

Humanities Literature 121

Literature as a Technology

Course: ENGL 121, Section: 001
Meeting times: MWF 1:25- 2:15 pm
HSS Room 205
Spring 2018

Instructor: Professor Woerle
Office: HSS, Room 408
Email: owoerle@gmail.com

Office Hours: MWF 3-5 pm

Feel free to email me at any time, and I will do my best to respond to you within 24 hours. You can also set up an appointment during my office hours after class. I am also open to individual mini phone conferences if coming to campus is not possible for you.

Course Description

In today's world when an infinite amount of information is at our fingertips, how can we analyze and make sense of it all? What is a text trying to get us to do, feel, or think? Literature is a technology and a skill we can use to find meaning and purpose out of all the information we are bombarded with every day. Before we begin to look for the meaning and function of a text, we first need to establish what literature is and its many forms. By spending the first two weeks learning what falls under the category of literature, we can then become more aware of how it constructs and influences our daily lives. Once we build our understanding of what literature is, we will apply that knowledge by examining multiple genres of literature including short stories, poetry, the novel, and film.

Goals

In this course students will:

- learn what constitutes as "literature" and its many forms found in our daily lives
- become familiar with a variety of literature genres
- learn to facilitate and collaborate with other classmates in small groups
- write a final paper on one of the texts we have studied in this course, and explain how the form and function of that text constitutes as literature

Required Texts and Materials

“Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction”, by Jonathan Culler
ISBN-13: 978-0199691340

The Norton Anthology to Short Fiction (Shorter 8th Edition)
ISBN-13: 978-0393937763

1984 by Gorge Orwell (novel)
ISBN-13: 9788483280065, 9780451518651, paperback copies on amazon will work

- I will distribute the poems we will be looking at in class, as well as email any short stories that are not included in our Norton anthology
- Laptops are permitted **with the expectation that students will be on task during class time and not on facebook, twitter, checking sports updates, playing games, etc.**

Assignments and Grading

A 100-90%

B 80-89%

C 70-79%

D 60-69%

F 59% and below

Attendance (10%)

Attendance is mandatory for this course and will be taken each class meeting. Students are allowed three excused absences during the course of the semester. Any absences beyond this will result in losing 2% off their attendance grade. You simply cannot learn the material without coming to class. Students will receive a warning for their first late arrival to class (more than 5 minutes late after class has started). After the first late arrival, students will lose 1% of their attendance grade. I understand that life happens at any moment beyond our control (i.e. car trouble, your ride is late, traffic) which is why the first late arrival is excused. However, you should prepare to arrive to campus or have a reliable ride with adequate time to find parking and get to class. If you have a true emergency, contact me as soon as possible and we will negotiate your absences and missed work.

Participation (10%)

Students are expected to read the assigned material before each class. Contributing to class discussion by demonstrating that you've read, asking relevant questions, or making connections to other ideas is essential to getting a full participation grade. Students who do not engage at all in class throughout the semester will not receive a full participation grade.

Weekly Journal Entry (25%)

Each week, starting week 2 of the course, an informal, typed free write in a word document format will be **due by email each Friday by midnight**. Feel free to write about the stories we read for that week, elaborate on anything mentioned in class, or make connections to other areas of literature, film, society, anything as long as you can make a valid point for what you are saying. The main rule is you can only write about the material used for that particular week. You cannot write about something mentioned the week before, or in any of the previous weeks. The purpose of these weekly writings is to get you to reflect on the material. Use complete sentences. Length of responses should be about **half a page, single spaced**. You will not have a journal entry due the last three weeks of the course since you will be working on your short essays and final papers.

Group Assignment (15%)

Groups will be divided up and assigned at random, and each group will collaboratively make a 1 page worksheet of facts and information about one of the short stories. The worksheets you make must include information about the author and major elements about plot and style particular to your groups' story. Worksheets will be submitted to me by email in a word document.

Short 1984 Essay (15%)

Your short essay will be written about *1984*. You will choose a topic from the following list to write about: *the individual versus society*, *how 1984 can be related to our world today*, or *how much you value privacy after reading the novel*. While you do not need to do outside research, regardless of which topic you choose, you must use characters, general themes, and a quote from the novel to back up your reasoning and ideas. Essays must be **3 pages** in length, **doubled spaced**.

Final Essay, Analyzing Literature as Technology (25%)

The final assignment for the course is a **4-5 page double spaced** essay about one of the stories, poems, or films we have studied in this class. With the item you have chosen to write about, explain the literary elements that construct the piece and how it performs as literature as we have been exploring throughout the semester. We have been studying literature as both a form and a tool to help us understand meaning we might tease out of a text. If you choose to write about a short story, you would write about how the narrative is constructed with specific literary techniques, and the overall purpose or bigger questions the story gets us to think about. If you write about a poem, you would write about the literary techniques the author used to create the piece, and how the words make us have an emotional reaction. If you write about a film we watched in class, you would write about the film techniques used to create the narrative, and how it achieved making us think about bigger questions or issues. You do not need to do outside research, but if you do, you must include a bibliography page of all the sources you consulted.