

## Oxford College of Emory University

Forms of Literary Inquiry: The Art of the Short Story  
English 389R- 12A  
MWF 12:50-1:40; Seney 310  
Fall 2011

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Office: Seney 407  
Hours: 2-3:30 daily, & by appt;  
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### Required Texts\*

Anderson, Sherwood. *Winesburg, Ohio: Text and Criticism*. Ed. John Ferres.  
Penguin, 1977.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 3<sup>rd</sup>  
edition. Manchester UP, 2009.

Brazier, Chris, ed. *One World: A Global Anthology of Short Stories*. New  
Internationalist, 2009.

Gioia, Dana and R.S. Gwynn. *The Art of the Short Story*. Pearson, 2006.

\*Multiple online articles on the literary schools and interpretive strategies from such  
websites as <http://42explore.com/litcrit.htm> and  
<http://vos.ucsb.edu/browse.asp?id=2718>, among others.

### Course Description

This literary readings course focuses on the many ways that we as readers 'make meaning' of the special stories we call literature. When we read, we automatically interpret the words on the page, often circling back, recursively, to a passage that needs a second (or third) look. After we finish a story, we can tell a friend what the story 'is about.' In this way, we make meaning by reading, interpreting, and then sharing that meaning with others.

Integral to this cycle of reading/interpreting/sharing is the way that questions play an important role at every step of the way. When we read, we question. Our interpretations are often a result of key questions we have had in reading. And, questions play a large role in making that interpretation clear to those who share our stories.

This course will also make these questions, this process of reading, and the making of meaning more open, more systematic, and more public as we see what efforts literary scholars have given to the ways that a story/text can acquire the meanings or 'readings' that we give it. But we will not begin with the answers of scholars to their questions. Rather, we will begin with stories, with a cluster of central concepts, and raise a number of questions which we will share with each other with the intention of making these questions and resulting answers more profound, rigorous, and rich as we go along.

## Course Objectives/Outcomes

1. Students will apply key literary concepts—plot, characterization, point of view, setting, theme, and style—in developing interpretations of short stories.
2. Building on this basis, students will gain knowledge of literary critical schools, terminology, and interpretive strategies.
3. Students will increase their skill and sophistication of reading by inquiring into and addressing significant issues in successive short stories.
4. Students will further develop their writing on and about literature.

## Assignments and Percentage of Final Grade

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Two essays.                                   | (15% x 2 = 30%) |
| 2. A formal paper.                               | (20%)           |
| 3. Brief 1-pg response papers, short assignments | (15%)           |
| 4. Class facilitation and other group work.      | (15%)           |
| 5. Oral presentation (single or with group).     | (10%)           |
| 6. A final exam (Discussion questions)           | (10%)           |

1-pg responses, short assignments, etc. These assignments are the daily/weekly work of the course which emphasize exploration, inquiry, discovery, and application. (15%)

Class facilitation and other small group work.

One person will shoulder responsibility for beginning and leading class discussion each day. Each due date will be determined by the class discussion. (15%)

The 2 essays: These assignments involve the application of a critical interpretive approach to one (or more) of the readings of the course. (30%)

The formal paper. This assignment is similar to the essays except several outside sources can be incorporated into the paper. (20%)

Oral Presentation. After midterm, we will begin putting together small group oral presentations on a particular literary school that you have decided upon as being the most useful for a particular story. (10%)

Final. An in-class written final exam. (10%)

## Other Responsibilities and Related Matters

1. Attendance. Be present and on time. I take roll the first thing as class begins, and always mark as absent those who are not in the room. You may miss three class meetings, but I will deduct points (5 pts per absence) from your class participation grade after the third absence. Students who are late

- must assume responsibility to be certain the attendance record is changed to reflect their attendance.
2. Honor Code. We will discuss this important issue in class, and we will cover plagiarism at that time. But please be aware that your writing is to be your own, and any other person's writing must be acknowledged through citations in the proper form. Please consult the Oxford College Handbook if you have any questions regarding the Code or the Honors Council.
  3. Late essays and other work. Work should be turned in on time so that I will be able to give you feedback on that assignment when the class is discussing the assignment. The longer period of time after we discuss an item that goes by, the less relevance and usefulness that assignment will have. For every day that an essay (or other work) is late, I will deduct 5 points (the +, -) from that paper.
  4. If I have to go to a conference to make a presentation, there will be online blended learning assignments in Blackboard. We will stay in touch through Blackboard/email.

