

Note: Read "The Birthmark" and "Elements of Fiction" for first class!

Doane College

INTRODUCTION TO FICTION (ENG 237)

W 8:00-12:30PM 3 Credits

Instructor: Lee Tasey
Office Hours: TBA
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Course Description: Reading and study of various authors and forms of fiction (short story, novella and novel) with attention paid to historical development and critical terminology.

Required Books:

The Art of the Short Story by Dana Gioia and R.S. Gwynn

Course Goals:

- to read and appreciate great literature
- to learn the building blocks of fiction (e.g., character, plot, symbol, theme, setting and pacing, etc.)
- to learn the religious, philosophical and historical background out of which the authors wrote
- to write well-crafted essays about literature
- to better understand G-d, the world, others, and ourselves through the reading of stories

- to sympathize with worldviews and life journeys different from our own

Course requirements:

- 1) attendance and participation
- 2) a reading report
- 3) a midterm exam
- 4) an interpretive essay

Attendance and Participation: Attendance is essential to learning. If you will miss more than two classes, do not enroll in this class. More than two absences will result in the grade of 'F.'

The Reading Report: At the beginning of each class, a group of students will begin discussion on the day's stories. Possible topics include theme, historical/religious context, narrative tools such as foreshadowing and irony, or the author's use of artistic language. A one-page "facts" sheet will be distributed to the class. This handout should list the author's hometown, education, religious background (if any), literary accomplishments as well as the author's influence on other writers and/or movements.

The Midterm Exam: Students will choose two stories from the syllabus and write an essay on each one. This will be a take-home exam.

The Interpretive Essay: Students will write a 4-6-page essay on one or more stories in *The Art of the Short Story*. The paper should meet essay standards (an opening paragraph with a clear thesis statement, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion.) Students should also engage at least two secondary sources and respond critically to those sources. All sources must be documented and comply with *MLA* standards.

Method of Evaluation:

- 1) Attendance and participation (10%)
- 2) The reading report (10%)

- 3) The midterm exam (40%)
- 4) The interpretive essay (40%)

Grading Scale:

A+ = 97-100
A = 93-96
A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89
B = 83-86
B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79
C = 73-76
C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69
D = 63-66
D- = 60-62
F = 59 and below

A Note on Plagiarism

Stealing a writer's intellectual property, such as words, sentences and paragraphs, is a crime. You may borrow these items, but you must carefully show where you got them. In other words, you must cite your sources. If you are suspected of plagiarism, not only will you receive a grade of 'F' for that assignment, you could also fail the course.

A Note on Courtesy

This is the twenty-first century, not the Stone Age. Everybody should act civilized. When the instructor is talking, you don't talk. When you're talking, your colleagues don't talk. Also, if you disagree with somebody, do it gracefully. And remember: always attack a person's argument, not the person.

Tentative Class Schedule

Session 1

Nathaniel Hawthorne "The Birthmark"
"The Elements of Short Fiction" (849-862)

Session 2

Kate Chopin "The Storm"
Charlotte Perkins Gillman "The Yellow Wallpaper"
Stephen Crane "The Open Boat"

Session 3

Sherwood Anderson "Hands"
Ernest Hemingway "A Clean Well-lighted Place"
William Faulkner "A Rose for Emily"

Session 4

Shirley Jackson "The Lottery"
Flannery O'Connor "A Good Man is Hard to Find"
Raymond Carver "Cathedral"

Session 5

Joyce Carol Oates "Where Are You Going, Where Have You
Been?"
Bobbie Ann Mason "Shiloh"

MIDTERM DUE

Session 6

Ralph Ellison "A Party Down at the Square"
Chinua Achebe "Dead Men's Path"
Leslie Marmon Silko "The Man to Send Rain Clouds"

Gabriel Garcia Marquez "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"

Session 7

Franz Kafka "The Metamorphosis"
"Writing about Fiction" (863-877)
INTERPRETIVE ESSAY THESIS DUE

Session 8

Guy de Maupassant "The Necklace"
Anton Chekhov "The Lady with a Pet Dog"

NOTE: The **INTERPRETIVE ESSAY** will be due the following week. Send essays (unattached) to ltasey@yahoo.com

