

LIT 110-03: Introduction to Literature

Montana Literature

Professor Harrison

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REQUIRED TEXTS

Hugo, Richard. *Making Certain It Goes On*.

McNickle, D'Arcy. *The Surrounded*.

Walker, Mildred. *Winter Wheat*.

Welch, James. *Winter in the Blood*.

The course will also include a number of literary, historical, and cultural works posted on the course page (Moodle).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

LIT 110 explores three genres of literature—poetry, fiction, and film—via the study of works set in Montana. Focusing on classic and contemporary Montana 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 DESCRIPTION

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

1. distinguish the characteristics of the three genres (poetry, fiction, film) under consideration in the 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 ¹ :	30%
Essay (5+ pages):	30%
Final Exam ² :	30%
Participation ³ :	10%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

¹ As much as possible, we will try to give you time in-class to complete these assignments; on some occasions, you will need to complete them outside of class time.

² Covers material from the entire course and will consist, in all likelihood, of a combination of essay and short answer questions.

³ Participation grades will be based on the following: doing the assigned readings (this includes both the primary texts and supplementary materials on the course page), watching (and taking notes on) the course lectures (and bringing any questions about the material covered in the lectures to the Thursday lecture/discussion sessions), attending and participating in the Thursday lecture/discussion sessions, completing assignments (see “Course Requirements”), screening (and taking notes on) the course films, etc.

Please note that you must submit at least 10 of the weekly quizzes/short writing assignments, turn in the out-of-class essay, and take the final exam in order to pass the course. The essay will be deducted ONE letter grade for EACH class period it is 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 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.

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 or call (406) 243-2243 (voice mail) or (406) 282-4602.

SYLLABUS⁴

Th Aug 20: Introduction to LIT 110
Writing Assignment #1

Tu Aug 25: **To Do:**

1. Read & Watch Lecture (course page):
“The Humanities, Critical Thinking, and Carl Sagan’s ‘The Fine Art of Baloney Detection’”
2. Read and Watch Lecture (course page):
“Montana (Or Many Montanas?): An Imagined Community? Communities?”
3. View (course page):
Map of Montana
Map of the North American West in 1821
Map of Western U.S. Territorial Expansion 1803-1959
4. Be Reading:
McNickle, Headnote on “The Surrounded”-148

Th Aug 27: Discussion:
Tu Materials
Mini-Lecture:
“William Bevis’ *Ten Tough Trips* & Narrative Patterns in Euro-American & American Indian Narratives”
Discussion:
McNickle Headnote-148
Writing Assignment #2

Tu Sept 1: **To Do:**

1. Read (twice, at least!) & Watch Lecture (course page):
“Elements of Form/Formal Elements”
2. Watch Lecture (course page):

⁴ In addition to the lectures and materials listed on the syllabus, there may, from time to time, be supplementary lectures and readings.

“The Western & Settler Colonialism”

3. Watch (on your own):
ONE of the Westerns Listed Below⁵

4. Be Reading:
McNickle 149-297

Th Sept 3: Discussion:
Tu Materials
Discussion:
McNickle 149-297
Writing Assignment #4

Tu Sept 8: **To Do:**
1. Read (course page):
“Key Terms: 1) Close Reading; and, 2) Interpretation”
2. Read (course page):
“Between What I See And What I Say . . . “ by Octavio Paz (a non-Montana poet)
3. Read (course page):
Get Fuzzy on Expressing Your Feelings
4. Watch Lecture (course page):
“Poetry: 3 Major Subgenres & Their Features”
5. Read (twice, at least) & Watch Lecture (course page)
“Elements of Poetry/Key Critical Terms & Concepts (Part 1)”
6. Read:
Hugo, “Degrees of Gray in Phillipsburg,” 216-17

Th Sept 10: Discussion:
Tu Materials
Discussion:
Hugo, “Degrees of Gray in Philipsburg,” 216-17
Writing Assignment #5

