English 260 Benedict

T/Th. 11:15-12:55 Fall 2020

**INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY STUDIES**

**SYLLABUS (subject to adjustment)**

**Note: you are responsible for all the information on this syllabus; please keep it handy.**

**IF ZOOM COLLAPSES, PLEASE CHECK MOODLE FOR IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS.**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Reading and writing about literature is an experience in finding and expressing meaning in powerful language: joy, confusion, compassion, grief, love, remorse and much, much more. This class is designed to introduce students to the ways in which authors express this beauty and meaning in all genres of literature, including poetry, drama, prose fiction, satire, and song, and to enable them to explore and to express cogently their responses. We will examine all the elements that characterize different genres and analyze literature so that it yields the richest meanings. This is primarily a **discussion** class and serves as the entry course to the English Major. **Zoom participation is required on both video and audio, except for certain exercises and circumstances: please, no muting. However, we will NOT be staring at the screen for the entire hour+forty minutes; exercises will include break-out sessions, film clips, stretching and so forth.**

**1. TEXTS (assigned reading appears in blue in the syllabus):**

**ALWAYS bring the text/print out to our Zoom class discussions: since we examine the language in depth, you need to have it in front of you. Failure to bring it in whatever form will affect your grade**.

\*Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*

\*Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

\*William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

\*Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

\*Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*

\*Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*

\*Henry James, *Daisy Miller*

*\*Norton Anthology of English Poetry* (shorter edition; or print poems online)

\*Shirley Jackson, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*

\*Jane Austen, *Persuasion*

**2. ASSIGNMENTS:**

\*1. **Zoom attendance on video and audio with no muting**;daily reading notes (with suggestions in yellow); quizzes; occasional special written homework assignments in green, and participation in discussion. **Always** bring your thoughts and comments to the questions in the syllabus to class and **be prepared to discuss them**. **ALWAYS BRING THE PRINTED TEXT TO CLASSfailure to do so will affect your grade**. This means you will occasionally need to download and print, or to order from the library, certain texts (3/10).

\*2. **Three ESSAYS (in red!)**: two 3-4 pp. (2/10 each) and one 6-8 pp. (2.5/10)

\*3. **Memorization Quiz:** memorization and recital to the class of 14 consecutive lines of verse (folded into your participation grade), to be delivered consecutively over two class days so every student can perform).

\*4. **Oral presentation** on background material and interpretation of a text from the reading; included in participation grade. Mere use of Wikipedia means failure since the information is unreliable: information must come from a reputable academic source (.5/10).

**3. DAILY READING NOTES and HOMEWORK**: Students are expected to keep up with the daily reading, to keep notes on the themes, symbols, tone, meanings, and ambiguities of the assignments, and to **attend every class**. These questions and mini-assignments are designed to stimulate your thoughts, not to prescribe them, so please feel free to remark on different aspects of the text. Creativity and originality matter. More than **one** absence will result in a **lowered grade**. **READING NOTES should be completed for EVERY class session**. I may ask you to email me homework and reading notes ahead of time so that I can grade them. Note: **no reading notes ever may be submitted after class has started, so bring copies for your own use in the discussion.**

**4. QUIZZES**: Quizzes (aside from the memorization one) are entirely punitive, so let us avoid them by completing the assignments.

**5. ESSAYS**: Although suggested topics appear on the syllabus and will arise in class, students are **strongly encouraged** to construct their own topics provided that you clear them first with the Professor. CONTACT THE WRITING CENTER for help; try to discuss your essays with the Professor before submitting them. **Please email them to me in a rich-text form so that I can comment specifically on them as I read. All essays must** include a **bibliography** and **cite sources** accurately and fully (for reminders on how to do this, the Writing Center or look up the correct form in the *MLA Handbook* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*, or on the library homepage). **Plagiarismusing other peoples ideas and/or words, including your own from another course, without due acknowledgment--will result in immediate failure: IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO INFORM YOURSELF OF WHAT CONSTITUTES PLAGIARISM**. *Please attach your notes and* ***previous*** *essays to each new essay when you email them to me*.

