

## Literary Analysis for English Majors

ENG 307 Spring 2016

Engleman D266, 2:00-3:15 MW

Dr. Joel Dodson

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Office Hours: M 9-10:30, Tu 1-3, W 9-10:30

### Why This Course

This is a course in how to read and study literature - poetry, fiction, drama - at the college level. Practically speaking, this means learning analytical skills: literal, figurative, formal, and structuralist modes of close reading, and the terms and concepts necessary for each. What this course is really about, though, is the art of *interpretation*. Literary interpretation (or “hermeneutics”) is the art of understanding how imaginative texts make meaning. It is a question not only of what a work *says*, but *what can be said* about it, exploring how literature “defamiliarizes,” or makes strange (to use the words of Russian formalist Viktor Shlovsky) the world around us. By the end of this term, you should be able to generate engaging well-supported interpretations, in writing and in person, and to have a command of the critical vocabulary to grow as an interpreter of literature in upper-level English courses.

### How to Do Well

- take careful notes and attend every class
- read *everything*, re-read it, and annotate it carefully (using pen or pencil)
- buy and keep a pocket dictionary with you, and use it
- memorize literary terms and concepts, recording them throughout the semester (using ELT and Bedford) in your glossary
- meet with Professor Dodson at least *twice* during office hours to discuss your work (first meeting is required in Week 4)
- pay careful attention to feedback on your writing, and follow up on it (esp. Unit 1 Mini-Essays)
- take charge of your writing - use the Writing Help folder in BB, and seek additional help if you have problems with your writing
- learn and master MLA (Modern Language Association) style for academic essays
- check your SCSU email regularly for updates, and Blackboard for any handouts or work missed
- become a *scholar* - embrace difficulty, participate in class earnestly, and take responsibility for your learning

And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*.

– Viktor Shlovsky, *Art as Technique*

### Texts

Alternate or electronic editions may not be used for this course; see Blackboard for complete book information. *Bring starred items (\*) to every class.*

- \* S. Hamilton, *Essential Literary Terms* (Norton, 2006)
- William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. Rasmussen (Modern Library / RSA, 2010)
- Allison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (Mariner Books, 2007)
- The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, 3rd edn. (Bedford, 2009)

### Also:

- \* *Course Packet of Poetry and Short Fiction* - print entire PDF from Blackboard, and keep in Reader's Notebook (with Glossary / Exempla)
- \* MLA Style Sheet and English Style Guide (Blue Book)



## Major Assignments

See Blackboard (Assignments folder) for complete assignment information.

**Poetry Mini-Essays and Portfolio (25%)** – Two short essays (3 pp., 15%) on poetry, due Weeks 4 and 7, and a portfolio of revisions (10%) due Week 8.

**Measure for Measure Annotation & Presentation (10%)** - (i) Group presentation on a critical term we have studied and its “staging” in a speech or scene of *Measure for Measure* (5% of final grade); and (ii) An online annotation of a speech from *Measure for Measure*, due after Spring Break, using the OED, independent research, and the online tool *Hypothesis* (5% of final grade)

**Fiction Essay (25%)** - A final essay (5 pp. min.) on fiction will be due at the end of the semester in Unit 3; final essays must be your best written work and will be graded by other professors in the English Department.

**Final Exam (20%)** - A comprehensive exam, administered to all Spring 2016 sections of ENG 307, on critical terminology and close reading. See course schedule below for date / time.

## Ongoing Assignments

### Blackboard Posts, Reader’s Notebook (Annotations and Glossary), and Quizzes (20%)

- Weekly Blackboard posts on literary “problems” – interpretive issues, questions, or puzzles – in our assigned readings; worth 50 points each if completed fully and on time
- The Reader’s Notebook is a three-ring binder with your course packet, which you will use to annotate your readings and compile a glossary. Notebooks will be checked periodically for progress.
- Regular short-answer quizzes at the beginning of class on terms and concepts covered in *Essential Literary Terms*, class lecture, or other assigned readings; worth 10 points each

## Being There (Attendance, etc.)

*Come to every class.* Being here means participating, being engaged, not using cellphones, not being disruptive (leaving early, taking excessive bathroom breaks, etc.). Always have your texts. If you don’t or you haven’t done the reading, take the absence and do the reading in the library or at home.

If you are absent, you are responsible for any material you have missed; reading quizzes may not be re-taken. *Do not email me to ask what you missed.* Check Blackboard for handouts or assignments distributed, or come visit me during office hours.

An attendance sheet will be distributed at the beginning of class. If it’s already collected by the time you arrive, you’re late. Don’t interrupt class. Tell me after class that you were here.

