

Columbia College of Chicago, 600 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago IL 60605

Introduction to Literature, 52-1600-05 , Fall '01 Mon. 5:30-8:20 3 credits

This handout is required reading; it's your survival kit for the class. If anything is unclear, don't hesitate to ask questions.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR: Karen Osborne, Ph.D. Please call me Karen.

OFFICE: Room 300-Y, 3rd floor, 33 E. Congress

MAILBOX: English department common area, suite 300, 33 E. Congress.

☎PHONE: 312-344-8123. You can leave a message in voicemail anytime.

✉ Email: kosborne@popmail.colum.edu

Feel free to visit the Intro to Lit. website I created at

<http://www.colum.edu/undergraduate/english/literature/introlit/>

and my website at <http://www.kosborne.8k.com/classes.html>

OFFICE HOURS:

Mondays 12-12:30; 3:30-5:20

Thursdays 2-4 exc. 11/15 (and 2-3:15 10/18-11/8)

and by appt.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Kirszner and Mandell, *Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing*, Portable Edition, Harcourt, 2001.

Note: This edition is smaller than the Compact Edition. Be sure to buy the Portable Edition!

REQUIRED SUPPLIES

If you do not have access to a computer at home, you will need a 3 1/2 HD or DD IBM-formatted **computer disk** for saving your work when using the computer labs to write your papers. You will also need to purchase a **printer card**. You will also need a notebook with detachable pages for your journal, unless you prefer to keep your journal on a computer and print it out when you bring it to class.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

from the *Columbia College Chicago Catalog*: "Course introduces students to [the] genres of fiction, drama, and poetry. By studying important works by writers of culturally diverse backgrounds, students gain experience reading, analyzing, and interpreting literature.

[The] course establishes connections between literature and other areas of arts and communications; students are better prepared for their majors in these fields.

Prerequisite: English Composition I."

Why Literature?

A sensitivity to literature and language deepens our ability to enter into and participate effectively in the larger discourse arenas of life---whether in the world of the arts, government, business, media, education, or human relations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES (INTENDED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES)

“Students will 1) become familiar with one or more of the major forms of literature (poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction) and 2) be able to demonstrate that familiarity by being able to read and write critically about one of those forms (genres).”

If this course does its job, you will leave it capable of demonstrating your ability to read, analyze, and interpret literature. You will also leave it with the following:

1. The ability to demonstrate a critical understanding of and appreciation for literature when analyzing stories, poems, and plays.
2. The ability to understand and appreciate figurative language (metaphors, similes, and the like) in poetry, fiction, and drama.
3. The ability to understand, appreciate, and apply knowledge of plot, character, point of view, imagery, theme, setting, irony, tone, symbols and language when reading fiction, poetry, or drama.
4. The ability to develop a reasonable interpretation of a literary text and to support that interpretation with evidence.
5. The ability to identify common or culturally specific themes in literature by writers of different races, genders and ethnic backgrounds.
6. The ability to identify similarities between works of literature and other works of art or forms of communication.

ATTENDANCE

The official English Department absence policy states that “More than two absences in classes that meet once a week (and more than four in classes that meet twice a week) will affect your grade and can result in failure.”

Save your two absences for **emergencies** only---unusual illness, visits to hospitals, funerals, and other disasters. The third absence lowers your final grade one letter. The fourth absence means you fail the course, unless you have an ‘A’ average--then you’ll get a ‘D.’ The fifth absence means you absolutely fail the course. Calling to let me know you’ll be absent is nice, but it’s still an absence. I do not give makeup quizzes. Email is an ideal way to contact me if you can’t stop by during office hours. **When you are absent**, you are required to turn in whatever is due that week to my mailbox by 10:00 a.m. Thursday of that week. Keep up with the syllabus and be prepared when you return.

PUNCTUALITY

Each time you arrive more than ten minutes late to class (or leave more than ten minutes early), this will count as half an absence. Quizzes are given every week **ONLY** at the beginning of class, so try to be on time.

English Department Incomplete Policy

Incomplete grades can only be considered for students who are meeting the attendance requirements and passing the course, but are faced with an unexpected emergency beyond the last date to formally withdraw from the course. If these criteria are met, it is up to the instructor to determine whether an incomplete is issued. Work for an Incomplete Grade must be finished in the semester following the course for which it was issued.

Academic Integrity (from the online *Student Handbook*, Columbia College):

"Academic honesty is a cherished principle in the life of the College community. Students must adhere to this principle by understanding the nature of plagiarism, and by not plagiarizing materials; by refraining from the use of unauthorized aids on tests and examinations; by turning in assignments which are products of their own efforts and research; and by refusing to give or receive information on tests and examinations. Persons who violate these principles of simple honesty risk embarrassment, course failure, or disciplinary action."

(See <http://www.colum.edu/student-life/handbook/page04.html#Academic%20Integrity>.)

A student who submits a paper that in whole or part has been written by someone else or that contains passages quoted or paraphrased from another's work without proper acknowledgement has plagiarized. My advice: Avoid unintentional plagiarism by being sure that you acknowledge your sources whenever you use the words or ideas of other people, including your fellow students. Notice how I have quoted from and acknowledged the Student Handbook above. Help your fellow students with drafts by identifying weaknesses and suggesting where the development or analysis needs to be expanded, for example. Let the writer rewrite.

CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

I invite all of you to help us create an environment of respect and courtesy where different perspectives can be heard, where more outgoing classmates gently encourage quieter classmates to participate in dialogue. Please email me or see me in my office whenever you have insights to offer or suggestions for ways to enhance the classroom as a place where everyone can learn from each other. Also, please see me whenever you feel that I'm spending too much or too little time on something, when I'm boring you to tears, etc. Telling me this won't devastate my ego and I probably won't even bite your head off. I am here to help you learn, and if you're not learning, you and I need to find ways together that will work. You should also get to know your fellow students and stay in touch with them.

