

ENGL 273G-4: The Art of Fiction
T/TH 11:00-12:15 PM
Spring 2017

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Course Wiki: <http://engl273g-shannon.wikispaces.umb.edu>

Course Description: Throughout this course, we will analyze and critique short stories and novels in order to learn critical reading and writing skills that are essential for success in the college setting as well as in life. We will spend time in class reviewing strategies for close reading and implementing those strategies in our writing. By using informal and formal assessments, students will gauge their level of comprehension and seek to close the gap on any misunderstanding both on their own and during class time. Students will also be introduced to literary theory and be able to apply a cursory knowledge of theory to papers, in-class writing assignments, and homework. Students will peer edit papers and apply their revision skills to final drafts. By the completion of this course, students will demonstrate oral presentation skills that are up to par with university standards. Finally, this course will help students successfully complete the WPE exam if it has not already been completed. Overall, by taking this course, students will gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for literature in all its forms.

About the Intermediate Seminar program

Intermediate Seminars offer students with 30 or more credits the opportunity to work on essential university capabilities in small-sized courses that are often thematic or problem-oriented and interdisciplinary in nature. Designed in part to help students prepare for the Writing Proficiency Requirement, Intermediate Seminars put special emphasis on critical reading, thinking, and writing. They focus on other essential capabilities as appropriate to the course and might therefore include attention to library research and information technology, collaborative learning, oral presentation, and academic self-assessment. Students who practiced reading, writing, and critical thinking in a First Year Seminar at UMass Boston will practice them at a more advanced level in the Intermediate Seminar.

IMPORTANT: Only ONE Intermediate Seminar may be taken for credit. If you have taken another 200G-level course in any department at UMB, you cannot receive credit for this one.

- **Prerequisites:** English 101, English 102, First Year Seminar (or waiver), and 30 credits. The First Year Seminar is automatically waived for students who enter UMB with 30 or more transfer credits. Because these are intensive reading and

writing courses, some students may find it helpful to enroll in CRW 221 to further develop their skills with college-level writing *before* taking an Intermediate Seminar. Discuss your situation with the instructor if you have any questions about these prerequisites or your readiness for the work in this course.

- **The Writing Proficiency Requirement:** Except for students in the College of Management, all UMass Boston undergraduates complete the University's Writing Proficiency Requirement through the Writing Proficiency Evaluation (WPE). The Writing Proficiency Requirement is not the same as the writing placement test you may have taken when you entered UMass Boston. The WPE can be met through either an examination or a take-home essay submitted along with a portfolio of papers written for UMB courses. See the WPR website for more details about the exam and portfolio options and dates: http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/undergraduate_studies/writing_proficiency. Students who have not already satisfied the WPR should arrange to take the exam or submit a portfolio shortly after completing this course.
- **Support services for Intermediate Seminar students:** The Academic Support Office offers both individual tutoring and drop-in workshops for students who need help with the critical reading, thinking and writing skills necessary for success in General Education courses such as this one. More information is available online (http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/academic_support/tutoring/rwssc/) or at their Campus Center office (CC1-1300). The Ross Center for Disability Services (CCUL-0211) provides accommodations and educational resources for students with demonstrated needs, as outlined on their website (<http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability/>). Should you be eligible for these services, you should contact the Ross Center right away so that their staff can help you identify appropriate accommodations in this and other courses. Finally, if it appears that you might not pass this Intermediate Seminar and if the instructor cannot figure out how to support your success in the course, the instructor might inform one of the University advisers working with the Student Referral Program. This strictly confidential program is part of an early warning system designed to help students address personal and academic difficulties that may interfere with their progress in the University.
- **Assessment of these courses:** In addition to course evaluation forms that are routinely administered at the end of each course at UMass Boston, Intermediate Seminar students are asked to complete a self-assessment questionnaire addressing their progress as critical thinkers and writers. Additionally, each term an assessment committee will look at randomly chosen student writing from a small sample of Intermediate Seminars. Please save all your writing in this course so that, if you are chosen, you will have your work available. The purpose of this evaluation is to improve the program and to improve particular courses as necessary, not to evaluate individual students. You may remove your name from your papers if you prefer to submit them anonymously.

- **Student plagiarism and classroom behavior:** Students are expected to abide by the University's Code of Student Conduct in all their classes at UMass Boston (http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/code/). Plagiarism is a particularly serious violation, as outlined in the Academic Honesty section of the code (section VI), and will not be tolerated in this class. In addition to the specific violations of student conduct itemized in section VII of the code, we urge all students to be mindful of broad standards of civility. Offensive and insulting behavior undermines the sense of community that the Intermediate Seminars strive to build. Class discussion and group projects can be productive only in a climate of respect for the opinions and beliefs of all. A healthy exchange about issues may include disagreement about ideas, but it must not demean the character or background of the individuals holding those ideas.

Classroom Etiquette:

- **Attendance:** Attending class, bringing the course materials, and arriving on time is crucial to your success in this course and to the success of the course in general. If you miss class, *you are responsible for making up the work and finding out what you missed* by contacting me or a classmate. **Missing more than six classes will result in a failing grade. Any student who misses more than six classes by the November 23rd withdrawal deadline will be recommended to drop the course. If you are late more than three times (more than 10 minutes), it will be counted as one absence.**
- **Participation:** Along with attendance, participation counts towards your grade for this course. This is because this class is centered around discussion, in-class writing and group work. If you miss class and/or do not participate in class you are negatively affecting the learning atmosphere of the class. All students must come to class **on time** and prepared to participate actively in individual, small group, and class-wide activities and/or discussions. This INCLUDES bringing texts and/or materials necessary for that class.
- **Late Work:** Assignments will only be accepted one session after the due date and will lose one letter grade. For example, if a paper is due on 4/18, you will have until 4/20 to turn it in; however, you will drop one letter grade. After that date, the paper will not be accepted. Presentations cannot be made-up. Extensions are possible, but not probable. Please see me well in advance of the due date if you need more time or are struggling with an assignment. Work will not be accepted after the last day of class. For the most part, I will not accept work that is emailed. I will accept written work by email if you know you will be absent; however, emailed work should still be passed in on time, i.e., by 12:30 PM, when our class begins.
- **Civility in and out of the classroom:** Every person should display tolerance and respect for one another, and for the class discussions. An educational institution is a unique cultural space: here, the open sharing of ideas is not only possible, but valued above all else. Intellectual exchange depends on showing

respect for your instructor and peers, taking responsibility for your own course contributions, and demonstrating a mature understanding that learning can involve disagreement over ideas and assessment. If you engage in uncivil behavior, such as making inappropriate comments to your professor or fellow students in the classroom, out of the classroom, or via email or social networking sites, you can be referred to the Chair of the English Department for sanctions that can include the lowering of your course grade. You can also be referred to the Dean of Students.

- **Plagiarism:** Students are expected to abide by the University's Code of Student Conduct in all their classes at UMASS Boston (www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/code/). The University takes plagiarism very seriously. Plagiarism is an act of academic dishonesty, and can include actions such as presenting another writer's work as your own work; copying passages from print or internet sources without proper citation; taking ideas off the internet, modifying them, and presenting them as your own; or submitting the same work for more than one course. ***Plagiarism will result in failure/and or dismissal from this course.*** Plagiarism cases will be referred to the Chair of the English Department. Also note that plagiarism can result in further academic sanctions such as suspension or expulsion.
- **Incompletes:** Incompletes are rarely offered, as they are reserved for students who are unable to complete a small portion of the course at the end of the term due to an extreme circumstance such as illness. Incompletes are not allowed to replace a significant amount of coursework or absences. If you are awarded an Incomplete, you must sign a contract with your instructor outlining the work to be done and work due dates. Although an INC automatically turns into an F after a year, your Incomplete work will typically be due before the year's end.
Incomplete policy:
http://www.umb.edu/registrar/academic_policies/incomplete_policy/.
- **Electronics:** I ask that there be no texting, tweeting, snapchatting, etc. while in class and please make sure phones are set to silent.

Required Texts:

The Handmaid's Tale, Margaret Atwood, ISBN 978-0-385-49081-8

The Namesake, Jhumpa Lahiri, ISBN 978-0-618-48522-2

OPTIONAL Texts:

Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction– 2nd edition, Jonathan Culler, ISBN 978-0-199-69134-0

Seagull Reader: Stories – 3rd edition, Joseph Kelly (Editor), ISBN 978-0-393-93821-0

*I will be providing PDF handouts of each short story and lit theory excerpt; however, these are great resources for literature students! If you think you may use in the future, consider adding both to your library.

Course Wiki: Please save the course wiki page under your favorites on your laptop, iPad, phone, etc. This is where I will post all assignments, handouts, and PDFs of reading assignments.

Course Requirements:

- **Journal Assignments (8)** You will receive a handout for each of the journal assignments. If you miss class and do not receive the assignment, you must contact me via email. The topics of each journal assignment relate to what we are discussing *at the time, and will be used for our class discussion on the day that it is due*. Journals are generally 2-3 page reflections on a given topic, must be typed (BUT- if you are having trouble with your printer or computer- **hand write it!!!** You will NOT be penalized) and are due at the **beginning** of class on the date noted. If you miss class, journals can be turned in via email **by** the start of the missed class. **Late journals will not be accepted.**
- **Writing Prompts (6)** From time to time, there will be a brief writing exercise, based on the day's reading/work. These will be administered at the beginning of the class, or will be handed out at the previous class, and will help focus both your reading and the day's discussion.
- **Reading Comprehension Quizzes (12)** These short quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class. They will vary in type throughout the semester as follows: 1.) Five short answer questions and a bonus question, graded in class. 2.) One (1) discussion question answered in groups. 3.) Short, written response to an essay question. These quizzes are meant to encourage students to engage in the reading while assessing if they have retained the information.
- **Workshop** Students will work in groups for a variety of reasons throughout the semester. Whether it be discussing the meaning of a short story or peer editing drafts, all students are expected to participate and be actively involved. A significant lack of participation will negatively affect your grade.
- **Formal Papers (3)** In addition to the somewhat informal journal/mini paper assignments, your formal papers are the best way to demonstrate what you have learned about literature and to showcase your ability to express your thoughts clearly and cohesively through written language. More information will be provided in class well before papers are due. Each paper will require a rough draft that needs to be peer edited during class. All assignments are due at

the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. A paper received after class is considered **late**, which will be reflected in the grade- one full letter grade lower each day. **Electronic copies of papers will be permitted as long as it is by the start of class.** You will be allowed to revise papers *once* if you wish. However, revisions are more than just correcting simple surface errors. All revisions must be returned **one week** after you received the assignment back. They should involve a rethinking about the subject matter and form of your paper. You may schedule an appointment with me for assistance. Calculating an **average of the revised and the original grades** will determine your final grade for that paper.

- **Final Presentation** A formal assignment explanation will be handed out toward the start of the semester. These final projects will allow you to creatively express your individual understanding of literature and literary studies. This acts as a reflective aspect of the course and entails both an oral presentation and a 3-5 page corresponding paper.

Course Grade Determination:

Paper #1 & Rough Draft: 20%

Paper #2 & Rough Draft: 25%

Final Presentation/Paper: 20%

Journal Assignments/In-class writing prompts/Quizzes: 25%

Attendance/Participation: 10%

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

The following schedule is a brief outline of the term's assignments, with the corresponding readings and subsequent due dates. What is shown may be modified throughout the semester; however, you will be given ample notice of any necessary changes. Please check your UMB email regularly as I will be sending you PDF's of additional readings and assignments as the semester progresses.

WEEK 1: Introduction to Course; Short Stories

- TU 1/24:** Welcome and introductions!
Overview of syllabus and assignment schedule
Read "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin; in-class writing activity
- TH 1/26:** Read "Hills Like White Elephants" by Ernest Hemingway & "What Are Stories?" (PDFs)
Journal #1 assignment distributed
*****ADD/DROP (1/30)**

WEEK 2: Short Stories [Identity]

- TU 1/31:** Read "Identity, Identification, and the Subject" and "A & P" by John Updike (PDFs)
Final Presentation assignment distributed
Sign up for Final Presentations!
- TH 2/2:** ***Journal #1 due***
Read "Sonny's Blues" by James Baldwin (PDF)
Writing Workshops on Identity

WEEK 3: Short Stories [Identity, cont.]

- TU 2/7:** Read "What You Pawn I Will Redeem" by Sherman Alexie (PDF)
Paper #1 assignment distributed

TH 2/9: Read "Rice" by Jhumpa Lahiri ([link](#))
Journal #2 assignment distributed

WEEK 4: *The Namesake*

TU 2/14: Read: *The Namesake* Pages 1-53 & "What is Theory" (PDF)
Reading Comprehension Quiz #1

TH 2/16 ***Journal #2 due***
Read: *The Namesake* Pages 54-96
Reading Comprehension Quiz #2
Journal #3 assignment distributed

WEEK 5: *The Namesake, cont.*

TU 2/21: ***Paper #1 Rough Draft due***
Read: *The Namesake* Pages 97-145
Reading Comprehension Quiz #3
Peer Editing Workshops for Drafts

TH 2/23: ***Journal #3 due***
Read: *The Namesake* Pages 145-192
Reading Comprehension Quiz #4
Journal #4 assignment distributed

WEEK 6: *The Namesake, cont.*

TU 2/28: ***Paper #1 due***
Read: *The Namesake* Pages 193-245
Reading Comprehension Quiz #5

TH 3/2: ***Journal #4 due***
Read *The Namesake* Pages 246-291
Reading Comprehension Quiz #6
Journal #5 assignment distributed

WEEK 7: Short Stories (Gender)

TU 3/7: Read "Boys" by Rick Moody & "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid (PDFs)

TH 3/9: *Journal #5 due*
Read "Boys and Girls" by Alice Munroe (PDF)

WEEK 8: SPRING BREAK

TU 3/14: *No Class*

TH 3/16: *No Class*

WEEK 9: Short Stories (Gender, cont.)

TU 3/21: Read "I Stand Here Ironing" by Tillie Olsen (PDF)
Paper #2 assignment distributed

TH 3/23: Read "The New Dress" by Virginia Woolf (PDF)
Writing Workshops on Gender/Sexuality
Journal #6 assignment distributed

WEEK 10: *The Handmaid's Tale*

TU 3/28: **Library visit!**
Read: *The Handmaid's Tale* Chapters 1-9
Reading Comprehension Quiz #7

TH 3/30: *Journal #6 due*
Read: *The Handmaid's Tale* Chapters 10-17
Reading Comprehension Quiz #8
Journal #7 assignment distributed

WEEK 11: *The Handmaid's Tale*, cont.

- TU 4/4** **Paper #2 Rough Draft due**
Read *The Handmaid's Tale* Chapters 18-24
Reading Comprehension Quiz #9
Peer Editing Workshops for Drafts
- TH 4/6:** **Journal #7 due**
Read: *The Handmaid's Tale* Chapters 25-30
Reading Comprehension Quiz #10
Journal #8 assignment distributed

WEEK 12: *The Handmaid's Tale*, cont.

- TU 4/11:** Read: *The Handmaid's Tale* Chapters 31-39
Reading Comprehension Quiz #11
- TH 4/13:** **Journal #8 due**
Read: *The Handmaid's Tale* Chapters 40-46 + Historical Notes
Reading Comprehension Quiz #12

WEEK 13: Final Presentation Workshops

- TU 4/18:** **Paper #2 due**
Workshop day in preparation of Final Presentations
- TH 4/20:** **Final Presentations**
*** PASS/FAIL DEADLINE***
*** COURSE WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE***

WEEK 14: Short Stories (Satire/Comedy)

- TU 4/25:** Read "The Ransom of Red Chief" by O. Henry (PDF)
Final Presentations

TH 4/27: Read "The Machine That Won the War" by Isaac Asimov (PDF)
Final Presentations

WEEK 15: Short Stories (Fables and Medieval Lais)

TU 5/2: Read "The Interlopers" by Saki (PDF)
Final Presentations

TU 5/4: Read "Bisclavret" by Marie de France (PDF)
Final Presentations

WEEK 16: Wrap-Up!

TU 5/9: Return graded assignments; Course evaluations