### **Weekly Outline of Readings/Assignments**

#### **Readings and due dates\***

\*Short assignments, quizzes, and facilitation of discussion are not placed on the calendar because those due dates will be made in class.

August 24: Course overview, syllabus, assignments discussion, mention of paired work

26: Discussion of key concepts, Gioia, pp 849-62.

29: "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"; paired discussion/presentation of key concepts

31: "Gimpel the Fool"; developing questions from the key concepts

September 2 Simplified overview of critical schools, Gioia, pp. 878-904

(Formalism, Biographical c, Historical c, Psychological c, Mythological c, Sociological c, Gender c, Reader-response c, Deconstructionist c, Cultural Studies c)

**[1-2 pg response]**

#### The Canonical Short Stories, Traditional interpretation toward Literary Schools

September 5: Labor Day Holiday

7: "Sonny's Blues"; formalism, questions that formalists often ask

9: "The Lady with the Pet Dog"; Biographical c.; 1 story TBC

12: "Civil Peace"; Historical c.; 1 story TBC

**[1-2 pg response]**

14: "The Tell Tale Heart"; Psychological c.; 1 story TBC

16: "Barn Burning"; Mythological c.; 1 story TBC

- 19: "Rocking Horse Winner"; Sociological c.; 1 story TBC
- 21: "The Yellow Wallpaper"; Gender c.; 1 story TBC
- 23: "Rose for Emily"; Reader Response c.; 1 story TBC

### **ESSAY 1 DUE**

- 26: "Happy Endings"; Deconstructionist c.; 1 story TBC
- 28: "Everyday Use"; Cultural Studies c.; 1 story TBC
- 30: Day for first discussion of Barry book.

### **The Short Story into Novel: Major or Minor changes in Interpretation**

**[Students will decide which terms and/or schools work best with individual stories]**

- October 3: Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*: "Hands," "Paper Pills," and "Mother"
- 5: Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*: "Philosopher," "Nobody Knows," "Godliness"
- 7: Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*: "Man of Ideas," "Adventure," "Respectability"
  
- 10-11 Midsemester break
- 12: Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*: "The Thinker," "Tandy," "Strength of God"
- 14: Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*: "The Teacher," "Loneliness," "Awakening"
  
- 17: Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*: "'Queer,'" "Untold Lies," "Drink"
- 19: Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*: "Death," "Sophisticated," "Departure"
- 21: Research paper class in the library;

### **ESSAY 2 DUE**

### **The Unexplored Horizon and the Individual Projects in Critical Interpretation**

**[Students will decide which terms and/or schools work best with these 'new' stories]**

- 24: One World: Chiew, Wood, Ramos
- 26: One World: Rose-Innes, Kubuitsile, Adichie
- 28: One World: Nadiya, Mangla, Unigwe
  
- 31: One World: Kwa, Gebbie, Nagamatsu
- November 2: One World: Dibia, Tzikas, Gappah
- 4: One World: Kamoche, Dhavan, Abiola
  
- 7: One World: Brannon, Mhute, Rehorek
- 9: Peter Barry *Beginning Theory*; Research paper prospectus
- 11: Peter Barry *Beginning Theory*; Research paper

14: Peter Barry *Beginning Theory*; begin oral presentations  
16: Oral presentations  
18: Oral presentations

21: Oral presentations  
23-25: Thanksgiving recess

28: Conclude oral presentations; MLA stylesheet day  
30: **Research Paper Due**; sharing of research stories  
December 2: Prep for final

5 Last day of regular class; denouement details  
7 Reading Day

8-14 Finals week

From a handout from the Exploratorium Institute for Inquiry, written by teacher Marilyn Austin. These questions are intended for teachers to pose as they interact with students engaged in inquiry processes.

1. What does this make you think of?
2. In what ways are these different?
3. In what ways are these the same?
4. What materials did you use?
5. What would happen if you ...
6. What might you try instead?
7. Tell me about your ...?
8. What does it look like?
9. What does it remind you of?
10. What does it feel like?
11. What can you do next time?
12. What can you tell me about it?
13. Tell me what happened.
14. What could you do instead?
15. Which one do you have more of?
16. Is one object longer/shorter than another?
17. What do you call the things you are using?
18. What can you tell me about the things you have?
19. Tell me what it looks like.
20. How are you going to do that?
21. What do you feel, see, hear, taste, smell?
22. How did you do that?
23. What will you do next after you finish that?
24. Is there anything else you could do/use?
25. How do you know?
26. What are some different things you could try?
27. What is it made of?
28. Show me what you **could** do with it?

<http://ethemes.missouri.edu/themes/1496?locale=en>