Course Overview

Introduction
I consider English 310 to be the first step in your development as student literary critics; thus, one of our goals this semester will be to read literature critically through a variety of approaches. However, English 310 is first and foremost a writing course, so our primary focus will be to practice writing about literature using a variety of methods and research tools. Finally, English 310 is designated for beginning English majors and minors who wish to develop a basic understanding of critical approaches to literature and the conventions of writing about poetry, fiction, and other literary genres. After the first class meeting, non-English majors and minors should carefully consider remaining in the course, but before dropping, please discuss this with me.

Required Texts
Scieszka, Jon, and Lane Smith. The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales. New York: Viking, 1992. (provided by instructor)

Other Required Texts/Materials
- Various critical essays and articles (on course reserve, Ekstrom Library)
- E-mail and regular WWW access
- A folder or binder in which you’ll keep printed copies of ALL work. Print all drafts, and don’t throw ANYTHING away until after the end of the semester (see warning in next item).
- Two or three floppy diskettes and a floppy diskette holder (around $1.00 each). Always back up your work. Warning: papers lost due to corrupted diskettes receive no credit.
- You will be required to have your final projects bound. CopyIT (Ekstrom or Miller Information Technology bldg.) charges no more than $2.00 per item.

Supplemental Texts
Course Goals
English 310 will help in our development as student critics of literature. In this course, we will develop critical reading strategies and writing skills that we will apply to the study of literature. More specifically, we will:

1. Learn some of the skills needed to read, interpret, and analyze poetry, fiction, and other literary genres
2. Practice producing and revising readable and interesting texts that reflect academic conventions of literary criticism
3. Use various methods for developing and focusing ideas, drafting, revising, assessing audience needs, and proofreading/editing our writing
4. Use vocabulary associated with literary criticism
5. Demonstrate an awareness of writing for an audience of novice and experienced literary critics
6. Draw support for literary criticism from the works we read in the course as well as from widely used literary research tools such as the MLA Bibliography and the Dictionary of Literary Biography
7. Learn contemporary critical strategies for analyzing literary texts, especially reader-response, narrative theory, feminism, Marxism, and new historical criticism.
8. Illustrate appropriate uses of MLA documentation, including adequately summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting research in our writing
9. Work through multiple drafts of all writing assignments
10. Learn effective techniques for editing, proofreading, and finalizing our writing in order to minimize error

Course Requirements

Reading
Since the primary focus of English 310 is writing, we will be reading significantly fewer writers and works than you would in a survey course (English 301/302, British Literature or English 311/312, American Literature, for example). Instead of focusing on a wide range of works and writers, our attention will be focused on a variety of analytic methods we can use in reading and analyzing a few selected works. Thus, I have decided to focus our reading on a particular period of literature: poetry and prose from 1945-present. Although we will not be reading drama in this course, you may apply the analytic techniques we learn to drama, as well.

With the exception of *Sula*, I expect you to read each assigned poem, story, or other literary work at least **twice**. Suggestion: read the work quickly the first time, only stopping to highlight, underline, or circle any interesting, confusing, or significant text. For the second reading, slow down, continuing to highlight, underline, question, comment, and dialogue with the text. Write in the margins. Note page numbers and cross reference your notes. Practicing *active reading* strategies is an essential component in learning effective, successful literary criticism. Periodically, I will ask to see evidence of your active reading skills as we progress through the course (a photocopy of a short story or poem you’ve read and annotated).

Writing
As I have mentioned, English 310 is **not** a survey course covering a broad range of literary works. Rather, English 310 is first and foremost a **writing** course, which means that we will be doing much more writing than you will in your literature survey courses. Think of English 310 as a summer reading and writing workshop that provides many opportunities for you to practice reading, interpreting, analyzing, discussing, and writing about a select group of literary works.
The key word here is *practice*. We will be writing a lot—almost every day—and your peers and I will provide oral and written feedback so that you can become a better student literary critic. Writing and literary criticism are skills, not innate gifts that some people have and some don’t. Such skills improve with practice; thus, I require everyone to work through at least **three (3)** drafts of each major writing assignment:

**Major Writing Assignments**

**Explication Essay.** Draft due June 17. Final draft due in portfolio. 3-5 pages. Essay will be built on an explication of a passage from either a poem or short story.

**Annotated Bibliography.** Draft due June 23. Final draft due in portfolio. Summaries/evaluations of five to six scholarly articles, essays, or book chapters that help you focus and support the research paper.

**Research Paper.** Draft due June 30. Final draft due in portfolio. 7-10 pages. A critical analysis of a literary work or a combination of works covered in the course.

**Other Writing**

**Question & Response Papers. (2-3 each week).** 250-350 words (1-1.5 double spaced pages) each. Assignment details will be announced prior to due dates and may include explication, summary/response, application of theory to a text, critical analysis, or an open topic.

**Research Bibliography + Presentation.** Various due dates. Summaries: 150-200 words each. Presentation: 5 minutes max. Descriptions of three (3) research resources used in literary studies (to be assigned individually)

**Periodic In-Class Writing.** To be announced individually and without notice.

**Assessment & Grading**

One of my goals for this course is to allow you to explore and practice literary criticism with little pressure to produce error-free text as you draft and revise. Thus, I have adopted a “portfolio” system of assessment for English 310. At the end of the term, you will submit a final portfolio of your work (I will inform you of the specific requirements later), which will make up 40% of your course grade.

Grades will not be assigned individually to the major writing assignments—the explication essay, the five to six entry annotated bibliography, and the research paper. These must be submitted as part of the final portfolio, which is graded as a whole. I will provide detailed feedback on most of your writing, and your peers will provide detailed feedback, as well.

At any point in the term, you may request an “informational grade,” and I will provide an estimated letter grade based on your work at that point in the term. “Informational grades” are not recorded in my grade book and are in no way used to determine final course grades.

Finally, grades will be assigned individually on Q & R assignments, the two-entry annotated research bibliography + presentation, and all in-class writing.

**Final Course Grades**

To pass this course, you MUST meet the following requirements: (1) complete multiple drafts of each major writing assignment; (2) complete at least 9 of the 12 Q & R assignments; (3) complete all required
reading and writing; (4) submit completed final showcase portfolios by the due date of July 7; (5) meet all writing assignment deadlines; (6) meet all attendance requirements for classes, peer review workshops, and individualized conferences. This is the minimum for PASSING. Then your course grade will be determined as follows:

Final Portfolio: 40%, Graded A-F. This is a collection of your best writing this term. The explication essay, the annotated bibliography, and the research paper must be included as part of the final portfolio. You will also choose examples from Q & R papers and in-class writing assignments for the portfolio. The portfolio is graded as a whole work (papers are not graded individually).

Q & R Papers: 25%, each Q & R graded A-F. Although only 9 of the 12 Q & R papers must be completed in order to PASS the course, all Q & R papers will be graded and recorded as part of the 25%.

Participation: 25%, Graded A-F. Active participation in class discussions; regular attendance; active participation in peer and whole-class workshops; completion of homework reading and writing; attendance of any required individualized conferences with me; reading quizzes; meeting deadlines consistently

Research Bibliography + Presentation: 10%, Graded A-F.

Grading Scale: 100-98 = A; 97-90 = A-; 89-87 = B+; 86-83 = B; 82-80 = B-; 79-77 = C+; 76-73 = C; 72-70 = C-; 69-67 = D+; 66-63 = D; 62-60 = D-; below 60 = F.

Other Activities and Policies

Participation: Because class participation is essential to a course with a reading and writing workshop format, you will receive a grade for your contributions to class discussions. This grade will reflect not only the amount of participation, but also the quality. Be prepared for each class by reading each assigned text employing active reading techniques such as note taking, underlining, highlighting, etc. Participation is 25% of your final course grade, so if you cannot prepare and come to class regularly, you should drop the course.

Revision: Revision means to see again (re-vision) and involves much more than mere editing and proofreading. Revision involves attentive and thorough examination of one’s intentions, style, audience, and voice to create a unified, innovative piece of student criticism. Revision is an important part of successful writing, and you should produce at least three drafts of each major assignment.

You are responsible for keeping all of your work—including invention activities, drafts, and responses to those drafts—over the course of the term. Don’t throw anything away!! Also, BACK UP EACH DRAFT on separate diskettes or on a diskette and a hard drive. E-mailing a draft to yourself is another way to back up your work.

Individualized Conferences: We will meet in one-to-one conferences at least once, possibly twice this term to discuss your writing. These conferences are mandatory. Missing a conference will significantly lower your 25% course participation grade.
**Attendance:** Because this course is designed as a workshop, our class discussions will often revolve around assigned reading and writing. For this reason, your participation in every class meeting, peer review workshop, and one-to-one conference is extremely important to your success in this course.

Specifically, your final course grade will be lowered by one letter grade after missing three (3) classes. After five (5) absences, either withdraw from the course or receive a final course grade of “F.”

I make no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. If you must miss class, contact me **first.** You will be responsible for submitting any assignments due during the class you will miss **before** they are due. Absences due to a death in the family, illness, automobile accidents, and the like must be covered by the six allowable absences. In case of heavy snow, try to e-mail me, but use common sense in deciding whether to drive.

**Late Arrivals and Early Departures:** Don’t be late. It’s disruptive for me and for others. Packing bags and/or leaving class early is rude and disruptive, as well. Consistent late arrivals or early departures will adversely affect your 25% participation grade. Special circumstances should be discussed with me before class.

**Late Work:** All reading and writing assignments must be completed/submitted at or before 9:40 a.m. of their due dates. Failure to complete/submit work by the due date will result in a “zero” for the assignment; I will not accept late writing assignments. (If illness or some other situation prevents your from attending class on the due date for a writing assignment, submit your work via e-mail attachment before 9:40 a.m. of the due date.) If you know in advance that you will miss a class meeting, you may submit your work early. However, unannounced in-class writing assignments cannot be made up after an absence. Major assignments submitted late will adversely affect both your final portfolio grade and your participation grade.

**Academic Fraud and Plagiarism:** Academic fraud consists of (1) submitting another person’s writing as your own, in every instance; (2) having someone dictate what should be written or write an assignment for you. Academic fraud is grounds for failure in the course. For the purposes of this course, plagiarism occurs when a writer unintentionally fails to document another’s words and/or ideas. Unintentional plagiarism is grounds for revision with or without penalty.

**Policies for Research:** Unacceptable sources for annotated bibliographies and research for final paper: *Dissertation Abstracts, The Explicator, Notes and Queries*, general encyclopedia and dictionaries, and other sources of brief notes or abstracts.

**Class Disruption:** Students who consistently disturb class in any way will be asked to stop the disruptive behavior. Students who continue to disrupt class will be dismissed from the course and will be referred to the English department’s director of undergraduate studies.

**Cell Phones:** Cell phones may remain on ONLY if you anticipate an emergency phone call and ONLY if you notify me first. Otherwise, turn off cell phones **before** class begins. If your cell phone rings while we’re having class, I’ll ask you not to bring it to class again.

**University Writing Center**
The University Writing Center is located in Ekstrom library, room 312 (3rd floor behind the elevators). Writing consultants will provide feedback on your projects, whether you’re just starting and have only a few ideas or you’re ready to submit a final draft but want someone to read it one last time and suggest final touches. Writing consultants will show you effective ways to produce better writing, but their
primary goal is to help you, the writer, to find your own successful ways of producing better writing. Thus, you’ll be better prepared for future writing because you’ll have become a better writer, not just produced a better draft for that particular project. Visit the Writing Center’s web site for more info: http://www.writingcenter.louisville.edu/

Administrative Statements

Course prerequisites: Successful completion of English 102 or 105.

English 310 is approved for the Arts and Sciences upper-level requirement in written communication (WR). Catalog description: “Extensive practice in literary analysis and in the forms and conventions of writing about various literary genres.”

Completion of English 310 with a grade of C or better is required for admission to the major. Students planning to major in English are strongly encouraged to take English 310 in the first semester after completion of English 102 or 105.

Disabilities Modification Statement: Students who have a disability or condition which may impair their ability to complete assignments or otherwise satisfy course criteria should meet with me to identify, discuss, and document any feasible instructional modifications or accommodations. Please inform me about such circumstances no later than the second week of the semester or as soon as possible after a disability or condition is diagnosed, whichever occurs earliest. For information and auxiliary assistance, contact the Disabilities Resource Center.

Student Grievances: In case of a grievance, follow these steps in order: (1) Discuss the problem with me; (2) if a resolution is not reached, discuss the matter with one of the assistant directors of composition in Bingham Humanities 321; (3) if a resolution is not reached at that level, consult the director of composition, Brian Huot, Bingham Humanities room 320; (4) if a resolution is not reached here, Professor Huot will suggest further steps to take.
Questions & Responses (2-3 per week)

To generate discussion and to encourage critical thinking about and analysis of the literature we will read, you will bring two questions to each class meeting in which we will be discussing specific literary works. Questions may be factual or interpretative, and they should be questions you don’t have definitive answers for. Questions do not have to directly address the literary work we are reading; however, they often will.

In addition to these questions, you will submit a critical response to one or more of the literary works we are reading and discussing in class. Some reading responses will be open in terms of content and focus; for others, I will ask for a specific type of response (noted in course schedule). Due dates for Questions & Responses will be noted throughout the course schedule.

Guidelines for Responses
1. Begin each response with a clear, concise topic sentence in which you take a critical stance about some issue you’ve discovered in one or more of the poems/stories we are reading for that particular day. Develop that argument in the remaining sentences.
2. Length of reading responses: 250-350 words, or 1–1.5 double spaced pages each. No more, no less.
3. Reading responses should address issues common in literary criticism. These may include (but are not limited to) the following:
   - the significance of a particular word, phrase, or line to the work as a whole
   - the poet’s/author’s verbal play
   - the poem/story as a response to a cultural/historical issue, such as gender, race, sexuality, etc.
   - the significance of a particular narrative point-of-view
   - analysis of a pattern of imagery, symbolism, or analysis of a character, etc.
   - application of a particular literary theory (feminism, reader-response, etc.) to a poem/story

Formatting
In addition to using MLA formatting guidelines, be sure to do the following for each Q&R:
- Your title should be: Q & R for [author’s name]’s [title(s) of poem/story in quotation marks]. Example: Q & R for Duncan’s “Often I Am Permitted to Return to a Meadow”
- Use the subheadings Questions and Response flushed at left margin
- Number your questions under the subheading
- Print two copies for each Q & R: one to submit and one for reference during class discussion
- Be sure to quote the poem/story you are writing about at least once.