*After six absences you may fail the course.* More than three absences will diminish your final grade. Please see me if you have a chronic illness or emergency situation that makes attending class this term a problem. *Otherwise, be thoughtful in managing your own attendance.*

## Snow and Ice

Face it - there tend to be weather cancellations at SCSU in the spring semester. Here’s our rule: if the university is open, we will have class. If the university is closed, do this: (i) monitor email / Blackboard Announcements for any class updates, and *continue with the scheduled readings in the syllabus for the next class*; (ii) if we miss two or more classes in a row (or three or more total for the semester), await further instructions from Professor Dodson about alterations to the course schedule.

## Getting in Touch

Never hesitate to get in touch with me if you’re having questions, writing issues, or simply want to talk out some ideas about the literature. I’m available. Here are the best ways to speak with me:

- *Email* - I normally reply to all emails as soon as I can between 7 AM and 7 PM; if you email after 7 PM, expect a reply by 7:30 AM the next morning
- *Office hours* – see times listed on front, or set up an appointment
- Catch me before or after class, in the hall, or when the door is open

## Additional Syllabus Information

*Late work policies, disability accommodations, class communication, and other information, as well as Writing Help and style guides, can be found in Blackboard.*

# Course Schedule

*Note:* These assignments and dates are subject to change, based on our progress throughout the semester. Any updates to the syllabus will be announced in class and posted in Blackboard.

## Unit 1 Poetic Interpretation: Language, Image, Form (Weeks 1-7)

	W 1.20	<i>Introduction:</i> Defamiliarizing the familiar Gaiman, <i>Instructions</i> and W. B. Yeats, “Adam’s Curse”	
		<b>Reading Literally and Figuratively</b>	
lyric poetry connotation denotation	M 1.25	<i>Theme and Variation</i> Jonson “On My First Son” and Plath, “Daddy” ELT: poetry (13-14), theme (154-5), imagery (83-6)	
diction, syntax theme imagery simile metaphor	W 1.27	<i>Figurative Language</i> Read: John Donne, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” ELT: simile and metaphor (32-8)	BB Post #1 due
personification synecdoche metonymy	M 2.1	<i>Figurative Language</i> Read: other Donne poems in CP ELT: personification, synecdoche, metonymy (39-42)	BB Post #2 due
enjambment end-stopped apostrophe	W 2.3	<i>Other ways of Playing with Language</i> Read: Marvell, “To his Coy Mistress” ELT: enjambment (204-5), figures of speech (62-4)	
		<b>Reading Poetic Form</b>	
meter rhyme	M 2.8	<i>Sound and Prosody</i> Read: “Come live with me...” sequence in CP ELT: Prosody (Meter and Rhyme, 198-217)	<b>Mini-Essay #1 (hard copy)</b>
metrical kinds stanzaic kinds stress caesura anaphora sonnet (Petrarchan & English)	W 2.10	<i>Sound and Prosody (cont. d)</i> Read: Whitman, “A Noiseless Patient Spider,” Dickinson, “A narrow Fellow in the Grass,” “There’s a certain Slant of Light,” Hughes, “Dream Variations” <i>Read also:</i> Alfred Corn, “Line and Stress” [CP] <i>* Do Scansion Exercise (see handout) for one poem in your reader’s notebook</i>	
blank verse free verse	M 2.15	<i>No Class – Presidents’ Holiday</i>	BB Post #3 due
	W 2.17	<i>The Elizabethan Sonnet</i> Read: Sonnets by Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare ELT: Poetic Form (Stanzas and Sonnet, 226-34) <i>* Do Scansion Exercise (see handout) for one sonnet in your reader’s notebook</i>	
	M 2.22	<i>Later Sonnets</i> Read: Sonnets by Donne, Milton, Keats, and Hopkins	BB Post #4 due
	W 2.24	<i>Modern Sonnets</i> Read: Sonnets by Millay, Bishop, and Winters ELT: Blank and Free Verse (234-44)	
	M 2.29	<i>Poetry Portfolio Workshop</i> (bring a copy of Mini-Essay #1 as well to class) Read: Begin Shakespeare, <i>Measure for Measure</i> , Act 1, scene 1	<b>Mini-Essay #2 (hard copy)</b>