**6. PRESENTATIONS:** Students in pairs (or threesomes) will develop a 10-15 analysis of a text from the course, including three analyses of the text from critics, to present to the class. Jeff Liszka, the Librarian for English, can help you to identify critical and historical sources. Presentations should include a **bibliography**, including original publication information and later criticism. **Students should email me a 1-2 pp. written account with this bibliography at the end of the class: DO NOT FORGET**. Presenters are expected to **generate discussion** by presenting questions to the class; audience members are expected to **provide feedback** to the presenters of at least 3 lines isolating virtues or flaws in the presentation (“great job!” won’t do). Students may elect to deliver a second presentation for extra credit.

CLASS PROTOCOL: ARRANGE A NON-DISTRACTING AND HAPPY WORK SPACE FROM WHICH TO ATTEND CLASS by removing enticements to distraction like phones, pamphlets, food etc.

1) You will receive a Zoom invitation before each class; please be sure to accept the link in time for the start of class.

2) Please turn ON your camera and audio.

3) Please choose “Gallery View” so we can all see each other in discussion. For this reason, big screens work best, so please try to use a computer rather than a ‘phone. During video clips, we will all watch my screen and then have pauses and discussion before returning to the clip.

4) Please do not check your email or phone during class any more than you would were we in a classroom (it is distracting and discourteous); we will have breaks during class that will allow you time to do this).

FURTHER COURSE INFORMATION:

**7. ZOOM:** On video and audio participation in all class sessions, occasionally recorded.

**8. LATE POLICY**: Class assignments, quizzes, reading journals, and/or revisions will **NEVER** be accepted late, nor made up: you must furnish a deans note to be excused from a late penalty. **There are no exceptions.** Essays are due via email at the beginning of the class and will be docked 1/3 of a grade for every day they are late, starting with the due date. Thus, if you submit an essay rating a B after class has begun, it is already 1 day late and will receive a B-. However, if you submit/email it by 4:00 p.m. that same day, it will still receive a B-; the following day, it will receive a C+ and so on. **PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS LATE TO FINISH AN ESSAY** since it is already late, and your entrance disrupts class. Instead, email it to me later that same day, after class. **Note: graded essays cannot be returned until all have been submitted**, so your late essay prevents everyone else from getting back their own papers.

**9. GRADING:** A=excellent: insightful, original, ambitious, rhetorically elegant and persuasive, well argued, developed and proven, flawless in grammar, punctuation, spelling and usage. B=very good: thoughtful and engaging, technically flawless but a little under-developed or flawed in argumentation, organization etc. C=a fair effort, but marred by errors in the categories cited above. D=inadequate in any one or several of the above categories. F=failure. **You are STRONGLY encouraged to go to the Writing Center for help on your essays**.

**10. REVISIONS**: **ONLY** essays that 1) are submitted on time, and 2) receive a failing grade (D+ or lower) are eligible for revision. Students must meet with the Professor to determine whether revision is appropriate, and if so must submit it *with the original essay* by the final day of class.

**11. OFFICE HOURS**: **By appointment only**. Please email me to set up an appointment.

**12. ACCOMMODATIONS**: students requiring special accommodations should provide the Professor with a letter or email copied to Ms. Lori Clapis (Lori.Clapis@trincoll.edu).

**13. GENDER PRONOUN PREFERENCE**: Please inform the Professor of your preferred gender pronoun; mine is she/her.

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

(Subject to change)

WEEK ONE: Tues. Sept. 8: Introduction. Adrienne Rich, Aunt Jennifers Tigers and Jusef Komunyakaa Facing It

Thurs. Sept 10: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Reading notes: what is the significance of the setting? How would you characterize the narrator? **1-page, double-spaced essay due, analyzing any one symbol in the story: please email it to me. Ungraded.**

