

English 200, Section 02
Reading Literature
Spring 2011

MWF 9:00AM – 9:50AM, Oddfellows 105A

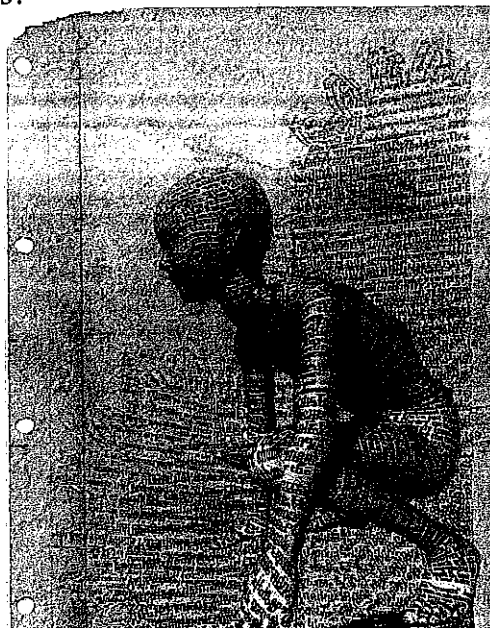
Prof. Ryan S Paul (rpaul@allgeheny.edu)

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Office Hours: M&W, 10:30AM – Noon; T&Th, 1:30PM – 3:30PM; & by appointment

There are two main goals in this course: first, to learn how to read literature *actively* and *closely*; second, to learn how to write thoughtful, insightful *interpretations* of literature based on careful *analysis*. We read in one form or another every day of our lives: street signs; stories told by a friend; TV shows and movies; and, of course, books. But we often do not think about the actual process of reading or how the words on a page create meaning. Instead, we simply read passively; we absorb what we see and hear and do not think deeply about how or why or what our reading material means. In order to learn how to analyze literature, we must become self-aware about our own reading processes and to analyze how language – specifically “literary” language – works to create meaning.

In this course, we will read a wide variety of texts and learn how to analyze them. We will begin by studying poetry, learning how to unfold the highly compressed meaning of its language through the study of a variety of literary devices. As we develop an understanding for how language can be manipulated to generate meanings, we will move to other forms of literature and add new concerns. We will study the Renaissance play *Doctor Faustus* and learn how historical context affects the interpretation of literature. We will then move to the two dominant forms of modern literature: the short story and the novel. As we read the works of Angela Carter and Graham Swift, we will add new analytical concepts and themes to our interpretive toolbox. The end goal will be to develop the ability to consider a variety of literary texts through a multi-leveled analysis that combines close attention to language, cultural context, and theme. All the while, we will consider the appropriate way to write about literature, discussing issue such as argumentation, organization, and style. Behind all of this work will be some of the bigger, philosophical questions about reading literature: what is literature? What differentiates it from other forms of communication? What is the purpose of literary analysis? What do we bring to the practice of reading, and how can we become better and more sensitive readers? And perhaps most importantly, what does literature offer us as individuals, as members of our community, and as young scholars?



Course Goals

At the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Differentiate between the major modes of English literature
- Identify literary devices and correctly apply the fundamental vocabulary of literary analysis
- Carefully read and analyze the language of literary texts
- Develop sophisticated interpretations of literary texts
- Articulate these interpretations in carefully structured written arguments

Student Responsibilities

In order to reach these goals, you should:

- Attend class every day
- Prepare for every class thoroughly by completing all assigned readings and reviewing your notes
- Take copious notes on class lectures and discussion
- Participate actively in class discussion with original and insightful comments
- Complete all assignments
- Meet with your fellow students or your instructor outside of class as necessary to discuss course materials and assignments
- Adhere to all Allegheny College and classroom policies on academic integrity, classroom behavior, etc

Course Texts

Required:

Angela Carter. *Burning Your Boats: The Collected Short Stories*. Penguin, 1995.

Christopher Marlowe. *Doctor Faustus*. Norton Critical Edition. W.W. Norton, 2005.

Ross Murfin & Supryia M. Ray. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*. Third Edition. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.

Graham Swift. *Waterland*. Vintage, 1992.

Additional readings provided by the instructor.

Recommended:

A good dictionary. In addition to keeping a pocket dictionary with you when you read, I would highly recommend you familiarize yourself with the *Oxford English Dictionary*, available online through the Pelletier Library website. It is far superior to free online dictionaries and should *always* be used instead.

The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. Seventh Edition.

Grades

Quizzes: 10%
Class Participation: 10%
Homework Assignments: 10%
Four Essays: 40% (10% each)
Midterm Exam: 15%
Final Exam: 15%

Active participation in class discussion and activities is essential for your success and the success of the class as a whole. So, attendance and class participation are **mandatory**. You should come to class every day prepared and excited to engage with the material and with your fellow students. Every student will be expected to contribute to class regularly and consistently.

