

Las Positas College  
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## Course Outline for ENG 45

### STUDIES IN FICTION

Effective: Fall 2008

#### I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

ENG 45 — STUDIES IN FICTION — 3.00 units

Form, development, and cultural insights of the novel and short story; exploration of particular themes or periods as reflected in works of fiction. Prerequisite: English 1A (completed with a grade of "C" or higher). 3 hours lecture.

3.00 Units Lecture

#### Grading Methods:

#### 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: 4

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

#### IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

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

1. demonstrate familiarity with a variety of techniques and methods used by authors of fiction
2. demonstrate familiarity with the structure of the works studied and discuss the works using appropriate literary terms such as metaphor, plot, point of view, and character development
3. explain the works studied in relation to and as expressions of cultural and historical influences
4. identify and explain common topics and themes in diverse works of fiction
5. analyze and evaluate critical responses to the works studied
6. bring various critical approaches to bear on the interpretation of fiction in take-home and in-class written work

#### V. CONTENT:

- A. Reading and analysis of short fiction, with attention to characterization, plot, point of view, imagery, symbolism, and theme
- B. Reading and analysis of at least two novels, with attention to characterization, structure, point of view, imagery, symbolism, and theme
- C. Instruction and practice writing responses to fiction
- D. Cultural and literary context of works studied
- E. Connections between writers' lives and writers' works
- F. Application of various critical approaches to works studied, including historical, formalist, ethnic, feminist, deconstructionist, and other approaches as applicable.

#### VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. In-class visits to Internet sites related to writers and their works
- B. Films based on fiction studied in the course
- C. Individual presentations
- D. Films providing historical, biographical background
- E. **Lecture** -
- F. **Guest Lecturers** - when appropriate
- G. **Discussion** - Small group discussion and collaborative presentations

#### VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Reading: 1. Read Edgar Allen Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death," and come to class with three questions for class discussion. 2. Find and read a critical essay on Poe's story, summarize it for the class, and discuss whether you agree with the critic's analysis. B. Collaborative Presentations: 1. The England of Jane Austen 2. Post Civil War America in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. C. Individual Presentations: 1. Psychiatric hospitals in the time of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* 2. Sexual Politics in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. 3. Uprooting of African-American communities, connecting this process to Morrison's *Sula*. 4. 19th century dining customs, connecting them to Dickens' *Great Expectations*. D. Writing, listening, problem-solving, critical thinking: 1. Write a short essay connecting the estates in Jane Austen's novels with the principles of neoclassicism. 2. Working in a small group, find a passage from the text that you agree reveals the most about one character, and explain the passage to the class. 3. Write a three to four page essay exploring Andre Dubus's *House of Sand and Fog* as a portrait of economic and ethnic stressors in urban America.

## VIII. EVALUATION:

### A. Methods

1. Other:
  - a. Essays
    1. Typical questions: in-class essays and take-home essays (take-home essays evaluated somewhat more rigorously):
      - a. Compare and contrast Darcy's two proposals to Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, focusing on setting, language, and outcome.
      - b. Discuss the importance and effects of Shelley's use of multiple narrators in *Frankenstein*.
    2. Typical questions: short-answer essay questions
      - a. List the characteristics of romanticism that appear in *Jane Eyre*.
      - b. Choose one line from the text and briefly explain its significance.
  - b. Ungraded reading logs, assessed for student comprehension and beginnings of analysis
    1. Record your thoughts and responses to this week's reading.
    2. Based on this week's reading, develop three questions for class discussion.

### B. Frequency

1. One oral presentation
2. Weekly reading logs
3. Two written examinations
4. Two 3-5 page critical essays

## IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Alvarez, Julia *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents.*, Plume, 1992.
2. Austen, Jane *Pride and Prejudice.*, Penguin Classics, 2002.
3. Bausch, Richard, and R.V. Cassill, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction.* 6th ed., W.W. Norton, 2000.
4. Cassill, R.V., and Joyce Carol Oates, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Contemporary Fiction.* 2nd ed., W.W. Norton, 1998.
5. Charters, Ann *The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction.* 6th ed., Bedford/St. Martins, 2002.
6. Dubus III, Andre *House of Sand and Fog.*, Vintage Books, 1999.
7. Hemingway, Ernest *For Whom the Bell Tolls.*, Scribner, 1995.
8. Morrison, Toni *Sula.*, Plume Books, 2002.

## X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: