

## PROF. ERIC REIMER

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Office hrs : M 9:00-10:30; W 12-1:30; & by appt.

## LIT 110: INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

### ABOUT THE COURSE :

In attending to some big questions – e.g., what is literature? Why do/should we read and study literature? How do/should we read and study literature? What literature should we study? – this course will find you considering the role and possibilities of literary studies in the academy and in your own lives. As you encounter a wide range of literature drawn from the various genres (short stories, poems, novels, drama, film, etc.), you will (1) consolidate your understanding of fundamental literary concepts; (2) become familiar with periodization and literary history; (3) perceive how literary theory has transformed, complicated, and deepened the study of literature; (4) consider the relationship between art and life, story and history, image and word, etc.; and (5) develop the alacrity and critical skills necessary for reading, thinking and writing about literature. Most importantly, perhaps, our inquiry and discussions will help us realize things that “in all their different ways,” as Mary Gordon has written, “point to something we find difficult to name and yet know as our treasure.”

### REQUIRED TEXTS :

- \* Brian Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990)
- \* Paule Marshall, *Praisesong for the Widow* (1983)
- \* Toni Morrison, *Jazz* (1992)
- \* Michael Ondaatje, *The English Patient* (1993)

\* Selected poems and essays, as well as selections from Rob Pope’s *The English Studies Book*, will be available via the course Moodle site.

### REQUIREMENTS :

Annotated bibliography (10 sources)	15%
Quiz (concepts, theories, and literary history)	15%
Four response papers (2 pp. each)	20%
Class participation	25%
Final analytical paper (6-8 pp.)	25%

The response papers will be based on prompts/directives that I supply; they will, in the aggregate, give you the opportunity to engage and write about various genres (i.e., poetry, short/long fiction, drama, film, etc.). Unless otherwise noted, papers must be typed and double-spaced, with 1” margins; to avoid grade reductions you will be expected to meet the minimum page requirements, attend to the assignment criteria, and turn them on time. Late papers will be marked down one-half letter grade per day (weekends count as one day). Although electronic submissions will be accepted as time stamps, formal papers are not considered fully turned in until there is a hard copy (unless otherwise noted).

Your class participation grade will be calculated based on your attendance, on various short writings (both in-class and assigned), on your contributions to our discussions, and generally on your willingness to engage the texts attentively and critically on a class-to-class basis. If you miss six or more class meetings (i.e., two weeks or more of class time), you can expect that your class participation grade will likely not be higher than a C.

The annotated bibliography assignment will grow out of our discussions about library resources, online databases, secondary sources, etc.; for the assignment, you will be finding eight scholarly sources representing diverse approaches to your chosen writer and his/her work, and you will represent those sources in a properly formatted bibliography with short but informative annotations that characterize each source. The final analytical paper will be derived from a line-of-inquiry of your choosing and will focus on one (or more) of our class texts. This thesis-driven investigation will also necessarily be in conversation with multiple secondary sources, and will ultimately emerge from your own research, in-class writing workshops, and a revision process.

As part of our introduction to the discipline of literary studies, we will periodically have brief discussions about some of the essential strands of literary theory (Formalism, New Criticism, Structuralism, Postmodernism, etc.). Late in the semester, there will be a quiz that will ask you to consolidate and elucidate some of the ideas and principles that you learn in these theory primers; a key to success with this task will be an open mind throughout the semester, taking good notes, completing all of the reading, etc.

Please ensure that your cell phones are kept on silent mode during our class sessions. I will assume/expect that any other electronic devices (e.g., laptops) are being used in the service of our class activities (e.g., taking notes), and that they will not distract either me or the other students in the class (through noises, by producing wayward attention, etc.).

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY :**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/vpesa/documents/Student%20Conduct%20Code%20PDF-%20FINAL%208-27-13.pdf>

All work that you submit for this course must be your own and be written for this course. You are responsible for acknowledging – by citation of name, title, page number, and/or location – all work that has influenced your thinking. Failure to do so constitutes the serious academic crime of plagiarism, and produces the risk of automatic failure for the entire course. If you have any doubts or questions about plagiarism or the University's academic honesty policies, please see me.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS :**

If you have a documented disability or otherwise anticipate needing special accommodations in this course, please bring this to my attention as early in the semester as possible so that we have an understanding and can make the arrangements that will allow for your full participation in the course. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at <http://www.umt.edu/dss/> or call 406.243.2243.

### **DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENT :**

The English Department may utilize, for assessment purposes, any work students produce in this class, including exam material as well as formal essays. No departmental assessment of student work will have any impact on a student's grade in the course or progress in the major. Throughout the assessment process, all summary data will be aggregated and student work will remain anonymous, with all characteristics identifying individual students removed before the material is ready by anybody but the course instructor. Students who do not wish to have their work used by the Department for assessment may opt out by notifying the instructor in writing before the first assignment is completed.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE :

All reading must be completed by class time on the date listed (and be aware, too, that you are not prepared for class unless you have that reading in front of you as we discuss it). (M) = Moodle.

