

**ENGLISH 104 SYLLABUS
INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE: FICTION**

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Office Hours:	T/R 4pm & by app't @ NSH 203
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Class Time:	TR: 1:00-2:20pm
Room:	NSH 210
CRN:	30611
Texts required:	None. All our material is supplied here on our Moodle website.
Prerequisites:	WR 121. You should have WR 121-level writing and thinking skills to succeed in this or any other Literature class. If you have not, see me and arrange for appropriate help.

Course Description:

Hello, and welcome to all of you. The goal of this class is to bring fiction to life—to help you enjoy, interpret, and reflect on, and understand the process of writing fiction.

To begin, let's start to think about issues that are relevant to you. While good stories have something to say and can entertain us with their message and with the skill with which they are assembled, an important question is this: are they just entertainment? Or do they address the same issues that we as men and women struggle with—the indeed humankind has always struggled with—love, power, identity, ambition, spirituality, conformity, individual identity, fame, money, death, failure, politics, fear? What issues are important to you?

Here are some other questions I'd like to look at with you: Is fiction helpful and relevant, or is it just a form of entertainment? How can we interpret a story so that we don't spoil our enjoyment of it through "over-analyzing" it? How can we see the issues in our own lives reflected in what we read, and, through an historical perspective, gain wisdom on how to live?

Here's another question I'd like to explore with you: "What matters most—the author's intent, or our response?"

In order to understand these issues, and to understand the craft involved in writing fiction, we'll incorporate the workshop model for this class.

A Philosophy of Fiction:

What we are forced to look at in the stories by Munro, Carver Oates, Chekov, and Hemingway—in most good literary fiction—is the discrepancy between inner lives and outer lives, between who we want to be and who we become, between the lives we want to live and the lives we feel we ought to live because the former are too chancy and the latter are endorsed by society, by family and friends.

The resonance for us as readers comes from a recognition in our own lives, as Joan Didion puts it, of the “apparently bottomless gulf between what we say we want and what we *do* want, what we officially admire and secretly desire, between, in the largest sense, the people we marry and the people we love.”

You'll notice that many divisions of art and fiction are artificial and arbitrary. The thematic components we look at under any author (family, the journey, self-discovery) can be seen in any other author. The groupings we've made here are no better or worse than any other, nor more meaningful. All good writing will share components, though some may highlight some over others for the sake of the style. Don't be tempted into seeing stories mainly in terms of groupings. And don't confuse the merely familiar with the superior. Put on your Sociological Imagination. The secret to reading texts effectively is to read everything you can that lends a new or different perspective to your understanding.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:¹ We will be formatting our work using the Chicago Manual of Style for this class (see page 13 of the Appendix and your handbook for details). You will have the opportunity to demonstrate our learning outcomes by accomplishing the following tasks:

1. **Author Interviews** or **Biographies** from the text to be read with a summary-response handed in Thursdays. I will not collect them but will score a Yes/No to indicate whether or not they are done. Only the “Yes” papers will be scored on Thursday. No late work, please. Use the Summary Response Template on our website. These 2-3 page reviews will be submitted with the Thursday class Feedback letter--BUT will be used as a springboard for Tuesday's class discussion, so have these papers done for Tuesday class.¹

¹ Author Interviews due for discussion and checked on Tuesdays. Hand these in Thursdays for grading with the feedback letter. Use the Summary Response Template on our website. These 2-3 page reviews will be used in during the Tuesday class and will be used as a springboard for class discussion.

2. **Creative Writing Exercises**: We'll do these in the class. Type them up and bring them to the next class to share. We'll read them together. You must be present in class for the credit.
3. **Weekly Feedback Letter**. (25 points each) Each of us will pick a single elements and read the story with that in mind and be prepared to talk about that aspect in the class discussion. A two-page (minimum) critique is to be handed in to me—or preferably uploaded on Moodle—each Thursday before we talk about the story.
4. **Fiction Quiz**: posted on our Moodle website, week 4.
5. **Final Capstone**: (100 points) This is a take-home assignment, and you will have one week to complete it. Due in week 10.

Upload your work through the Turnitin icon posted at the bottom of each week's section in our Moodle shell for the course.

Please read the work before class and examine its meaning closely. Do mark the pages in your texts. **Allow at least two hours of outside work for each hour of class** and be sure to have all assignments done before class. Your grade will reflect your preparedness. Word-process and double-space your work, and include your name, the class time, the instructor's name, and the assignment title and type at the top left of the first page of all tests and assignments. Refer to the Chicago Manual of Style for guidelines. All work is to be typed in #12 courier font.

