

**LIT 110**  
**Introduction to Literature**  
**Fall 2017**

LA 138  
MWF 10-10:50

Professor David Gilcrest  
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Office Hours:  
T/W/Th 11-12  
and by appt.

**“She didn't read books so she didn't know that she was the world and the heavens boiled down to a drop.” --Zora Neale Hurston**

**“Language is a virus from outer space.” --William S. Burroughs**

**Literature is “equipment for living.” --Kenneth Burke**

**Course Description**

LIT 110 introduces students to the study of how readers make meaning of texts and of how texts influence readers. Our focus will be on developing strategies essential to interpreting **literary texts**: close reading, critical analysis, and effective writing. Our shared inquiry will draw from poetry, short prose, the novel, and drama.

**Course Goals**

LIT 110 will introduce students to important aspects of our literary traditions. Students who successfully complete this course will:

- demonstrate through class discussion, written essays, and examinations the ability to apply productively an essential critical vocabulary
- demonstrate through class discussion, written essays, and examinations an understanding of rhetorical strategies used by literary authors
- demonstrate through class discussion, written essays, and examinations the analytical skills required to be good readers of literature
- demonstrate through class discussion, written essays, and examinations the essential connection between effective thinking and effective writing about literature

**LIT 110 and the Writing Competency Requirement**

As an approved course in partial satisfaction of the Writing Competency Requirement, LIT 110 is designed to give students the opportunity to develop the ability to write with clarity of thought and precision of language.

This course requires an electronic submission (via Moodle) of an assignment stripped of your personal information to be used for educational research and assessment of the university's writing program. Your paper will be stored in a database. A random

selection of papers will be assessed by a group of faculty and staff using a rubric developed from the following Writing Learning Outcomes:

- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions (largely style conventions like APA or MLA)
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

This assessment in no way affects either your course grade or your progression at the university. Click on the link to access the **rubric** that will be used to score the papers.

### **LIT 110 and the General Education Program**

As a course that satisfies the General Education Group V: Literary and Artistic Studies (L) requirement, LIT 110 is designed to develop familiarity with significant works of literature. Through this experience, students will enhance their analytical skills and explore the historical, aesthetic, philosophical, and cultural features of these literary texts.

Upon completion of LIT 110, students will be able to:

1. analyze works of art with respect to structure and significance within literary and artistic traditions, including emergent movements and forms; and
2. develop coherent arguments that critique these works from a variety of approaches, such as historical, aesthetic, cultural, psychological, political, and philosophical.

### **LIT 110 Requirements**

- Regular class attendance and participation, steady preparation
- Three Critical Essays
- Poetry Response Project (PRP)
- Final Examination
- Completed Portfolio

### **Grading**

Essay #1	15%
Essay #2	20%
Essay #3	20%
Poetry Response Project	20%
Final Examination	25%

## Course Policies and Procedures, and Unsolicited Advice

- Students who fail to attend the first two classes of the term will be dropped.
- Attendance and Participation: Because I believe you can learn the material covered in this course only by being here, your attendance and **ACTIVE** participation are required. Your final grade will be dropped one full letter grade after **four** unexcused absences; a failing grade will be assigned after **five** unexcused absences. (An **excused** absence requires a **pre-arranged** scholastic or athletic commitment or a **bona fide and substantiated** medical emergency.)
- You are responsible for everything covered in class discussion, especially information that makes it on to the whiteboard. **Taking good notes is crucial to your success in this class.**
- If you miss a class, **please make arrangements with a colleague to get notes.** Also, **please check with me to see if you missed any handouts** or special instructions. Handouts will make it to our Moodle site, eventually.
- Each class period requires up to three hours of preparation—that is, three hours of careful reading and critical thinking (and writing). **If you cannot commit to this work, LIT 110 is probably not the class for you.**
- If you get confused, or have a question, raise your hand. If your hand is not in the air, I can only assume you understand the texts and ideas under consideration **PERFECTLY.**
- Laptops and tablets may be used for note taking; **laptops and tablets (and cellphones) used for other purposes will be confiscated and given to wayward children.**
- Texts: The texts under consideration are central to our work in this class, especially during class time. You **MUST** purchase the texts for this class **and you MUST bring the relevant texts to class.** No exceptions, no excuses.
- Deadlines: All work is due in class on the assigned date. **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.**
- Presentation: Essays must be printed. Black ink. 10 or 12 pt. font. Either Arial or Times New Roman, e.g., is sufficient. Please, no funky fonts. I would like you to follow the MLA citation and documentation guidelines in this class. Make sure you include on your work your name, the title and draft number, this class and section number, my name, and the date.
- Revision: Because true revision is an essential part of serious writing, **you are required to revise your first two essays.** A final grade will only be recorded after I receive, and evaluate, your revision. Please follow the **Guidelines for Revision** that I will give you.
- Please make hard copies of all your work and keep them in a safe place.
- I do not accept work in electronic form. Recycled paper saves trees. Printing on two sides is usually fine.
- The instructor and the University reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus (course requirements, grading policy, etc.) as needed.

