COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Inquiries into the nature of character and selfhood — who we think we are and how others regard us — have long been at the core of fiction, poetry, and drama. In this course we will examine literary responses to the notion of identity, private and public, local and global. Through close readings of key works we will explore foundational literary techniques. At the same time, we will develop the basic tools for critical analysis, and apply these to a host of wide-ranging questions. What guises do we assume and what roles do we play? How do we as individuals and as communities create ourselves through our choices, actions, and involvements with the world around us? What are the relationships between truth and falsehood, self-knowledge and self-deceit? Rather than formulating definitive answers, we will instead attempt to pose pointed, thoughtful elaborations — blueprints for an ongoing engagement with the life of ideas.

By semester’s end you will have:

- developed and sharpened your critical-thinking, writing, and persuasive-arguing skills;
- enhanced your ability to read literary works closely;
- gained an overview of a variety of literary approaches and traditions, with an emphasis on contemporary writings;
- deepened your ability to place these works within a broader historical and multi-disciplinary artistic context;
- acquired some familiarization with the scope of English literature and much of the terminology employed by literary critics;
- obtained a grasp of the techniques employed by writers of fiction, poetry, and drama.

REQUIRED BOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS


There will also be assigned readings, as well as a few videos, music selections, and examples of visual art available on Sakai. You will be required to print the readings out and bring them to class on days when they are scheduled to be discussed. Please view or listen to the videos, visual art, or music prior to class, and come prepared to discuss them. (S)

You will receive some assigned readings as handouts. These will be distributed to you in class. (H)
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

• one 2 – 3 paragraph writing assignment, double-spaced and typed using 12 pt. Times Roman; due in class
• one essay of 4 - 5 pgs., double-spaced and typed using 12 pt. Times Roman; due in class
• one essay of 6 – 8 pgs., double-spaced and typed using 12 pt. Times Roman; due in class
• a mid-term examination
• a final examination
• an oral presentation on an assigned reading, presented (for the most part) in trios; sign-up and logistics to be discussed in class
• class participation
• attendance at all three Spring semester Single Voice Readings Series events

GRADING

• brief writing assignment — 5%
• essay #1 — 15%
• essay #2 — 20%
• mid-term examination — 15%
• final examination — 20%
• class participation — 15%
• oral presentation — 5%
• attendance at all three Single Voice Reading Series events this semester — 5%

PLEASE NOTE: UNLESS YOU FURNISH ME WITH APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION, I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK. ALSO, I WILL NOT ACCEPT ASSIGNMENTS ONLINE.

SOME NOTES ABOUT GRADING, HELP WITH COURSEWORK

You will receive handouts from me containing guidelines for all assignments, including essays and oral presentations. The following are some general guidelines.

Written work:
A Work exhibits original and coherent ideas, which are persuasively, economically, and comprehensively asserted. Work also demonstrates your mastery of the mechanics of spelling, grammar, and usage. Where appropriate, work accurately and thoughtfully draws on other sources, and documents these using MLA style.
B Work is founded on solid ideas that are effectively communicated. Organization, spelling, grammar, usage, and documentation are mostly in keeping with fine academic standards.
C One of the following traits will earn work this grade: underdevelopment, disorganization, or grave inattention to the conventions of spelling and grammar.
D Essay or report displays more than one of the traits found in a C paper.
F Work contains plagiarized material or has missed the deadline.
Help with written work:
Please do not hesitate to meet with me in my office to go over drafts of your essays or reports — just be certain to allow several days before the due date. I also highly recommend conferring with the Learning Commons writing consultants, at Pelletier Library. For further information, see: http://learningcommons.allegheny.edu.writing/

Participation:
A Consistently active and insightful participation will earn this grade. To do so, carefully and critically read assignments prior to class discussions and be prepared to respond to questions. Also be prepared to initiate thoughtful debates about an assigned reading’s construction and place within the literary and historical context. Respond to your classmates’ insights with engagement and civility.
B Consistent participation that demonstrates a command of the assigned readings will earn this mark, as will constructive, analytical responses to your peers’ remarks.
C This grade represents participation that is sporadic — for example, once or twice every other class — and disinterested.
D Rarely speaking in class — perhaps only a few times during the semester, if at all — will qualify you for this grade.
F Usually this mark directly corresponds with egregious absenteeism.

ATTENDANCE AND OTHER POLICIES

After two absences, you will lose a full letter grade for each absence, unless you are able to provide me with medical or otherwise-appropriate documentation.

If you are unable to attend class on the day when an assignment is due and would still like to submit work for grading consideration, you must provide me with documentation. Failure to do so will result in your receiving an F for this portion of your final grade.