Again:

Each Thursday, you will hand in one assignment for grading. It will consist of two parts: 1/ a feedback letter on the story of the week, and, 2/ attached to the back of that, a biography or interview analysis of the assigned reading.

Tuesday:

Bring your Summary Response (use the template provided on the Moodle website) or biography of the week to class. We will use these papers as a basis for our class discussion. I will not collect them but will score a Yes/No to indicate whether or not they are done. Only the "Yes" papers will be scored on Thursday. No late work, please.

We'll write a creative writing exercise based on the focus of the week and discuss these in class.

You must be present and involved on the activity to earn the credit (10 points).

Thursday:

Submit your weekly assignment for grading (25 points):

The feedback letter on the story of the week

The bio/summary on the author attached to the back of the feedback letter.

Tip:

The Story Feedback on the assigned story:

You will be responsible for turning in, on the dates specified, a thorough, thoughtful, two-page minimum, typed (double-spaced in courier #12 font) analysis of the assigned section or story from the textbook.

For the written critique, allow at least two readings of the story, then choose one of the following topics, and be prepared to talk about it. **Please Note:** this is not to be a critique or review of these published stories. It is to be an example of your own close reading abilities and your understanding of the relationship between a writer's craft and your interpretation of the story's subject or psychological conflict.

In your analysis, use direct quotations from the text to support and explore your topic. I'll evaluate these based on 1) the quality of your questions or inquiry; 2) open, but careful thinking; 3) clarity of presentation; 4) specifics from the text for support.

Written Analysis Topics For The Readings:

Pick ONE of the following for your analysis and use a different topic for each story.

1. The handling of time.
2. Place and imagery.
3. Voice and/or point of view.
4. "Focal" character.
5. The role of a minor character.
6. Humor.
7. Mythological (or other literary) motifs.
8. The pattern of the sentence.
9. The art of the dialogue.
10. The pattern of the paragraph.
11. Transitions.
12. The use of formal repetition.
13. The opening.
14. The pattern of development.
15. The dramatic moment or crisis—is there one?
16. Ending or resolution.
17. Poe's Single Effect.
18. The initial problem and its development.³

Attendance: It's important that you attend all classes. *Every class will entail points towards your grade.* Much of the work will be in-class writes and discussion (class participation)—and you'll be graded on this. The revision process occurring in class is crucial in developing skills in

writing, and your team members will depend on you. Also, material is covered in class that is not in your texts.

Course Outcomes for ENG 104

Students who successfully complete ENG 104 will be able to:

1. Analyze stories using the major elements of literary fiction (plot, characterization, conflict, setting, point of view, irony, and symbolism),
2. Interpret and evaluate works of literary fiction based on analysis of their aesthetic, figurative, and narrative elements.
3. Understand traditional methods of literary analysis (mythological, psychological, sociological, or gender-based) at a basic level and apply them to form interpretations and evaluations of literary fiction.
4. Articulate how reading literary fiction affects their understanding of themselves and the range of human experiences and questions that fiction explores.
5. Interpret and engage in literature and the arts, making use of the creative process to enrich the quality of life.
6. Critically analyze values and ethics within a range of human experience and expression to engage more fully in local and global issues.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1: Course Introduction: *Who Writes This Stuff, and Why?* Syllabus and overview

Tuesday What is short fiction and who writes it? Who cares?

- Fiction through the ages has been more than an art form. People have died for writing it. Russia shot writers until the 1970's, and some South American countries until the 1980s. What was that all about? What modern writer in England had a contract on his life by a national government for writing a novel? Name the novel, the writer, the country, and the circumstances.

Thursday: Poe's Single Effect and the short story.

- The Heart of the story
- A little bit about you: What's your name; where do you come from; where are you going; what time is it?
- Writing Exercise #1: Who Speaks? Point of View. An autobiographical short-short story. First person POV, then a rewrite from third person POV. Think of a significant event that stands out in your life, and write a one-page story about it. Then rewrite it in the 3rd person POV: "he" or "she." Give the character a name.

Week 2:

Story: Ray Bradbury's *The Veldt*.

Interview or Biography: *Edgar Allan Poe: The Philosophy of Composition* (p 1659)

Tuesday: *Summary Response discussion from Writers on Writing: Poe: The Philosophy of Composition*

- Creative Writing Exercise: Seeing is Believing. Significant detail.
- Also read (but do not write on) An Interview: Katherine Anne Porter, which follows the Poe essay.

Thursday • Feedback letter due with your work from Tuesday attached. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to talk about it. We'll discuss these stories using the workshop model.

- We read and share the polished freewrites. Hand both versions in to me.

Week 3:

Story: Raymond Carver's *Cathedral*

Interview or Biography: *Raymond Carver: On Writing*

Tuesday • *Summary Response discussion from Writers on Writing: Raymond Carver: On Writing*

- Creative Writing Exercise: Characterization. Appearance and action.

Thursday • Feedback letter due with your work from Tuesday attached. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.

- We read and share the polished freewrites.
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Week 4:

Story: Kate Chopin's *The Story of an Hour*

Interview or Biography: [Henry James. *The Art of Fiction* \(1643\)](#); [Tolstoy: *What is Art?* \(1665\)](#)

Tuesday • *Summary Response discussion from Writers on Writing: Henry James. [The Art of Fiction](#); Tolstoy: [What is Art?](#)*

- Creative Writing Exercise: Place and Atmosphere.

Thursday • Feedback letter due with your work from Tuesday attached. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.

- We read and share the polished freewrites.
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Week 5:

Story: Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*

Interview or Biography: [Doris Lessing. *An Interview*](#)

Tuesday • *Summary Response discussion from Writers on Writing: Doris Lessing. [An Interview](#)*

- Creative Writing Exercise: Theme. Ideas and morality.

Thursday • Feedback letter due with your work from Tuesday attached. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.

- We read and share the polished freewrites.
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Week 6:

Story: D. H. Lawrence's *The Horse Dealer's Daughter*

Interview or Biography: [D.H. Lawrence. *Why the Novel Matters*](#)

Tuesday • *Summary Response discussion from Writers on Writing: D.H. Lawrence. [Why the Novel Matters](#)*

- Creative Writing Exercise: [Is and is not](#). Symbol and allegory.

Thursday • Feedback letter due with your work from Tuesday attached. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.

- We read and share the polished freewrites.
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Week 7:

Story: Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*

Interview or Biography: *Alice Munro. [What is Real?](#); Joyce Carol Oates. [The Art and Craft of Revision](#)*

Tuesday • *Summary Response discussion from Writers on Writing: Alice Munro. [What is Real?](#)*

- Creative Writing Exercise: [Structure](#). Form and the arc of the story.
- Review Poe's article on [The Philosophy of Composition](#).

Thursday • Feedback letter due with your work from Tuesday attached. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.

- We read and share the polished freewrites.
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Week 8:

Story: Ernest Hemingway's *Hills Like White Elephants*

Interview or Biography: *Hemingway: [An Interview \(p. 1640\)](#); Busch: [On Hills Like white Elephants \(p.1685\)](#)*

Tuesday • *Summary Response discussion from Writers on Writing: Hemingway: [An Interview; Busch...](#)*

- Creative Writing Exercise: [Winging it](#). The writer as creator.

Thursday • Feedback letter due with your work from Tuesday attached. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.

- We read and share the polished freewrites.
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Week 9:

Story: Alice Walker's *Everyday Use*

Interview or Biography: [Flannery O'Connor: *The Nature and Aim of Fiction*](#)

Tuesday • [Summary Response discussion from Writers on Writing: Flannery O'Connor: *The Nature and Aim of Fiction*](#):

- Creative Writing Exercise: [The Full Monty](#). Using your arsenal.

Thursday • Feedback letter due with your work from Tuesday attached. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.

- We read and share the polished freewrites.

- **Final Exam** handed out Last day of class this week. You have one week to complete it.
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Week 10:

Story: Eudora Welty's *A Worn Path*

Interview: [Susan Dodd's "Eudora Welty's 'A Worn Path'", page 1687 of your text; Welty: An Interview p.1668](#)

Tuesday • Feedback letter due with your work from Tuesday attached. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss it.

- We read and share the polished freewrites.