## Scholarship

**All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course.** The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrase) must be properly documented. Students who plagiarize face serious consequences that may range from receiving a failing grade on a given assignment to failing the course. Students who plagiarize also face additional University sanctions.

## Accommodations

If you have a disability (physical or learning) that you think may affect your performance in this class, please see me during the first week of the term so we can discuss whatever accommodations may be necessary.

## Required Texts

*The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck  
*Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* by Ben Fountain  
*Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller  
*Sweat* by Lynn Nottage  
Poetry Packet, via Moodle  
Other Handouts, via Moodle  
Also, a two-pocket folder for your portfolio

## **Syllabus**

F 9/1 Introduction: Language Games

M 9/4 Labor Day Holiday—No Class

### **Fiction**

W 9/6 *Grapes of Wrath* Chs 1-9

F 9/8 *Grapes of Wrath* Chs 10-14

M 9/11 *Grapes of Wrath* Chs 15-19

W 9/13 *Grapes of Wrath* Chs 20-21

F 9/15 *Grapes of Wrath* Chs 22-25

M 9/18 *Grapes of Wrath* Chs 26-30

W 9/20 Writing About Literature Boot Camp; "The Elephant in the Village of the Blind" **(M)**

F 9/22 No Class

M 9/25 Workshop #1

W 9/27 Workshop #2

**Essay #1.1 DUE**

**Essay #1.2 DUE**

F 9/29 *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* (1-49) **Essay #1.3 DUE**

M 10/2 *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* (50-107)

W 10/4 *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* (108-156)

F 10/6 *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* (157-216)

M 10/9 *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* (217-257)

W 10/11 *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* (258-307)

F 10/13 Workshop #3 **Essay # 2.1 DUE**

M 10/16 Workshop #4 **Essay #2.2 DUE**

### **Drama**

W 10/18 Elements of Drama, Roots of Tragedy **Essay #2.3 DUE**

F 10/20 *Death of a Salesman* Act One

M 10/23 Film: *Death of a Salesman*

W 10/25 *Death of a Salesman* Act Two + "Requiem"

F 10/27 Film: *Death of a Salesman*; Miller "Tragedy and the Common Man"

M 10/30 *Sweat* Act One

W 11/1 *Sweat* Act Two

F 11/3 Taking Stock: The American Dream in 2017

M 11/6 Workshop #5 **Essay #3.1 DUE**

W 11/8 Workshop #6 **Essay #3.2 DUE**

F 11/10 Veterans Day Holiday

### **Poetry**

{All poems in LIT 110 Poetry Course Packet}

M 11/13 Love

W 11/15 Family

F 11/17 Death

M 11/20 War

Thanksgiving Holiday

M 11/27 Politics

W 11/29 Nature

F 12/1 Image

M 12/3 Paradox  
W 12/5 Spirit  
F 12/7 Becoming Human

M 12/10 Evaluations; Loose Ends

**F 12/15 Final Examination 10:10-12:10  
Poetry Response Project, Completed Portfolio, DUE by 5pm**