- 9/1 f Introduction. Liberal Humanism. The canon.
- 9/4 m **NO CLASS:** Labor Day
- 9/6 w Responding to fiction. The short story.  
**Read:** Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants" (M) and Culler, *A Very Short Introduction to Literary Theory*, chap. 2 (M).
- 9/8 f Formalism. New Criticism. Reader Response theory.  
**Read:** Selected poems (handout); Pope, *The English Studies Book (ESB)* (M), 1-12, 29-43, 73-95; Culler, chap. 1 (M).
- 9/11 m Active reading. The short story, cont'd.  
**Read:** Woolf, "The String Quartet" (M) and Birkerts, "The Woman in the Garden" (M).
- 9/13 w Poetry. Prosody and scansion. Terminology and poetic form.  
**Read:** Johnson, "On the Death of Dr. Robert Levet" (M), *ESB* 250-254 (M), and Culler, chap. 5 (M).
- 9/15 f Poetry, cont'd. Poetic form. The sonnet.  
**Read:** Shakespeare, "Sonnet #29" (M); Wordsworth, "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" (M); Muldoon, "The Sightseers" (M); and Hopkins, "Pied Beauty" (M).
- 9/18 m Poetry, cont'd. Figurative elements.  
**Read:** Donne, "Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" (M); Herbert, "The Pulley" (M); Shelley, "Ozymandias" (M); and Shelley, "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" (M).
- 9/20 w Poetry, cont'd. The lyric voice. Nature, the seasons, and the human condition.  
**Read:** Keats, "To Autumn" (M); Hopkins, "Spring and Fall" (M); Tennyson, #2 from *In Memoriam, A.H.H.* (M); and Hirshfield, "Poetry and the Constellation of Surprise" (M).
- 9/22 f Structuralism and Post-structuralism.  
**Read:** Culler, chap. 4 (M). **Due:** Response paper #1.
- 9/25 m Poetry, cont'd. Race, gender, and identity.  
**Read:** Hughes, "The Weary Blues" (M) and "Summer Night" (M).
- 9/27 w Poetry, cont'd. Blank verse. Cultural history.  
**Read:** Wordsworth, excerpt from *The Prelude* (M); Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (M).
- 9/29 f Psychoanalytic and Feminist theory. New Historicism.  
**Read:** *ESB* 96-105, 114-126 (M); and Culler, chaps. 7-8 (M).
- 10/2 m The novel.  
**Read:** Ondaatje, *The English Patient* (3-119).
- 10/4 w The novel, cont'd.  
**Read:** *The English Patient* (120-158).
- 10/6 f Research. The library. Databases.  
**Due:** Response paper #2.

- 10/9** m The novel, cont'd.  
**Read:** *The English Patient* (162-261).
- 10/11** w The novel, cont'd.  
**Read:** *The English Patient* (265-302).
- 10/13** f Cultural Studies. Anthropology. The novel, cont'd.  
**Read:** Culler, chap. 3 (M); Morrison, *Jazz* (3-51).
- 10/16** m Writing Workshop.  
**Due:** Annotated bibliography.
- 10/18** w The novel, cont'd.  
**Read:** *Jazz* (53-87).
- 10/20** f Music: John Coltrane, *A Love Supreme*.
- 10/23** m The novel, cont'd.  
**Read:** *Jazz* (89-162)
- 10/25** w The novel, cont'd.  
**Read:** *Jazz* (165-229)
- 10/27** f Introduction to drama.  
**Read:** Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Act I.
- 10/30** m Drama, cont'd.  
**Read:** *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Act II.
- 11/1** w Drama, cont'd. The thesis and the enthymeme.
- 11/3** f Film studies. Postcolonial theory and literature.  
**Read:** Walcott, "The Sea is History" (M); *ESB* 138-155 (M).
- 11/6** m Film studies, cont'd.  
**Film:** Bruce Beresford, *Mister Johnson*.  
**Due:** Response paper #3.
- 11/8** w *Mister Johnson*, cont'd.
- 11/10** f **NO CLASS:** Veterans Day.
- 11/13** m Film discussion.  
**Due:** Response paper #4.
- 11/15** w Postmodernism.  
**Due:** *ESB* 127-137 (M), Baudrillard, "The Orders of Simulacra" (M).
- 11/17** f Essays on reading and literature I.  
**Read:** Birkerts, "Mah Vuh Huh Puh" (M) and "The Death of Literature" (M).
- 11/20** m The novel, cont'd.  
**Read:** Marshall, *Praisesong for the Widow* (9-83).
- 11/22** w **NO CLASS:** Thanksgiving.
- 11/24** f **NO CLASS:** Thanksgiving.

- 11/27** m The novel, cont'd.  
**Read:** Marshall, *Praisesong for the Widow* (87-145).
- 11/29** w The novel, cont'd.  
**Read:** Marshall, *Praisesong for the Widow* (149-209).
- 12/1** f **Quiz.**
- 12/4** m The novel, cont'd.  
**Read:** *Praisesong for the Widow* (213-56).
- 12/6** w Thesis and writing workshop.
- 12/8** f Essays on reading and literature II. Conclusions. Evaluations.  
**Read:** Gordon, "Moral Fiction" (M).
- 12/11** m **NO CLASS**
- 12/18** m **Due:** Analytical paper (by 5 p.m., under my door in LA 226 or in my mailbox in LA 133).