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 814-332-2898. Disability Services is part of the Learning Commons and is located in Pelletier Library. Please do this as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty are offences for which serious sanctions will be taken, including at the very least certain failure of this course. Please refer to your student handbook for definitions of these offences and a description of other possible resulting sanctions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 19</td>
<td>INTRO. TO COURSE/INTRO. TO FICTION</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Jamaica Kincaid, “Girl” <em>(H)/(C)</em></td>
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<td>Jan. 21</td>
<td>“Girl”</td>
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<td>Charters, pp. 9 – 13</td>
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<td>Jan. 24</td>
<td>Dan Chaon, “Big Me” <em>(S)</em></td>
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<td>Bedford, pp. 55 – 56; 391 – 92; Charters, pp. 17 – 21</td>
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<td>Jan. 26</td>
<td>“Big Me”</td>
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<td>Charters, pp. 14 - 16</td>
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<td>Jan. 28</td>
<td>“Big Me”</td>
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<td><strong>BRIEF WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>Aimee Bender, “DebbieLand” <em>(S)</em></td>
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<td>Charters, pp. 21 - 23</td>
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<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>“DebbieLand”</td>
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<td>Charters, pp. 24 - 33</td>
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<td>Feb. 4</td>
<td>Listening and viewing assignment: music and repetition in Steve Reich, “Different Trains” and “Piano Phase”; Phillip Glass, excerpts from “Glassworks” and “Einstein on the Beach” <em>(S)</em>; repetition in the visual arts: Donald Judd <em>(S)</em></td>
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<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>“DebbieLand”</td>
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<td>Begin outlining your essay</td>
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<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>Sherman Alexie, “The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven” <em>(C)</em></td>
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<td>Charters, pp. 34 - 35</td>
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<td>Feb. 11</td>
<td><strong>Oral presentation #1: “The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven”</strong></td>
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<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>Franz Kafka, “A Hunger Artist” <em>(C)</em></td>
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<td>Charters, pp. 268 – 69; Bedford, p. 158 - 59</td>
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<td>Expressionism in the visual arts: Max Beckman, “The Oyster Eaters”; Egon Schiele, self-portraits; Edvard Munch, “The Scream” <em>(S)</em></td>
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<td>Expressionism in music: Arnold Schoenberg, excerpt from <em>Pierrot lunaire</em></td>
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<td>Begin drafting your essay</td>
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<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>“A Hunger Artist”</td>
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<td>Feb. 18</td>
<td>Edwidge Danticat, <em>The Dew Breaker</em> <em>(D)</em></td>
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<td>Interview with Danticat <em>(S)</em></td>
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<td>Feb. 21</td>
<td><em>The Dew Breaker</em></td>
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<td>Begin polishing your essay</td>
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<td>Feb. 23</td>
<td><em>The Dew Breaker</em></td>
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<td>Feb. 25</td>
<td><em>The Dew Breaker</em></td>
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<td><strong>ESSAY #1 DUE IN CLASS</strong></td>
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<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td><em>The Dew Breaker</em></td>
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<td>Mar. 2</td>
<td>Mid-term review</td>
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<td>Mar. 4</td>
<td><strong>MID-TERM EXAMINATION</strong></td>
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Mar. 7 INTRO. TO POETRY
Kim Addonizio, “What Do Women Want?” (H)

Mar. 9 Philip Levine, “You Can Have It” (S)
Charters, pp. 699 – 700; 709 – 11; 727 – 28; 731 - 34

Mar. 11 Emily Dickinson, “It was not Death, for I stood up” (S)

Mar. 14 Kevin Young, “Urgent Telegram to Jean-Michel Basquiat” (H)
Charters, pp. 722 – 25; Bedford, pp. 301; 135 - 36
Visual art: Jean-Michel Basquiat (S)

Begin outlining your essay

Mar. 16 Walt Whitman, excerpts from “Song of Myself” (C)
Charters, pp. 1015 – 16; Bedford, pp. 523 - 24

Mar. 18 Oral presentation #2: Allen Ginsburg, excerpt from “Kaddish” (C)
Charters, pp. 867 - 69

Mar. 21 – 25 No classes — Spring Break

Mar. 28 Yusef Komunyakaa, “Facing It” (C)
Visual art: Maya Lin, Vietnam Veterans Memorial (S)
Charters, pp. 737 – 39; Bedford, pp. 297 – 99; 477 - 78

Begin drafting essay

Mar. 30 Oral presentation #3: Michael Dickman, “The Black Album” (S)

Apr. 1 Oral presentation #4: Cynthia Cruz, “Diagnosis” (S)

Apr. 4 John Keats, “Bright Star” (S)
Charters, pp. 771 – 72; Bedford, pp. 481 - 82

Begin polishing your essay

Apr. 6 Rita Dove, “Sonnet in Primary Colors” (C)
Charters, pp. 945 – 6
Visual art: Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera (S)

Apr. 8 Elizabeth Bishop, “One Art” (C)
Charters, pp. 783; 910 – 11; Bedford, pp. 533 - 34

ESSAY #2 DUE IN CLASS

Apr. 11 INTRO. TO DRAMA
Aristotle, excerpt from Poetics (C)
Charters, pp. 1119 – 39; Bedford, p. 124

Apr. 13 Sophocles, Oedipus the King (C)
Charters, pp. 1143 – 51; 1152 – 55

Apr. 15 Oedipus the King

Apr. 20 Oral presentation #5: Oedipus the King

Apr. 22 Rajiv Joseph, Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo (I)

Apr. 25 Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo

Apr. 27 Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo

Apr. 29 Oral presentation #6: Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo

May 2 Final Examination Review

FINAL EXAMINATION — TO BE ANNOUNCED