⁵ The purpose of this assignment is (re-)familiarize you with the “Western” as a literary and cinematic genre: as part of our consideration of *The Surrounded* (and other works of Montana literature and film), we will be discussing the ways in which it may or may not embody “Western” tropes. If you are not familiar with the Western as a literary and cinematic genre, I can recommend that you screen John Ford’s *The Searchers* (1956), starring John Wayne. It is, by any measure, perhaps *the* classic settler colonial/American Western. (Warning: the film features stereotypical and racist images of American Indians.) Other, more recent Westerns that have received critical and commercial acclaim (and that you can watch as exemplars of the genre): *Tombstone* (1993), starring Kurt Russell, or *Open Range* (2003), starring Kevin Costner (and set, some say, in Montana). Still other classic Westerns: *My Darling Clementine* (1946), *High Noon* (1952), *Rio Bravo* (1959), *True Grit* (2010), and the one that I think might be the greatest “Western” of them all (and certainly one of the most violent), *The Wild Bunch* (1969). For kicks (and if you know the Western genre well,) you might watch the wonderfully funny parody, *Blazing Saddles* (1974). Interesting question: do any “Westerns” star women? Indeed, check out: *The Missing* (2003), *The Homesman* (2014), *Jane Got a Gun* (2016), or *Sicario* (2015).

- Tu Sept 15: **To Do:**
1. Read (course page):
****Essay: Assigned****
 2. Read & Watch Lecture (course page):
“Elements of Poetry/Key Critical Terms & Concepts (Part 2)”
 3. Read & Watch Lecture (course page):
“Five Contexts for Discussing Literary Texts: The Local, the Regional, the National, the Transnational, the Global (or Planetary)”
 4. Read (course page):
“Miserabilist: A Definition”
 5. Be Reading:
Hugo 163-189

- Th Sept 17: Discussion:
Tu Materials
Discussion:
Hugo 163-189
Writing Assignment #6

- Tu Sept 22: **To Do:**
1. Read & Watch Lecture (course page):
“Questions/Lines of Inquiry When Thinking About Literary Works”
 2. Read (course page):
“Essay Writing: The Basics”
 3. Be Reading:
Hugo 190-217

- Th Sept 24: Discussion:
Tu Materials
Discussion:
Hugo 190-217
Writing Assignment #7

- Tu Sept 29: **To Do:**
1. Read & Watch Lecture (course page):
“Think Culturally, Or, Cultural Approaches to Literature”
 2. Read & Watch Lecture (course page):

“The Anxiety of Influence, or, Conversation Pieces: Poets in Dialogue (or Trialogue, Quadrilogue, etc.)”

3. Be Reading (course page):

“Poets in Conversation with Hugo” (course page)

Th Oct 1: Discussion:

Tu Material

Discussion:

“Poets in Conversation with Hugo”

Writing Assignment #8

Tu Oct 6: **To Do:**

1. Read & Watch Lecture (course page):

“Film: Key Critical Terms & Concepts”

2. Read (course page):

“Sample First Page of an Essay in MLA Format”

“Sample Works Cited Page in MLA Format”

“How to Quote Prose & Poetry (& How to Provide Proper Parenthetical References) in MLA Format”

3. Screen (on your own):

A River Runs Through It (film)

(4. Be Reading:

Walker)

Th Oct 8: Discussion:

Tu Material

Discussion:

A River Runs Through It (film)

Writing Assignment #9

Tu Oct 13: **To Do:**

1. Read & Watch Lecture (course page):

“Are There Any Women in Montana? Or, Enough with the Montana Hypermasculinity”

2. Screen (on your own):

Certain Women (film)

(3. Be Reading:

Walker)

Th Oct 15: Discussion:

Tu Materials

Discussion:

Certain Women (film)
Writing Assignment #10

- Tu Oct 20: **To Do:**
1. Read & Watch Lecture (course page):
 “Why Read Literature? Why the Humanities? Why Critical Thinking?”
2. Small Group Workshop:
 Out of Class Essay
(3. Be Reading:
 Walker)
- Th Oct 22: Discussion:
 Walker 1-156
Writing Assignment #11

- Tu Oct 27: **To Do:**
1. Read & Watch Lecture (course page)
 “The Final Draft Checklist”
2. Small Group Workshop:
 Out of Class Essay
(3. Be Reading:
 Walker)
- Th Oct 29: Discussion:
 Walker 157-306
Writing Assignment #12

- Tu Nov 3: **No Class: Election Day**
Th Nov 5: Discussion:
 Welch 1-88
Writing Assignment #13
****Out of Class Essay Due****

- Tu Nov 10: **To Do:**
1. Read & Watch Lecture (course page):
 “Think Historically, Or, Historicist Approaches to Literature”
2. Read & Watch Lecture (course page):

“Think Literary History: The Native American Renaissance, Surrealism,
& Others”

3. Be Reading:

Welch 88-176

Th Nov 12: Discussion:

Welch 88-176

Writing Assignment #14

Tu Nov 17: Review for Final Exam