Pierce College English 107 - English Composition: The Challenge of Literature in Short Fiction, Poetry and Drama

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General Description

Writing expository and argumentative essays based upon literary readings and studies.

Course Content

A. Readings of literary texts—designed within the course to create a unifying whole, whether the unity be based upon genre approaches, authorial studies, thematic content, or historical context(s)
B. Application of literary theory and critical approaches in the interpretation and appreciation of texts
C. Literary terminology
D. Writing critical analytical essays responding to assigned literary works
E. Composition process in writing critical literary and research essays
F. Information competency

Outcomes

1. Appreciate value and meaning of literature
2. Write unified, coherent analytical essays that develop and support a thesis statement
3. Critically analyze literary works through the application of theoretical approaches
4. Explicate literary works through the appropriate use of literary terminology
5. Practice the skills of information competency in research
6. Apply the writing process in the composition of expository and argumentative essays
7. Recognize historical, social, philosophical, psychological, and cultural contexts for literature

Course Introduction

Literature can take lots of forms - basically, anything written down and distributed to people is “literature.” In this course we will concern ourselves with what is variously called creative, esthetic, artistic literature. More specifically, we'll study three of the most common and enduring forms: fiction, poetry and drama.

It's not uncommon to wonder why this type of literature is a standard topic of study in school and college. Some ask where the pleasure is in reading such challenging works. The word, “challenging,” gets at the heart of why these works are so valuable and enduring - they challenge us. Literary artists write for any number of reasons, but among them is the desire to present perceptions, situations and points of view that challenge conventional ways of thinking about the world. Each work of literature strives to be unique, to give rise to insights in the reader (or listener) that haven't occurred to her, him - or maybe anyone - before.

With each literary text that we read, we should work to understand one or more ways that the work poses a kind of challenge to readers to think differently, to reshape an understanding or newly appreciate an existing one. This challenge would engage readers of the writer's own historical period and culture; or, as is often the case, it challenges readers in the present day. In order to perceive the challenge, we as readers must perceive how the author does it. Literary authors use a variety of techniques to invite the reader's
exploration of their works - to encourage dialogue rather than simply persuade all readers to adopt a single understanding, as in an argumentative essay. However, with the author’s challenge comes the possibility that the reader may find ways to challenge the themes representations or assumptions of the work. While analyzing literature, we also become critics of it, and we should strive in our own way to present the significance of the work as accurately and fairly as possible, even when that significance isn’t particularly flattering.

**Course Texts**

**Prerequisites**
ENGL& 101 with a grade of 2.0 or higher.

**Requirements**
Students will write three short analytical essays, take one in-class essay exam, complete a research paper and submit other small assignments as part of class participation.

- Short Fiction Essay - 15% of grade
- Poetry Essay - 15% of grade
- Drama Essay - 15% of grade
- Research Paper - 30% of grade
- Mid-term exam - 10% of grade
- Class participation - 15% of grade

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated in the Activity and Assignment Schedule. Late papers may be given an “F.” Failure to hand in any essay is sufficient grounds for failure in the course.

Students should plan to follow a drafting process for developing papers. However, students need not submit early drafts; only the final draft is required. I encourage Students to schedule time during my office hours to present or talk about early drafts in preparation for submitting final drafts.

**Standards for Work**
All drafts must be typed and handed in on paper. Final drafts should follow the Modern Language Association (MLA) format for essays. Final drafts should be carefully reviewed and edited for correct spelling and grammar prior to submission.

**Add/Drop Policy**
Use the schedule change form, available at the Registrar’s office, to add or drop a course. Classes may be added or dropped without instructor signature during the first five days of the term (Jan 5-9). Classes may be added with instructor signature from the sixth to the tenth day of classes (Jan10-Jan16). Courses may be dropped without penalty through the tenth day of classes (January 16). Class dropped after the tenth day will appear on your college transcript as a dropped course.

**Plagiarism**
If you plagiarize, you could fail your course, be suspended, or even be expelled. Deliberate plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work as your own. Whether you take information (all or part) or images
(graphs, photos, artwork, etc.) from a book, encyclopedia article, Web site, or your roommate’s paper, you are plagiarizing. **Buying a paper** from a research service, online source, or your classmate is plagiarism, too.

Accidental plagiarism occurs when students fail to write complete and accurate citations, such as

- Leaving out quotation marks (or indenting a quotation “block”) when quoting a source, even if you supply documentation.
- Paraphrasing materials from a source without appropriate documentation in a list of works cited or references.
- Copying data (or anything else) from a source without proper acknowledgment in a list of works cited or references.

Avoid plagiarism by understanding the rules for quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing sources. See the Pierce College plagiarism guide for more info: [http://libguides.pierce.ctc.edu/content.php?pid=104138](http://libguides.pierce.ctc.edu/content.php?pid=104138)
Activity and Assignment Schedule (subject to limited revision)

**Week 1**
- Tues, 1/6: Course welcome; syllabus; intro lecture & activity: “Happy Endings”. Reader Response Theories.
- Thurs, 1/8: Story 1: “The Yellow Wallpaper”; Reading and Writing about Literature (RWL) Ch. 1 & 2. RWL Ch. 9 (Feminist & Gender Criticism)

**Week 2**
- Tues, 1/13: Story 2: “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”; RWL: Ch. 4 (Summary & Explication), Ch. 5 (Writing about Stories) and Ch. 9 (Historical Criticism and New Historicism). Due: Journal entry.
- Thurs, 1/15: Story 3: “Hills Like White Elephants”; RWL Ch. 4 (Analysis & Compare/Contrast)

**Week 3**
- Tues, 1/20: Story 4: “The Lesson”; RWL Ch. 3, RWL Ch 9 (Cultural Studies); Due: expository paragraph
- Thurs, 1/22: Story 5: “The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven”

**Week 4**
- Tues, 1/27: Poem 1: “They flee from me”, Sir Thomas Wyatt. Poem 2: Sonnet 73, William Shakespeare. RWL Ch. 6 (Writing about Poems), Ch. 9 (Formalism and New Criticism)
- Thurs, 1/29: Poem 3: “To Autumn”, John Keats. Poem 4: “I heard a Fly buzz -- when I died”, Emily Dickinson; RWL Ch. 9 (Structuralism)

**Week 5**
  Mid-term in-class essay.

**Week 6**
- Thurs, 2/12: RWL Ch. 7 (Writing about Plays), Ch. 9 (Poststructuralism and Deconstruction). Due: poetry essay.

**Week 7**
- Tues, 2/17: Play 1: *The Glass Menagerie*, Tennessee Williams. Due: Journal entry
- Thurs, 2/19: *The Glass Menagerie*. RWL: Ch. 9 (Queer Theory)

**Week 8**
- Tues, 2/24: Play 2: *Fences*, August Wilson. RWL: Ch. 9 (Marxist Criticism). Due: Journal entry.
- Thurs, 2/26: *Fences*. 
Week 9
Tues, 3/3  RWL: Ch. 8, Writing a Literary Research Paper, Ch. 9 (Postcolonial Criticism). **Due:** Drama essay.

Week 10
Tues, 3/10  Research paper presentations.
Thurs, 3/12  Research paper presentations.

Finals Week
Thurs, 3/19  **Research Paper due by 8:30 PM in AAH 136.**