## Unit 2 Dramatic Interpretation: Stage, Character, Speech (Weeks 7-9)

genre (comedy, tragedy) stage directions soliloquy aside setting character characterization foil irony	W 3.2	Shakespeare, <i>Measure for Measure</i> , Act 1, scene 2-4 (plus editor’s introduction) ELT: drama (1-7), speech (141-3), setting (150-2)	
	M 3.7	<i>Measure for Measure</i> , Act 2 ELT: character, characterization (125-32)	BB Post #5 due
	W 3.9	<i>Measure for Measure</i> , Act 3- Act 4, scene 2	<b>Poetry Essay</b>

Portfolio due

- M 3.14 *Measure for Measure*, Act 4, scene 3 – Act 5  
ELT: irony (44-7)  
W 3.16 **Staging Criticism Presentations** (location TBD)

\*\* *Spring Break – No Class M 3.21 or W 3.23*

**Unit 3 Narrative Interpretation: Story, Discourse, Context (Weeks 10-15)**

narrator, narration point of view (1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , omn., limited) focalization direct / indirect discourse plot, story analepsis prolepsis symbol epiphany allusion short story novel/novella bildungsroman	M 3.28	<i>Point of View</i> Read Bowen, “The Evil that Man Do-” [CP ] ELT: fiction (8-12), voice and point of view (112-24)	Shakespeare Annotation due (online)
	W 3.30	<i>Point of View</i> Re-read Bowen (all) ELT: dialogue (132-40)	
	M 4.4	<i>Plot / Story</i> Read: Melville, “Bartleby the Scrivener” [CP ]	BB Post #6 due
	W 4.6	<i>Plot / Story</i> Melville, “Bartleby” (cont.’d) ELT: structure (167-78), syntax	
	M 4.11	<i>Beginnings, Endings</i> Re-read Melville (assigned pages) ELT: symbolism (86-9), epiphany (102-4)	BB Post #7 due
	W 4.13	<i>Beginnings, Endings</i> Re-read Melville (assigned pages) and McCall, “The Reliable Narrator” [CP ]	
	M 4.18	<i>Voice and Discourse</i> Read: Diaz, “The Pura Principle” [CP ]	
		<b><i>Thinking about the “Literary”</i></b>	
	W 4.20	Bechdel, <i>Fun Home</i> , Ch. 1-3 ELT: allusion (74-5), bildungsroman (10)	Draft opening paragraph of Fiction Essay (with thesis) due
	M 4.25	Bechdel, <i>Fun Home</i> (assigned chapters)	Rough draft of Fiction Essay due (4-5 pp.)
	W 4.27	Bechdel, <i>Fun Home</i> (to end)	
	M 5.2	Roundtable Discussion on <i>Fun Home</i> : “What is the ‘literature?’” Read: Culler, “What is Literature, and Does it Matter?” [BB]	
	W 5.4	Class Conclusion and Final Review	<b>Final Essay Due</b>

**Final Exam – W 5/11 3-5 PM**

## Appendix A - ESSENTIAL LITERARY & RHETORICAL TERMS FOR ENGLISH 307

- **Genre and generic conventions**
  - Drama, Fiction, Poetry
    - Prominent Poetic Forms: Lyric & Sonnet
  
- **LITERAL vs. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**
  - **Denotation & Connotation**
  - Diction
    - Formal vs. Colloquial
    - Abstract vs. concrete
  - Syntax
  - Tone
  
- **FIGURES OF SPEECH & RHETORICAL EFFECTS**
  - **Imagery**
  - **Metaphor**
    - Simile
    - Metonymy
    - Synecdoche
    - Personification
  - **Irony**
    - Verbal irony
    - Dramatic irony
  - Paradox
  - Allusion
  - Symbolism
  - Tone (common definition)
  
- **Speaker vs. poet / narrator vs. author**
  
- **Narrative Point of View & Focalization**
  - 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>-person
    - 3rd-Person Omniscient
      - Intrusive vs. Objective Narrator
      - Limited Omniscient
  
- **Characterization**
- **Dialogue**
  - Direct vs. Indirect Discourse
  
- **Setting**
- **Plot vs. Story** (Story vs. Narrative Discourse)
  - flashbacks/analepsis, flashforward/prolepsis
  - Narrative discourse
  
- **POETIC SOUND EFFECTS**
  - **Scansion**
    - **Iambic Pentameter**
    - Accentual-Syllabic Meters: Metrical Feet & Line Length (concepts & practice)
    - **Substitution/variation**
    - End-stopped vs. enjambed lines
    - Caesura
  - Rhyme & Rhyme Scheme
  - slant rhyme
  - Stanzaic vs. Blank vs. Free Verse
  
- **THEME**
- **DRAMATIC CONVENTIONS**
  - Asides
  - Soliloquies
  - Stage directions