WEEK TWO: Tues. Sept. 15: William Shakespeare, Sonnets 18 and 130; e.e. cummings, next to of course god america i and since feeling is first.*.* Reading notes: what is the tone of each poem? How do the two Shakespearean poems differ, and which is the more persuasive love poem, in your view? What symbols appear? What is the significance of the form of the poems by e.e.cummngs? how do they enhance/detract from the content? **Remember to bring your reading notes to class today and *every day of class*. Sign up for presentations: choose two preferred dates.**

Thurs. Sept. 17: Robert Browning, My Last Duchess” and Jonathan Swift, A Beautiful Young Nymph. Reading notes: Who is speaking in each poem and how do you know? What is the context of each poem, and why does it matter? How does each speaker regard the subject? What is/are the satiric target(s) of Swift’s poem? Please identify two key themes and two key symbols, and explain their significance

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WEEK THREE: Tues. Sept. 22: Andrew Marvell, To His Coy Mistress and Paul Muldoon, From His Mistress Going to Bed. **Make sure to look up all the words you dont know, write down their definitions and bring them to class**. **Homework: 1) Bring your own sheet marking the metrical feet of the first verse paragraph of To His Coy Mistress and 2) please write one paragraph discussing a symbol from any one of the poems we have read so far and make it as perfect as possible: we will discuss it in class.** Reading notes: is “To His Coy Mistress” a persuasive poem? Why/not? What is the significance of the symbols in each poem, and how do they characterize the speaker? Is Muldoon’s poem an effective response? How/not? **Presentations begin.**

Thurs. Sept. 24:Matthew Arnold, Dover Beach and Anthony Hecht, The Dover Bitch. Reading notes: does the historical context (the date and the international circumstances) of Arnold’s poem matter to its meaning, and if so how? What are the major symbols and poetic devices? Is Hecht’s poem a cheap joke at Arnold’s expense, or making a real point? Is it feminist or not? **Discussion of student-written paragraphs and essay topics for the essay due in a week in break-out sessions.**

WEEK FOUR: Tues. Sept. 29: T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” Reading notes: what is the point of the epigraph (and what does it say)? What allusions appear in the poem, and why are they there? How would you characterize the speaker? What is his problem and what does he want? **Continued discussions of student paragraphs and ESSAY TOPICS. FIRST SET OF RECITALS FOR THE MEMORIZATION QUIZ: recital in class of at least 14 consecutive lines of verse from any of the poems from class (one whole sonnet or a section from one of the longer poems): more will gain you more credit.**

Thurs: Oct. 1: : William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Acts 1 and 2. Reading notes: What is the significance of the opening scene? How are the characters related to one another? How do Caliban and Ariel differ? How are they alike? Discussion of essay topics. **REMAINDER OF RECITALS FOR THE MEMORIZATION QUIZ: recital in class of at least 14 consecutive lines of verse from any of the poems from class (one whole sonnet or a section from one of the longer poems): more will gain you more credit. FIRST ESSAYS DUE: 3-4 pp. on any poem(s) read in class so far. Suggested topics include:**

\*Compare/contrast the depiction of nature in Shakespeare’s sonnets #18 and #130.

\*Compare/contrast the depiction of love in Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress” and T.S. Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (this is a difficult but rich! topic)

\*Analyze the way the imagery exposes the speaker in Browning’s “My Last Duchess”

\*Analyze the speaker in Eliot’s “Prufrock”

\*Compare/contrast the depiction of sexuality in “Prufrock” and “To His Coy Mistress’ or “From His Mistress Going to Bed.”

\*Analyze the imagery in “Prufrock” and the way it illuminates themes in the poem.

WEEK FIVE: Tues. Oct. 6: William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Acts 3 and 4. Reading notes: how do the different characters see the island? what central themes and symbols appear? What is the purpose of Caliban in the story in terms of plot, theme and symbol? Homework: Write a 1-page analysis of any peripheral character in the play: how does s/he illuminate the themes in the play? Be prepared to discuss this in class.

Thurs. Oct. 8: finish *The Tempest* and read all of Henry James, *Daisy Miller* Reading notes: does Prospero change during the course of *The Tempest*? What do you think will happen when he returns home? Is there a lesson in this play for the audience? What are the various causes for Daisy’s fate? What is the role of the narrator in *Daisy Miller*? Is he reliable, responsible, objective, evasive?

