LIT 110-05: Introduction to Literature: The West and the Western

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REQUIRED TEXTS

- Proulx, Annie. *Close Range: Wyoming Stories*. (Scribner.)
- Wister, Owen. *The Virginian*. (Penguin Classics.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

LIT 110 explores three genres of literature—poetry, fiction, and film—via the study of works set in the American West. Focusing on classic and contemporary Western writing and film, the course emphasizes close reading skills and the writing of smart, effective essays of literary analysis. Along the way, we’ll also work diligently on acquiring the critical terms and concepts crucial to the study (and enjoyment) of literary works.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. distinguish the characteristics of the three genres (poetry, fiction, film) under consideration in our course;
2. i. a) refine, and complicate their understanding of individual works in light of these characteristics;  
   b) refine and complicate their understanding of genre on the basis of their close reading and analysis of individual works;  
   c) thus, think dialectically about genre and individual works of literature; and,  
2. ii. a) look beyond the characteristics of each major literary genre to understand, as much as possible, the particular literary innovations and accomplishments of an individual work;  
   b) judge, as much as possible, whether (and how and why) an individual work affirms,
complicates, or upends the characteristics and “rules” of its respective genre(s);
3. incorporate appropriate critical terms and concepts into their reading and analysis of individual works and the three genres;
4. state clearly, in class and in writing—and while drawing on appropriate critical terms and concepts—the central themes, concepts, and ideas at play in individual works and genres;
5. evaluate the literary and/or cultural significances of both individual literary works and their respective genres;
6. engage thoughtfully with a range of critical terms and perspectives on literary and cultural (and even controversial) issues, including an ability to state clearly the assumptions and premises of their own position;
7. perform a close reading (both in class and in writing assignments), demonstrating an ability to interpret literary texts by thoughtfully integrating quoted passages into larger argumentative claims; and,
8. write an audience- and occasion-appropriate, clear, grammatically consistent, and rhetorically effective paper, driven by a thesis and sustained by logic, the discipline-appropriate conventions of essay writing, and the ordered, carefully structured presentation of ideas and interpretation.

GRADING

- Quizzes, Short Writing Assignments: 30%
- Essay (5+ pages): 30%
- Final Exam\(^1\): 30%
- Participation: 10%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Please note that you must turn in the out-of-class essay and take the final exam in order to pass the course. Essays will be deducted ONE letter grade for EACH class period they are late.

DEPARTMENT AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Department Assessment: The Department of English’s ongoing process of assessing its curriculum requires a committee of professors to read student papers (including exams) to learn how students in general are progressing through the program or course of studies. Thus, your professor may ask for an electronic version of your essay to use in this assessment process. (All identifying information—such as name or ID number—will be removed and no evaluation of student work outside the boundaries of the course will play any role in determining a student’s grade.) If you do not want your work used in such a way, please inform your professor and she

\(^{1}\) Covers material from the entire course and will consist, in all likelihood, of a combination of essay and short answer questions.
or he will not forward it to the Assessment Committee. Otherwise, the Department of English appreciates your tacit consent.

University Assessment: Students should also note that this course may require 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 (MLA)
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

This assessment in no way affects either your course grade or your progression at the university. Your work is used anonymously.

Plagiarism: the use of someone else’s ideas or words as if they were your own. To avoid this contravention of the fundamental values of the academy, you must acknowledge, by citation of name, title, and/or page number, work that has influenced your thinking. The University’s official warning can be found in the Student Conduct Code (Academic Conduct), available on the web: [http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php)

Disability Accommodation: Students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation for coursework. To request accommodation, please contact the professor as soon as possible. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at [http://www.umt.edu/dss/](http://www.umt.edu/dss/) or call (406) 243-2243 (Voice/Text).
**Schedule**

**SYLLABUS**

Tu Jan 23: Introduction

Th Jan 25: **Lecture & Handouts: The Elements of Fiction/Key Critical Terms**

Tu Jan 30: **Lecture: The Western**
Wister dedication (to Roosevelt)-68

Th Feb 1: Wister 69-135

Tu Feb 6: Wister 136-205

Th Feb 8: Wister 205-59

Tu Feb 13: Wister 260-323

Th Feb 15: **Lecture: The Western (Film)**
**Screening: The Searchers**

Tu Feb 20: **Screening: The Searchers**

Th Feb 22: **Lecture: Poetry & Its Subgenres**
Portable Western 346-54

Tu Feb 27: Portable Western 73-76, 78-84, 302-09, 439-43

Th Mar 1: Portable Western 460-64, 517-27

Tu Mar 6: Portable Western 533-43, 576-83, 593-95

Th Mar 8: **Essay Assigned**
Erdrich Genealogy-67

Tu Mar 13: Erdrich

Th Mar 15: Erdrich

Tu Mar 20: Erdrich

Th Mar 22: Erdrich

Tu Mar 27: **No Class:**

Th Mar 29: Spring Break!!!
Tu Apr 3:  **Workshop 1: Complete Draft of Essay**  
            **Screening: Smoke Signals**
Th Apr 5:  **Screening: Smoke Signals**
Tu Apr 10: **Workshop 2: Complete, Revised Draft of Essay**  
            **Screening: Smoke Signals**
Th Apr 12: Proulx epigraph-80
Tu Apr 17: **Essay Due**
Th Apr 19: Proulx 81-149
Tu Apr 24: Proulx 150-248
Th Apr 26: Proulx 249-285
Tu May 1:  **Review for Final Exam**
Th May 3:  **Review for Final Exam**