

LIT 110: Introduction to Literature
TR 11:00 – 12:20
GBB L14

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Office Hours: TR 12:30 - 2:00
and by appointment (LA 219)
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This course is an introduction to the study of literature. Throughout the semester we will read and discuss a number of short stories, novels, and lyric poems, as well as one long poem (a book-length poem). We will try to understand the manifold ways in which literary works illuminate basic questions of our lives, including death, loss, trauma, grief, renewal, love, family ties, the bonds of friendship, our place in history, the power of stories and visions, and the relationship between the ideals we try to live by and the actual messes our lives so often become.

Literature is inexhaustible. It can be approached from a great many different perspectives. This course has three relatively straightforward goals: to awaken or deepen your appreciation for the way literary works help us to see our own lives and the lives of others; to develop your ability to think clearly and imaginatively about literary works; and to improve your ability to write an interpretative essay that is clear, coherent, thoughtful, articulate.

Requirements

Reading of all assigned texts
Regular attendance
Three or four short papers (1-2 pages)
Two interpretative essays (4-5 pages)
A substantial revision of one of these interpretative essays (5-7 pages)

Note. For this course you are required to come to class with hard copies (not electronic copies) of all the essays, stories, novels, and poems that are assigned. The books can be purchased at the University Book Store or elsewhere. The essays, the poems, and a few of the stories are on moodle: you are required to print these out by yourself and bring them to class. I'll talk about my reasons for this requirement on the first day of class.

Texts

George Saunders, *Pastoralia*
Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeping*
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad* (optional)
C. D. Wright, *Deepstep Come Shining*

Course packet (essays and poems on moodle)

Map of Course

There may be changes as we move along.

- R Aug 31 Introduction
- T Sept 5 Donald Barthelme, "The School"
Joy Williams, "Souvenir"
- R Sept 7 Grace Paley, "Friends"
***** First Short Paper Due *****
George Saunders, "The Braindead Megaphone"
- T Sept 12 George Saunders, *Pastoralia*: concentrate on "Pastoralia"
- R Sept 14 George Saunders, *Pastoralia*: concentrate on "Pastoralia"
- T Sept 19 George Saunders, *Pastoralia*: concentrate on "Sea Oak"
- R Sept 21 George Saunders, *Pastoralia*: concentrate on "The Falls"
***** Second Short Paper Due *****
- T Sept 26 Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeping*
- R Sept 28 Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeping*
- T Oct 3 Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeping*
- R Oct 5 Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeping*
Marilynne Robinson, "Freedom of Thought"
- T Oct 10 Emily Dickinson, "We grow accustomed to the Dark," "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain"
W. H. Auden, "In Memory of W. B. Yeats"
Lucie Brock-Broido, "Soul Keeping Company"
- R Oct 12 A. R. Ammons, "Easter Morning," "The City Limits," "The Eternal City," "Day"
***** Essay I Due *****

- T Oct 17 Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
- R Oct 19 Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
- T Oct 24 Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
- R Oct 26 Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
- T Oct 31 Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
- R Nov 2 Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
- T Nov 7 Wallace Stevens, "Sunday Morning," "The Plain Sense of Things," "Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour," "The River of Rivers in Connecticut"
Joy Harjo, "Ceremony," "It's Raining in Honolulu"
- R Nov 9 Thylas Moss, "A Man," "Decision," "Cheating"
- *** Essay II Due *****
- T Nov 14 W. B. Yeats, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," "The Song of Wandering Aengus," "Sailing to Byzantium," "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop," "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," "A Prayer for my Daughter"
- R Nov 16 Adrienne Rich, "Origins and History of Consciousness," "Transcendental Etude"
- *** Third Short Paper Due *****
- T Nov 21 (story)
- R Nov 23 Thanksgiving
- T Nov 28 C. D. Wright, *Deepstep Come Shining*
- R Nov 30 C. D. Wright, *Deepstep Come Shining*
- T Dec 5 C. D. Wright, *Deepstep Come Shining*
- R Dec 7 C. D. Wright, *Deepstep Come Shining*
- T Dec 12 Review

***** Final Essay Due on Thursday December 14 by 10:00 a.m. *****

Department and University Policies

Writing Course Learning Outcomes

- Learn new concepts through the art of writing well
- Formulate and express ideas that are logical, organized, and developed
- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience and purpose
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions
- Demonstrate appropriate English-language usage

Literary and Artistic Studies Course Learning Outcomes

- Learn to characterize, interpret, and critique the structure and significance of works of art
- Learn to compose coherent arguments about works of art from a range of perspectives
- Acquire knowledge about artistic and cultural traditions

Departmental Assessment

The English Department's process of curriculum assessment requires that faculty read student papers, outside of specific courses, to measure the progress students are making as they move through the program. One of your papers may be selected to be evaluated in this assessment process. If so, all identifying information will be removed, and no evaluation of your work outside the course will have an effect on your grade. If you wish that your work not be read a second time in this context, please let me know, and I will make sure that none of your work is forwarded to the assessment committee.

Disability Accommodation

It is university policy that students with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations in their course-work. If you wish to request accommodations, please do contact me early in the semester, and I will work with you and Disability Services to make sure that the necessary accommodations are made. For more information, call 406.243.2243 (Voice/Text), or visit the Disability Services website at <http://www.umt.edu/dss/>.