Thursday **Final Exam due Thursday, your last day of class.**

Week 11

Finals Week. We meet for the class session on Tuesday

APPENDIX

Learning Outcomes: When you've successfully completed this ENG 104 class, you should be able to:

1. Understand and appreciate the range of human questions and issues that fiction (and most art) explores.
2. Assess the value of a story: did it accomplish something worthwhile? Did it create a worthwhile experience?
3. Understand the different critical methods of reading and interpreting fiction.
4. Apply an insight or awareness from your reading of stories to an issue or question you face in your life (that is, recognize how literature helps in understanding the human condition).
5. Form an overall impression of a story's meaning or impact.
6. Analyze the ways different structural elements help create meaning, and awareness.
7. Write and speak confidently about your own and others' ideas.
8. Demonstrate how literature enhances personal awareness and creativity.
9. In other words--interpret literary works, poetry, and some visual art, through critical reading.

COURSE THEMES AND CONCEPTS: To demonstrate our learning outcomes, you'll need to understand these Themes and Concepts:

1. Identifying author intent in fiction: the choice of message and form
2. Identifying and understanding the Human/Personal significance of literature
3. Applying a non-defensive posture in critical analysis
4. Understanding of fictive structure, meaning, and form.
5. Theme
6. Audience
7. Genre and form
8. Types of critical posture such as Feminist, Marxist, Freudian, etc. used in literary analysis

SKILLS: To reach our learning outcomes, you'll need to master the following skills:

1. Interpreting stories through critical reading
2. Analyzing literature using the above themes and concepts in writing responses
3. Researching sources and the use of bibliographic standards
4. Connecting fiction to our own lives and sharing these connections in discussions and writing
5. Understanding structure and meaning of fiction
6. Writing some fiction to appreciate form and process
7. Working collaboratively in groups

FORMAT: We will use the **Chicago Manual of Style** in this class, and all submitted work must follow that style correctly. There is a section in your handbook explaining it, and there is a template on the class website illustrating how it is done. Additionally, we'll circulate a handout

in class and go over the mechanics of setting it up. We'll hone this down in the first two weeks of class; after that, work that does not follow the style correctly will be returned ungraded for correction and late credit.

Classroom Atmosphere: Writing is an intense process, a skill acquired through diligence and work. It is a personal act as well that demands honesty, focus, and openness. To help each other in this process, it's important that an attitude of civility, a habit of positive suggestions, and a posture of support be the rule.

Grades:

A—90-100

B—80-89

C—70-79

D—60-69

A = You perform consistent and excellent work on time. You come to class having read the material actively and thoughtfully. Your writing makes insightful connection between the literature and the issues involved.

B = You show consistent work, but you may not have always understood the literature and your writing might not express clarity all the time. Minor errors impede the writing.

C = Also means consistent work, but you have occasionally struggled with the reading and your writing shows recurring errors. You missed an occasional assignment.

D = You fall behind, miss an assignment, and attempt to turn in work late. You attend class irregularly and do not contribute to class or group work.

F = You complete less than 2/3rds of the work. Most students fail because they stop trying or don't seek help before it's too late.

Y = Means you complete so little work (less than 25%) that there is no basis for a grade.

Disability statement:

If you have emergency medical information for your instructor, need special arrangements to evacuate campus, or have a documented disability, please meet with your instructor, by appointment, no later than the first week of the term, to discuss your needs and present your ODS accommodation letter. If you have a documented disability that will impact you at college and you have yet to seek accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) for intake and to document your disability with LBCC. Only students who document a disability and present an accommodation letter to an instructor are entitled to academic accommodation. Each term, when you register for classes, and at least 2-3 weeks prior to the start of the term, submit

your “Request for Accommodations” form to ODS. During Week 1, pick up letter for your instructors and deliver in person to each instructor during office hours or by appointment. Instructors may need time to arrange your accommodations. ODS may be reached from any LBCC campus/center by email to ODS@linnbenton.edu or by calling 917-4789. Letter pickup is available at each LBCC campus/center. Additional instructional services beyond classroom instruction and instructor consultations are available for all students at the Learning Center and the Support Lab at HO-114.

Waitlist Policy:

Students who are registered but not present for the first class, unless they have given the instructor prior notice, will be dropped from the class and their place assigned to students on the waitlist.

Late Work Policy:

Late work is actively discouraged unless critical circumstances justify an exception. There is no guarantee that late work will earn a grade more than “excused.”

1 PLEASE NOTE:

1. You are responsible for all the material that is assigned in the text as outlined in your syllabus.
2. You can be tested on any of this material at any time once it’s due.
3. You are also responsible for material handed out, discussed, or lectured on during class, so take notes and ask questions about issues that elude you.