Much of your grade will be determined by your work on four short analytical essays. Each essay will cover one of the major sections of the course, and each essay will analyze one text. The first will cover poetry; the second, the play *Doctor Faustus*; the third, the short fiction of Angela Carter; and the final, Graham Swift's novel *Waterland*.

In addition, you will be graded on your participation in daily discussion, your understanding and retention of key concepts and literary vocabulary, and your performance on various writing assignments both in and out of class. Your performance will be evaluated by regular quizzes, a midterm exam, and a final exam. In addition to the material explicitly outlined on the syllabus, you are responsible for any information or ideas that come up over the semester. Take careful notes, review them regularly, and internalize all the material we cover.

A significant amount of the work for this course will occur *outside* of class. We will not cover every aspect of every text or topic during our meetings, but you are still responsible for all the material assigned. The work done in the classroom is designed to provide you with models for literary analysis; your job is to take the tools and lessons learned and master them through diligent practice.

Each student is allowed 3 unexcused absences without penalty, with each additional unexcused absence incurring a 3% penalty to your final grade. Medical, college-related, and religious absences will be excused only with proper documentation, and advance notice is greatly preferred.

All students are responsible for making up any missed work; in-class assignments missed for unexcused absences cannot be made up. If you know in advance you will be absent on a day that a paper is due, turn it in early or make other arrangements with me. Late papers are penalized 1 letter grade per class-day late. All papers will be turned in online via SAKAI's "Dropbox" function.

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.

Daily Schedule

This schedule is subject to change with reasonable notice.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topic</u>
	<i>Be sure to have read the assigned material by the date listed</i>
	<u>Unit 1: Poetry & Close Reading</u>
W 1/19	Introduction to the course.
F 1/21	Poetry as Symbolic Action: The Address Circuit Ezra Pound, "The River Merchant's Wife: A Letter" <i>Bedford</i> : poem, poetry, voice, formalism, the New Criticism, intentional fallacy
M 1/24	Speech Acts William Carlos Williams, "This is just to say"; Langston Hughes, "Silhouette" <i>Bedford</i> : speech-act theory and related entries
W 1/26	Persuasion and Rhetorical Strategy John Donne, "The Flea" & "The Sun Rising" <i>Bedford</i> : argument, personification, rhetoric, symbol
F 1/28	QUIZ. Imagery and Theme Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress" <i>Bedford</i> : image, imagery, motif, representation, theme
M 1/31	Tone and Atmosphere Thomas Wyatt, "They flee from me"; George Herbert, "The Collar" <i>Bedford</i> : atmosphere, mood, tone
W 2/2	Figurative Language Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" <i>Bedford</i> : figurative language, figure of thought, figure of speech, trope
F 2/4	Metaphor & Simile William Shakespeare, Sonnets 1 & 2 <i>Bedford</i> : conceit, metaphor, simile, tenor, vehicle
M 2/7	QUIZ. Metonymy, Synecdoche, and other figures of speech Robert Herrick, "Delight in Disorder" <i>Bedford</i> : metonymy, synecdoche
W 2/9	Form Shakespeare, Sonnets 18 & 129 <i>Bedford</i> : sonnet, Italian sonnet, English sonnet, stanza, quatrain, couplet, octave, sextet

F 2/11 **QUIZ.** Meter
Donne, Holy Sonnet 10; Philip Sidney, Sonnet 1
Bedford: prosody, meter, stress, accent, scansion, verse, versification & related terms

M 2/14 Form & Meter continued

W 2/16 **Midterm Exam**

Unit 2: Drama & Historicism

F 2/18 **QUIZ.** Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (A-Text, 1604)
Bedford: drama, play, plot, act, scene, tragedy, hubris, comedy

M 2/21 **PAPER 1 DUE.** *Faustus* continued
Bedford: Old English Period, medieval, Middle English Period, morality play, allegory

W 2/23 *Faustus* continued
Bedford: Renaissance, Renaissance period, early modern, Early Tudor Age, Elizabethan Age

F 2/25 **QUIZ.** Marlowe's *Faustus* and its sources
pp. 182-209 in *Faustus*

M 2/28 *Faustus* in its historical contexts
pp. 226-265 in *Faustus*
Bedford: historicism, the new historicism

W 3/2 *Faustus* in its historical contexts continued

F 3/4 *Faustus* concluded

Unit 3: Short Fiction & Narrative

M 3/7 Angela Carter, "The Courtship of Mr Lyon"
Bedford: fiction, prose, short story, diction, syntax

