

| English 308: ~~Freshman Writing I~~ **Practical Literary Criticism.**

- 1. Demonstrate fluency in the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, editing, and preparing final papers:** This course is for advanced English Liberal Arts majors. They already have a strong sense of the writing process; the course complicates the process requiring them to formulate cogent arguments based on close readings of literary texts. Thus they have to integrate complex material into the steps in the process.
- 2. Demonstrate competence in the varied elements of writing: thesis, stance, content, organization, sentences, diction, and technical matters:** All of these matters, and more, are implicit in good critical writing, and these, among others, form the basis on which papers are evaluated.
- 3. Demonstrate awareness of rhetorical strategies in various forms of writing, with particular attention to audience:** Students write from a variety of critical perspectives—formalist, deconstructive, feminist, historicist, and others—most of which require different strategies in both formulating arguments and considering audience reception and response.
- 4. Assess the usefulness and reliability of sources, including Internet sources:** All essays require students to assess primary sources critically, the literary text they are writing about, and the longer research essay asks them to do the same with secondary sources. They are instructed in use of the MLA bibliography and other relevant indexes on line.
- 5. Synthesize and critique material from a variety of sources with an emphasis on scholarly and professional publications; incorporate sources; document sources properly:** The very nature of literary criticism requires critique, incorporation, and documentation of both primary and secondary sources, and these matters are one of the major focuses of the course.
- 6. Exhibit critical thinking as readers and as writers:** Critical thinking and writing are implicit in literary criticism; thus, they are taught, practiced, and stressed throughout the course.
- 7. Understand the relevance of writing to real-world situations:** Critical perspectives such as feminism, historicism, and political criticism demonstrate how literature interacts with the world. In addition to their work in criticism, students also learn to write a job letter and *résumé* in this course. This last unit is somewhat divorced from the rest of the course but is included because these students, English Liberal Arts majors, would not have the opportunity to receive instruction in these since they do not take 305T.

English 308: Practical Literary Criticism

Root Hall A113: 1:00-1:50 MWF

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Office Hours: 10:00-10:50 MWF; other times by appointment.

Spring 2009

Dr. Carino

TEXTS

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. New York: Scribner's.

Perrin, Robert. *The Beacon Handbook*. 6th ed. Boston: Houghton, 2003.

Lynn, Steven. *Texts and Contexts: Writing about Literature with Critical Theory*, 4th ed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Fulfilling a foundational studies requirement but tailored to the English Liberal Arts majors and minors, *this course is designed to expand your knowledge as both a reader and writer of critical approaches to literature, some of which you should be at least familiar with from English 230* (FS Comp. objectives 1-4, 6). *You will be writing essays practicing different critical approaches* (FS Comp. objective 1-3) and *a longer paper requiring library research* (FS Comp. objective 4, 5 specifically, and all others implicitly). *Literary criticism can be fascinating as well as frustrating. You, like professional critics, respond to literature based on a variety of assumptions—personal, social, political, cultural, aesthetic, to name a few* (FS Comp. objective 3, 6, 7, specifically). *Studying alternative critical perspectives can enable us to see beyond our own assumptions as well as those of critics. As students of literature, we need to be aware of a variety of critical perspectives to help us to become more astute readers and writers. Critical essays sometimes use a single dominant approach or several that overlap. Learning to recognize and practice various critical approaches illuminates and enriches our understanding of literature, criticism, and the place of both in academia and the world. Because this is a writing course, along with our readings, we will be discussing and practicing means to improve your writing, more advanced points such as managing an essay informed by critical theory, to matters of organization, and, if necessary to fundamental matters such as technical correctness* (FS comp. objectives 1-6, and 7 to the degree that technical correctness is important in the world). *Finally, you will also receive instruction in and be required to write a job letter and résumé.*

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POLICIES

1. Type all out-of-class papers unless directed otherwise, following MLA style and documentary form. (See *Beacon Handbook*, Chapter 34, for complete guidelines.)

2. Papers are due on the assigned days, at the beginning of the period. Late work will receive lowered grades, usually one letter grade for every calendar day, not class session, late.

3. I give few extensions on assignments; a request for an extension must be made *in advance* and for very good reason.

4. Email submissions. You should send me an email paper if you are sick and going to miss class, but do not make a habit of doing so.

Completing all assignments--in-class and out-of-class, minor and major--is the minimum requirement, but not a guarantee, for passing the course.

REQUIREMENTS

Single Source Papers: All papers except paper 6 (see below) will be written in response to assigned literature, from a particular critical perspective. Papers 1-4 will run approximately 900 words, roughly 3-4 pages. ~~Papers Paper 5~~ will be a cover letter, ~~and résumé.~~ ~~It functions differently than the other papers~~ and will be completed after the last single-source paper and before the multi-source paper. ~~A break from critical writing. Its purpose is to~~ ~~it serves to provide you with~~ ~~give you instruction and practice in~~ ~~some sense of how to~~ presenting your credentials ~~to employers after upon~~ graduation.

A multi-source paper. You will complete a moderately long researched paper, 7-9 pages, excluding the works-cited pages. The paper will be your analysis of some feature of a work in context with the ways in which critics have responded to the work (the choice is yours, with my approval). We will discuss this paper in some detail on February 14, and you will receive a detailed topic sheet.