WEEK SIX: Tues. Oct 13: Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw* (first half). Reading notes:

What is the function of the opening section? Who is Douglas, and what is his structural function in the story (i.e. why does James have him there at all?) Bring a list of 5 words and their definitions from the story that you hadnt previously known. Find a passage that illuminates the narrator’s personality. Prepare essay topics for your second essay due next week, with relevant questions, passages, quotations etc: we shall spend time discussing these (ideally in some detail) in class.

Thurs. Oct 15: finish *The Turn of the Screw*. Reading notes: Analyze Miss Jessel: why does she wear black? What did she do? What happened to her? Why is she a ghost (if she is)? Analyze Miles: what did he do? Is he “normal”? is he evil? Homework: please find an example in the text of an ambiguous passage that might either confirm or disprove the existence of the ghosts, and be prepared to discuss it in class.

WEEK SEVEN: Tues. Oct. 20: Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*: read first half to approx p. 127 (Big Ben struck the half-hour) Please also read my “Introduction to *Mrs. Dalloway,”* which I have posted on Moodle. Reading notes: why do Miss Kilman and Clarissa dislike each other? What is the significance of the setting, the season, the time? How would you characterize Clarissa and do you like her? Why/not? Homework: bring a list of 5 words and their definitions from the story that you hadnt previously known and a list of symbols you noticed and what themes they suggest. **SECOND ESSAYS DUE: 3-4 pp. on *The Tempest* or any prose work read in class so far; please include my comments from your first essay. Suggested topics include:**

\*Compare/contrast Prospero, Alonso and Caliban as rulers (or just analyze one)

\*Analyze the natural imagery in *The Tempest* and explain what it suggests about the relationship of mankind to nature and/or the supernatural

\*Analyze the role of magic in *The Tempest* and explain why Shakespeare uses it

\*Analyze the narrator or Daisy in *Daisy Miller*

\*Argue for or against the sanity of the governess in “The Turn of the Screw”

\*Analyze the depictions of sexuality in *The Turn of the Screw*

\*Compare/contrast the narrators of “The Yellow Wallpaper” and *The Turn of the Screw*

Thurs. Oct. 22: finish *Mrs. Dallowa*y. Reading notes: please bring 5 more new words and definitions from the story. What does the party symbolize? What does Clarissa think Septimus “has” that she does not? Does Septimus win or lose at the end? Does Clarissa?

WEEK EIGHT: Tues. Oct. 27: Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, first half. Reading notes: please bring a list of words and their definitions from the story that you hadnt previously known. What is the significance of the opening? What metaphors, symbols and themes appear?

Thurs. Oct. 29: finish *Heart of Darkness* and read Chinua Achebe, “An Image of Africa: Racism in Chinua Achebe’s *Heart of Darkness*,” which you may find online. Reading notes: analyze Kurtz: how is he like/unlike Marlow? What is the role (symbolically, not literally) of the Intended in the story? Homework: bring a list of 5 words and their definitions from the story that you hadnt previously known, and a page-long argument supporting or opposing (or nuancing) Chinua Achebe’s argument to discuss in class.

WEEK NINE: Tues. Nov. 3: ZOOMING SESSION with Mr. Jeff Liszka, the Librarian for English, to find THREE sources for your final essay, DUE NEXT WEEK. Discussion of student essay topics.

Thurs. Nov. 5: read all of *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*. Reading notes: do the Blackwoods triumph or not at the end? What changes the villagers’ behavior? Discussion of upcoming final essays.

WEEK TEN: Tues. Nov. 10: Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, finish the play. Reading notes: please write a one-paragraph analysis of any one joke in the play, explaining CAREFULLY what makes it funny. THIRD ESSAYS DUE: 6-8 pp. analysis of any text from the class except those you have previously written about for earlier essays. This essay should employ at least 3 sources of historical information and/or literary criticism from your library research; please attach my comments from your last two essays.

Thurs. Nov. 12: final day of class. General celebrations.