W 3/9 Carter, "The Tiger's Bride"
Bedford: narrative, narration, narrator, point of view and related terms

F 3/11 **QUIZ.** Carter, "The Bloody Chamber"
Bedford: action, setting, character, antagonist, protagonist, hero, antihero conflict

M 3/14 **PAPER 2 DUE.** "The Bloody Chamber" continued
Bedford: black humor, grotesque, ambiguity, fable, fairy tale

- W 3/16 **QUIZ.** Carter, “The Werewolf” and “The Company of Wolves”
Bedford: constructionism, gender, sexuality, beast fable, the Other
- F 3/18 Carter, “Wolf-Alice” and “Peter and the Wolf”
Bedford: discourse
- 3/21 – 3/25** **Spring Break: No Class**
- M 3/28 Carter, “The Fall River Axe Murders”
Bedford: diction
- W 3/30 Carter, “Lizzie’s Tiger”
Bedford: syntax
- F 4/1 Carter concluded

Unit 4: The Novel

- M 4/4 **QUIZ.** Graham Swift, *Waterland* pp. 1-20
Bedford: novel, persona, irony and related terms
- W 4/6 *Waterland* pp. 21-59
Bedford: the absurd, anachrony and related terms
- F 4/8 **QUIZ.** *Waterland* pp. 60-105
Bedford: utopia, dystopia, setting, atmosphere and related terms
- M 4/11 **PAPER 3 DUE.** *Waterland* pp. 106-151
Bedford: objectivity, subjectivity
- W 4/13 *Waterland* pp. 151-205
Bedford: naturalism, realism
- F 4/15 *Waterland* pp. 205-257
Bedford: Oedipus complex
- M 4/18 **QUIZ.** *Waterland* pp. 258-308
Bedford: voice, narrator, narration, point-of view and related terms
- W 4/20 *Waterland* pp. 309-335
Bedford: constructionism, gender, sexuality and related terms
- F 4/22 *Waterland* pp. 335-358
- M 4/25 Review
- W 4/27 Review

F 4/29

PAPER 4 DUE

M 5/2

Review

TBA:

Final EXAM

Additional Class Policies

Please turn off all electronic devices when you come to class. You may use laptop computers, but *only* for taking notes or other work directly related to class.

Students are encouraged to stop by during office hours with any questions or concerns. You may also stop by my office at any time convenient for you, but I may or may not be available. If you absolutely cannot make my office hours, you may set an appointment with me for an alternate time.

If you would like to meet with me to discuss an assignment, please do not wait until the day before it is due. Meet with me as early as you can so that we can develop a productive course of action.

The best way to contact me is via email. I am regularly available during "business hours" (Monday – Friday, 9AM – 5PM), and if you email me during this time I usually will respond within a few hours. If you email me in the evening, over holidays, or during the weekend, I probably will not get back to you in less than 12 hours. I *do not* chat or instant message through the Allegheny webmail system.

I do not discuss grades via email or phone.

Essay-grading Criteria

So you can understand what is expected of you, I have indicated the general criteria I use to evaluate all writing assignments in this class. I base my grades on careful consideration of all aspects of a writing assignment, from the author's fluency with language to the concepts being explored. Grades are determined based on actual product, not on intention; if you intend to make a particular argument but are unable to do fully articulate it, you will be graded on the quality of the argument you do produce, not on the ideas that you were trying to write.

An essay in the A range is founded on an original, logical and coherently organized set of ideas; it makes a clearly discernible and persuasive argument (even if the reader disagrees with its argument) and articulates this argument with a clear, direct, and thoughtful thesis statement. Its thinking is, at each turn, absolutely clearly articulated: words carry thought, they don't obscure it; its sentences use only the words their ideas require, not any more; its paragraphs have distinct though related roles in the essay's larger argument, each holding one thoroughly asserted idea (not two competing ideas, not one idea half-asserted). Its sentences are without the grammatical, spelling or typographical mistakes that exacting proofreading would catch. An A paper produces a nuanced argument, considers multiple perspectives, carefully examines and explains the evidence put forth by the author, makes a clear and persuasive case for the validity of its thesis, and clearly and cogently states the significance of its argument. All of this takes *a lot of work*. If it is all very nearly accomplished, the essay usually earns an A-.

An essay in the B range: a very good paper, founded on solid, persuasive thinking, the writing of which is clearly and effectively executed. What usually prevents an "A" is a lack of originality, complex and thorough thinking, or careful proofreading. If two of these virtues are absent, the essay will usually earn a B- or rest between a B and a C; these papers often contain potential but some crucial flaw (a weak thesis statement, unclear organization, etc.) keeps it from being a solid B. Other common attributes of a B paper include: a thoughtful but not entirely persuasive argument, omission of key examples or textual evidence, inability to integrate textual evidence smoothly into your own

writing, failure to fully address a perspective important to making the argument, a conclusion that does not articulate the full significance of the argument, some tangents or digressions that detract from the coherence and logic of the argument.

