

Course Syllabus: English 300C, Literary Perspectives (Spring 2007)



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Class meetings: 1:35 – 2:50 p.m., Heath 105

Office hours: MW 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., and TuTh 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

DESCRIPTION:

This course hopes to: (1) enhance understanding and interpretation of literary expressions in the form of short fiction, creative essays, poetry, drama and film, and (2) consider literature as a venue of conversation for issues central to human experience.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

English 300 will measure success through evidence of:

- College-level critical reading and analytical writing abilities
- Engaging the world of ideas, often through a perspective of Christian faith
- Understanding terms and methods central to the study of literature as an academic discipline

These will be measured through:

- Notes based on reading questions
- Exams
- Short papers
- Class discussion

COURSE FORMAT:

The course will commence promptly at 1:35 and end at 2:50 pm in Heath 105 on every Tuesday and Thursday of the spring term. Class sessions typically consist of a combination of lecture and discussion. Students are asked to view four films (listed below) outside regular class hours, either in a group viewing or on their own, using viewing questions to help them study.

REQUIRED TEXTS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):

FOR PURCHASE:

Henderson, Gloria Mason et al. *Literature and Ourselves*. 5th edition. New York: Pearson Education, 2006. This is our main anthology for the course, used over the entire term.

FOR RENTAL OR GROUP VIEWING (NOTE: EDWARD SCISSORHANDS AND THE PRINCESS BRIDE ARE AVAILABLE FOR CHECKOUT AT THE VANGUARD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY):

Perelman, Vadim (director, writer, producer), *House of Sand and Fog* (film, 2003). Drama concerning a clash of cultural expectations centered on the purchase and occupancy of a family home. Stars Ben Kingsley and Jennifer Connelly.

Burton, Tim (director, writer, producer), *Edward Scissorhands* (film, 1990). Cultural allegory and critique following the fortunes and misfortunes of an “unfinished” hero. Stars Johnny Depp and Winona Ryder.

Reiner, Rob (director). *The Princess Bride* (film, 1987). Classic fairy tale. Stars Carey Ewles and Robin Wright Penn.

Allen, Woody (director). *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (film, 1986). A morality film about world views and how we respond to them; connects to and comments on Greek Tragedy. Stars Martin Landau, Woody Allen, and Allen Alda.

PREREQUISITES:

None.

RELATIONSHIP TO CURRICULUM:

Meets one of the junior-level 3-unit Core Curriculum requirements, except for English majors.

Notes and Policies

Who I am: After spending 12 years at North Park University in Chicago as professor of English and Dean of Undergraduate Studies and a year at Biola University in La Mirada, I joined Vanguard in fall 2005 as Assistant Provost and Professor of English. I'm currently writing two books: a novel (in progress), and a book about Christian Literature with Brazos (Baker) Press (due out in October). I also publish essays from time to time, and I try to play guitar. I'm married to a family practice physician (in her third year of residency), and we have three boys. We attend the small, intimate Saddleback Community Church of Lake Forest.

My expectations of you: I'm expecting everyone enrolled in our course to attend without fail (see statement on attendance below), do the reading and reading questions in time for class, complete the papers and exams as scheduled, and participate. Class discussion is just that: discussion. This means listening and speaking with respect to others. I'll call on anyone not expressing civility to the other participants and, if the problem is not resolved, I'll ask them to leave the course.

Writing Center: For the essay assignments, you can get help with your writing in the campus writing center, also on the second floor of Scott. It's a place to go for feedback on drafts and for writing help.

Questions, problems, discussions: Come in and see me in my office, or send me an email.

Plagiarism: The following, from the *Student Handbook*, is applied rigorously in this course:

Academic dishonesty, either cheating or plagiarism (presenting as one's own, the words or opinions of others), is regarded as a serious violation of both the academic and moral standards of VUSC. Dishonesty in a minor class assignment or test can result in loss of credit for the assignment, test, or even the entire course. Dishonesty in a major assignment or examination can result in immediate loss of credit for the course and referral to the Vice President for Student Affairs....

A student commits plagiarism if submitted as his/her work:

- *Part or all of an assignment copied from another person's assignment, notes or computer file.*
- *Part or all of an assignment copied or paraphrased from a book, magazine, pamphlet or website.*
- *A sequence of ideas transferred from another source which the student has not digested, integrated and reorganized, and to which he/she fails to give proper acknowledgement.*

Plagiarism is simply not worth the risk. It runs counter to your purposes here—spiritually and intellectually.

Attendance: Discussing literature works better in communities, so I pay attention to attendance and class participation. Attendance is non-negotiable; the first two unexcused misses are worth two points each, and each miss after that equals a loss of five points. The university policy for attendance in lower-division classes is that students who miss more than one fifth of the scheduled class meetings in a course receive an "F" as a course grade. In our class, that means that anyone who misses 6 or more class meetings fails the course.

Late Work: Students are to complete and submit all examinations and written assignments on-time; late work is penalized. If you know that you will miss an examination date, it is your responsibility to schedule your exam for an earlier date.

Schedule of Class Meetings

- 1-9 Introduction to the course; introduction to short fiction, in-class reading of “The Prodigal Son”
1-11 Lahiri, “A Temporary Matter” (377); protagonist, antagonist, structure, symbol and meaning
- 1-16 Walker, “Everyday Use” (136); Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephants” (356)
1-18 Malamud, “Angel Levine” (1240); Roth, “The Conversion of the Jews” (1254)
- 1-23 Excerpts: on O’Connor’s Christian Fiction (1374, 1376); “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (1344)
1-25 Cade Bambara, “Raymond’s Run” (1266); Tan “Heart” (818)
- 1-30 Fiction discussion: de Roulet, “Dinosaurs” (photocopy)
2-1 Short paper due; introduction to poetry
- 2-6 An introductory group of poems (photocopies)
2-8 Collins, “Forgetfulness” (684) and “Poem” (1114); Roethke, “My Papa’s Waltz” (155)
- 2-13 Frost, “Design” (669), Millay, “Sonnet 42” (414); Donne, “Holy Sonnet 14” (1283)
2-15 Shakespeare, sonnets 73, 116, 130 and 138 (pp. 663, 391 and 392)
- 2-20 Hopkins, “God’s Grandeur” (1289); Brodsky, “December 24, 1971” (1300)
2-22 Review
- 2-27 Midterm Examination**
3-1 Introduction to the creative essay; Didion, “On Going Home” (64)
- 3-6 Anne Lamott and Donald Miller, selected essays (photocopies)
3-8 LeGuin, “The Child and the Shadow” (1058); Plato, “Allegory of the Cave” (1214)
- 3-12 -> 3-16 No class meetings—spring recess**
- 3-20 Introduction to Drama; Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* (1303)
3-22 Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* (1303)
- 3-27 Wilson, *Fences* (178)
3-29 Wilson, *Fences* (178)
- 4-3 Hamlet (any edition)
4-5 Hamlet (any edition)
- 4-10 Stoppard, *The Real Inspector Hound* (1118)
4-12 Short paper due; introduction to film
- 4-17 *The Princess Bride*
4-6 *Edward Scissorhands*
- 4-24 *House of Sand and Fog*
4-26 *Crimes and Misdemeanors*
- 5-1 Final Examination, Tuesday, 1:00 – 3:00 pm, Heath 105**

REVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Two short papers, reading notes, a midterm examination and a final examination measure student learning. Reading assignments are listed on the course schedule for the day they will be discussed in class. Read ahead appropriately