian texts, literary criticism, and other academic ideas, theories, or research related to your

topic.

## 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, and Nancy Sommers. *A Writer's Reference*. 7th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010.
3. James, Missy, and Alan Merickel. *Reading Literature and Writing Argument*. 5th ed., Longman, 2012.
4. Hosseini, Khaled. *And the Mountains Echoed*, Riverhead Books, 2013.
5. Benjamin, Melanie. *The Aviator's Wife: A Novel*, Bantam, 2013.
6. Johnson, Adam. *The Orphan Master's Son*, Random House, 2012.
7. Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. Norton Critical ed., Norton, 2009.
8. Atwood, Margaret. *Handmaid's Tale*, Anchor, 1998.
9. Castillo, Ana. *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, Bilingual Review, 1992.
10. Silko, Leslie. *Ceremony*, Penguin Classics, 2006.
11. Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Dell, 1991.
12. Hansberry, Lorraine. *Raisin in the Sun*, Mass Market, 2004.
13. Norris, Bruce. *Clybourne Park: A Play*, Faber & Faber, 2011.
14. Azar, Nafsi. *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*, Random House, 2003.
15. McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*, Vintage, 2007.
16. Schilb, John, and John Clifford. *Arguing about Literature: A Guide and Reader*, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2014.

## X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: