

SHORT FICTION SINCE MODERNISM

Lit 325, Spring 2024
Office: 413 Cullimore Hall
Hours: Mon., 1:00 - 2:00, & by appointment
Mail: Humanities & Social Sciences Dep't, NJIT,
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Course Digital Venue, Canvas Conferencing System

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course considers the literary genre of the modern short story with particular attention to recently written American work that, arguably, reflects shifting cultural practices. The course will first consider the genre starting in the earlier twentieth century (and focusing solely on American short stories), and moving forward to more recent work, and then will concentrate on contemporary published short fiction. This recent work especially may raise issues having to do with genre in light of what exactly a short story in our time is--all within a view of the short fiction work as a key to understanding contemporary culture.

The HSS General Education courses, this course one of them, are characterized by an increasing sophistication of inquiry. Prerequisites for this course are: HUM 102; and one from among HUM 211, HUM 212 and Hist 213 or their equivalents, all with a grade of C or better. Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course students should be able to: demonstrate critical thinking within a narrowly focused subject area through both oral and written, argument-based communication.

COURSE TEXTS

See the names of the literary works in the course schedule (below). All assigned stories will be available inside the course homepage in Canvas. Various other short readings are also to be found at the course homepage in Canvas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Oral/Visual Reports, two of them.

- Weekly Canvas postings (one original of 100 to 150 words, another 50 to 100-word response to someone else's post). Weekly Canvas posts should be single-spaced but otherwise must also be spell-checked and to the best of one's ability grammar-checked, and must be in standard English and adhere to standard formal writing protocols.
- Midterm examination, comprehensive, essay in format, open-book.
- Final examination, comprehensive, essay in format, open-book. *Failure to submit the final exam will result in the papers that are part of the term paper project being disqualified.*

As regards all writing submitted in this course, please keep the following in mind. If on occasion use is made of the ideas or words of someone else in one's writing, then the source(s) of those ideas and/or words must be cited; that is, when appropriate, papers must be fully documented in MLA format (you must cite sources--using footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical documentation, which include specific page numbers keyed to particular passages in your text, and complete bibliographical information). WRITTEN TEXTS NOT MEETING ALL OF THESE REQUIREMENTS WILL NOT BE READ AND WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT.

N.B. Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity whose policy can be found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

N.B.: *Failure to participate in class discussions (especially online) at a minimally acceptable level will result in disqualification of end-of-term assignments such as the term paper and final exam*; such disqualification must inevitably spell failure in the course. In order to pass this course a student should be consistently active in weekly class work starting from the beginning of the course term. Furthermore, only three

unexcused absences will be allowed; more than these will mean automatic course failure.

COURSE GRADE

Final Examination, 30%; midterm examination, 10%
Class Participation online (initial, originating posts - graded weekly), 20%
Class Participation online (responses to classmates' posts), 10%
Follow-up Questions or Comments, 5%
Portfolio of Eight Best Posts online, 5%
Group Reports (two required), 10% each
Extra credit project, 10%

COURSE SCHEDULE*

Week 1: Introduction to the course.
Week 2a: Hemingway, "Big Two-Hearted River";
Week 2b: Ellison, "Battle Royal."
Week 3a: Jackson, "The Lottery."
Week 3b: O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find."
Week 4a: Paley, "A Conversation with My Father."
Week 4b: Carver, "Neighbors."
Week 5a: Morrison, "Recitatif."
Week 5b: Erdrich, "The Red Convertible."
Week 6a: Williams, "Escapes."
Week 6b: Trask, "Putting Out the Sun."
Week 7a: Midterm Exam.
Week 7b: Lahiri, "Interpreter of Maladies";
Week 8a: Wallace, "Good People."
Week 8b: Willis, "Tara White."
Week 9a: Ng, "Girls, at Play."
Week 9b: Darraj, "Chasing Valentino."
Week 10a: Simmons, "Little America."
Week 10b: Shaik, "Bird Whistle."
Week 11a: Lipsyte, "The Dungeon Master."
Week 11b: Englander, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank."
Week 12a: Diaz, "The Cheater's Guide."
Week 12b: Vossoughi, "The Vine."
Week 13a: Friedlander, "The Sand Collector"
Week 13b: Faison, "Do Sum Sum."vvv

Week 14a: Zhang, "Any Good Wife"

Week 14b: Loonam, "The Assistant."

** See due dates and details of assignments at course homepage in Canvas.*