An essay in the C range: some conspicuous flaw usually earns an essay a C; its argument is really underdeveloped, it lacks a clear thesis statement, it is disorganized, its diction is consistently inarticulate, or it is in dire need of proofreading. Note that a C denotes “average” or sufficient work: it accomplishes the bare minimums established by the assignment and demonstrates that the student has “done the work” to a level of adequate competence but has not shown a mastery of the material or assignment. A C paper will put forth an argument, but one that is simple, obvious, or vague; it supplies some evidence from the text, but this evidence is often not suited to the case being made; its conclusion simply restates the introduction without articulating the overall significance of the essay; its introduction is often too broad and vague, or it does not suit the topic and/or argument; it follows slavishly the five paragraph structure. C papers also often include many assertions without explanation, clarification, or support; for example, a C paper will include statements like “I will analyze the importance of X” or “Y is a significant moment in the text” with little or no follow-up.

A D essay either contains more than one of the large problems cited in the "C" description or finds another way to convince its reader that the author has not spent nearly enough time on the thinking or writing in the essay. It is insufficient in multiple areas, usually lacking an argument, focusing on summary rather than analysis, and without a clear articulation of distinct ideas in each paragraph across the paper. D papers often contain numerous factual errors, unsupported assertions, digressions completely inappropriate to the topic, illogical or incomprehensible interpretations, or numerous and distracting problems in organization, grammar, spelling, etc.

An F essay misses the mark on all criteria (originality, articulateness, persuasiveness, organization, the absence of writing mistakes) or is handed in very late.

Some other factors:

A paper that lacks an identifiable thesis or argument will earn *at best* a C-

A paper that lacks evidence in the form of direct textual quotation (or contains only minimal textual evidence) will earn *at best* a C-

A paper that contains no argument or analysis but instead is largely summary, description, or observations without a unifying thesis will earn *at best* a C-

A paper that adheres slavishly to the five paragraph structure or is otherwise not organized logically based on its content and argument will earn *at best* a C-

A paper that contains numerous errors in spelling, syntax, word usage, formatting, citation, etc. will earn a *minimum* penalty of one full letter grade (from an A to a B, from a B- to a C-, etc)

Please note that these factors are solely negative, and if your paper does not fall under one of these flaws that does *not* guarantee a higher grade. For example, if you have an abundance of textual evidence that does not mean you will necessarily get a grade any higher than a C-

Class Participation

While it is difficult to quantify the success of a student's contributions to class discussion (at our best we all of course contribute differently), here are the general standards I will use to grade participation:

A range: Participation at this level is marked by its active nature, its consistency, and its quality. When A participants read an assignment, they *prepare* to participate in a class discussion; they read the assignments fully, carefully and critically enough to be ready not just to respond to my questions but also to initiate discussion with comments and questions of their own. Such participants will also come to class ready to make and argue assertions about the reading and to think out loud about a text's relation to its contexts; they will attend to the comments of others in class, agree, elaborate or civilly disagree with them, bring our attention to passages from the reading to make their point and at times connect such thinking with earlier readings or previous class discussions. In short, students who by their engagement in class discussion throughout the semester show themselves to be true students of the course material – persistently conscientious and inquiring – will get an A for their efforts. They will also make the course a lot better. (By the way, substituting quantity of participation for quality will not work.)

B range: Students who come to every class, have almost always done all the reading, and consistently respond to the questions of others in a way that demonstrates their command of the reading will earn a B participation grade. What separates this effort from an A one is not so much quantity (teachers are remarkably good at detecting bs) as the level of preparation – one's reading and thinking – that has gone on before one gets to class, especially the kind that enables students to *initiate* discussion. But you can't get a B participation grade by just showing up, either, or by talking every once and a while.

C range: A C participant comes to almost all the classes, usually has done most of the reading most of the time, but not with the energy necessary to demonstrate through participation their ongoing engagement with the material. Such a discussant contributes infrequently, maybe one time every other class.

D range: Automatic pilot mode. You were physically there most of the time, spoke a few times all semester maybe, but that was it.

F: Not coming to class is the traditional route.

Please Note: Students who are reluctant to talk in class can partially compensate for their silence by e-mailing me comments and questions about the reading *before* the class discussion of it. If you define yourself as “shy,” though, please don't convert this definition into permission not to talk. People get “writer's block” but still must hand papers in on time; others have “test anxiety” and take tests. In this class, participating in discussions is an obligation as important as test and papers, so keeping mum isn't really an option for those who expect to succeed.