Attendance. *Your attendance grade will be determined by this standard: 0-1=A; 2=B; 3-4=C; 5=D; 6-9=F. If you miss more than 10 classes, you will fail the course, not just receive an F for the attendance grade. If you have more than 5 absences, you cannot earn better than a C for participation.*

Participation. Your participation grade will be determined in two ways: (1) your participation in class discussions and (2) your preparation for and your contributions to peer editing. Your participation grade can be no more than two grades higher than your attendance grade; however, if you are not actively involved in class, your participation may be more than two grades lower than your attendance grade. *Exceeding five absences prevents a grade above C for participation.*

The final exam. The final exam will consist of an essay in which you will discuss a work of literature (probably a poem or short story) from several critical perspectives. It will not require extensive memorization but will require you to be aware of the key critical principles we have applied throughout the course.

GRADES

Your course grade will be based on your essays, attendance, and participation. They are weighted by percentage on the following scale:

Attendance 10%

Participation 5%

Essays 1-4 10% each for a total of 40%

Job Letter/Résumé 10%

Multi-source Essay 25%

Final exam 10%

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is passing off the work of others as your own. Though you are likely familiar from previous instruction with strategies to avoid plagiarism, we will review paraphrasing, integration of quotation, and fair use of critical sources. See the ISU Code of Student Conduct for a complete definition. Any plagiarism will result in failure for the semester and a notice sent to Student Judicial Programs.

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LAPTOP POLICY

Laptop computers may be used only on peer editing days to enable you to make suggested changes in your papers. Please bring a hard copy draft as well. If I plan to use the web, such as on the days we will be looking at ~~data bases~~ data bases for research, I will let you know in advance; and you can bring your laptop if you have

| one. Otherwise, laptops are not allowed to be open in class. All other electronic devices—cell phones, blackberries, and the like—are not to be activated in class.

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

If you have a documented physical or learning disability that could affect your work, let me know privately. By federal law you are entitled to and eligible for accommodation through the Student Support Services Program, Gillum Hall, 201E, ext. 7920. Have your contact person there contact me. Such accommodation may include more time on in-class writings or a transcriber for out-of-class work.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

ISU Follows American Association of University Professors' guidelines: "Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject." For complete guidelines, see

| ~~statement~~: <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1940statement.htm>

English 308: Daily Calendar

Spring 2009

Abbreviations: *TC* = *Texts and Contexts*, *GG* = *The Great Gatsby*

Week 1

M 1/12: Introduction to the Course
| W 1/14: Overview on Writing Criticism. Read, *Beacon* pp: 653-664.
F 1/16: Overview of Criticism: *TC*: Chap. 1-2

Week 2

M 1/19: No Class: Martin Luther King, Jr., Day
W 1/21: *GG*, Chapter 1 introduction of **Paper 1**
F 1/23: *GG*, Chapters 2-3

Week 3

M 1/26: *GG*, Chapter 4-5
W 1/28: *GG*, Chapter 6-7
F 1/30: Peer editing (**Paper 1**); discussion of writing techniques (bring *Beacon*)

Week 4

M 2/2: *GG*, Chapter 8-9. **Paper 1 DUE**
W 2/4: Read *TC* Chap 3: Introduction of New Criticism
F 2/6: More on New Crit.: Introduction of Paper 2: Explication

Week 5

M 2/9: Discussion of writing techniques and read handouts. (bring *Beacon*)
W 2/11: Introduction of Reader Response Crit. Read *TC* Chap. 4
F 2/13: Peer editing (**Paper 2**); More on Reader Response.

Week 6

M 2/16: More on Reader-Response **DUE: Paper 2**

W 2/18: Read *TC* Chap. 5 Structuralism and Deconstruction
F 2/20: More on Deconstruction

Week 7

M 2/23: Discussion of Paper 3. Discussion of writing techniques. Bring *Beacon* and graded papers 1 and 2.
W 2/25: Discussion of Research Methods and Research Paper: Paper 6. Read *TC* Chap.9: Research and Documentation
F 2/27: More on Research

Week 8

M 3/2: Open
W 3/4: Peer editing (**Paper 3**); discussion of writing techniques (bring *Beacon*)
F 3/6: **DUE: Paper 3** Class meets in [RQ: A275RO A-275](#) for preliminary research.

Week 10

M 3/16: Read *TC* Chap.7 Psychological Criticism
W 3/18: Psychoanalytic Criticism—continued (Read Sample)
F 3/20: Discussion of **Paper 4** on your chosen work for the research paper. Read sample research paper on *The Awakening*.

Week 11

M 3/23: Read *TC* Chapter 8 Gendering the Text, pp. 227-54
W 3/25: Gender-based Criticism—continued (Read samples)
F 3/27: No Class. I have to be out of town.

Week 12

M 3/30: Bibliography Format: Read *Beacon* Chap. 436-51, skim 452-71 (bring *Beacon*).
W 4/1: Peer editing (**Paper 4**)
F 4/3: Read *TC* Chap. 6, [pp.](#) 145-64 Historical, Post-Colonial, and Cultural Criticism
DUE: Paper 4

Week 13

M 4/6: Read Samples (New Historicist essay, and excerpt)
W 4/8: Cover Letter, Résumé, and Course List Read Handouts
F 4/10: Cover Letter, Résumé, and Course List—continued
DUE: Preliminary Bibliography.

Week 14

M 4/13: Cover Letter, Résumé, and Course List—continued
W 4/15: Peer editing (**Paper 5**)
F 4/17: **DUE: Paper 5** More on research papers. Bring notes and outlines and parts of drafts, whatever you have on completed on the research paper

Week 15

M 4/20: Review of Sample Papers on Austen and Hamlet
W 4/22: Conferences—continued
F 4/24: Conferences—continued

Week 16

M 4/27: Peer Editing, Paper 6 Research Essay.

W 4/29: Peer editing cont. SIRs

F 5/1: Discuss Final. **Research Essay Due**

Final Exam: Weds. May 7