Of course, any behavior that interferes with learning will not be tolerated. Any student who is discourteous to another student or to the instructor, or who in any way tries to usurp the classroom for purposes other than learning, will be given an 'F' in the course. This is the only warning.

HOW TO SURVIVE THIS COURSE AND COLLEGE: TIME MANAGEMENT

For every hour in a college classroom, you need to budget TWO or more hours of study time *outside* of class. This class carries three credit hours. Therefore, you will be spending AT LEAST six hours per week *outside of class*. That's 9-12 hours per week *for this class alone*. Do the same for your other classes--for every three-credit class, budget a total of 9-12 hours. Thus, a 12-credit course load means you'll have AT LEAST a 36-hour school and study schedule.

THE ASSIGNMENTS YOU CAN EXPECT THIS SEMESTER**WEEKLY QUIZZES—2 points each, total of 20 points (drop the 2 lowest) or 20% of final grade**

At the beginning of almost every class, I will ask two simple questions based on that week's reading or the prior week's reading, or on a concept we have discussed in class. If you keep up with the reading, you should do well on all of these quizzes. I will ignore your 2 lowest quiz scores at the end of the semester. Thus, 10 out of 12 quizzes will count for a total of 20 points.

WEEKLY JOURNAL—a total of 15 points for the semester or 15% of final grade

As you read, notice the nature of texts as created works of art, perhaps not unlike the works of art you yourself enjoy creating or hope to create someday. Ask questions of the text as you read. Notice things that seem unusual or techniques that work well or things that don't make sense to you. This course seeks to stimulate your own THINKING about literature and the ability to link your reading of literature with your own CREATIVE process. Your weekly journal will help you cultivate your thoughts across disciplines. Try jotting

down questions and reactions to any one of the reading assignments every week in your journal. What characters do you like? Why? What surprised you in a text? What bothered you? What about the way the text is constructed caught your attention? What other text/film etc. did this text seem similar to? Note these or anything else in response to the readings in your journal. Don't worry about grammar or writing style in the journal. Allow about 10-15 minutes per entry, or about 20-30 minutes per week. Write about 2 pages per week, and always bring your pages to class, ready to turn in if I ask to see them.

CREATIVE PROJECT: 15 points (15% of final grade)

The creative project must show your own imaginative or creative response to literature, or must make some connection between literature and another artistic medium. (Connections may be made in either direction; each may inspire the other.)

If you're a painter, turn in a painting inspired by literature. If you're a composer, compose a short melody, have it performed, tape it, and submit a brief explanation describing how the melody is connected with any piece of literature. If you're a dancer, perform a dance for the class in response to any text. Or turn in a videotape of your performance. If you're a photographer, use your imagination to capture settings or characters that you think fit one of the stories, poems, or plays. If you're a filmmaker, turn in a screenplay for short film or scene, or a videotape. If you're a journalist, do a profile of one of the authors of a piece of literature in our text, or interview a published author, or rewrite a short story as a news story.

Show that you can assimilate information or influences in either or both directions between this literature class and what you love to do. I will evaluate your creative project on the strength of the connection you make between the literary piece and your own artistic or professional medium or creative process.

TWO PAPERS, 5-6 pages each, worth 20 points each, total of 40 %

You must write your papers in the English department open computer lab or any PC/IBM-compatible lab; **be sure to SAVE TO THE A DRIVE where your 3 1/2 in. disk is.**

I require double-spaced **rough drafts** before the final drafts are due. You will get feedback from your fellow students and from me. Then you will rewrite the paper. **If you don't bring your rough draft on the day it's due, you forfeit your opportunity to revise your paper for the grade.** Be sure to take advantage of the rough draft feedback. I may ask you to revise the paper three times or until the paper is as strong as it can be.

Final drafts of papers: I require **two clean copies**. Papers must be double-spaced, carefully proofread, and turned in AT CLASS TIME on the due dates. BE SURE to use page numbers. (Click "insert," then "page numbers.") Each paper must be **5-6 pages** (typed, double-spaced, font size no larger than 12 pt., with 1" margins). It's OK if your paper is longer, but if your paper is shorter than five pages, you will not have met the requirement and may lose points. If the paper is a day or two late, you lose half a letter grade; a full letter grade if a week late. After that, I will not accept the paper.

CLASS PARTICIPATION—10 points total possible, or 10%

I don't reward you just for speaking up, but also for helping your fellow classmates to understand the material and to gain more from the class. See my comments on creating a learning environment above. I will award up to 5 (or more) points for outstanding participation in peer review workshops, small group discussions, and other activities throughout the semester. That's approximately half a letter grade.

YOU CAN DO THE MATH YOURSELF

You'll always know where you stand. I grade on a standard scale: at the end of the semester, 90+=A, 80+=B, 70+=C, 60+=D.

Quizzes=20 %

Journal=15%

Creative Project=15%

Papers (2)= 40%

Participation=10%

On assignments, if the total possible is 20 (as for a paper), then you need 18 points for an A on that paper, 16 points for a B, and 14 points for a C. At the end of the semester, I will DEDUCT points for tardiness, absences, or missed deadlines.

EXTRA CREDIT

You can earn extra credit (a maximum of 5 points total all semester) by attending worthwhile literary, theater performances, or museum exhibits and writing brief reaction papers or reviews. I especially encourage you to attend readings at Columbia and to write reviews of any plays produced by the Columbia Theatre Department. Many local theaters also have discount rates for students. Some excellent opportunities include these: Oct. 18, 5:30 p.m., Concert Hall, 1014 S. Michigan, poet Jay Wright. Other Columbia College poetry readings by nationally/internationally prominent poets are scheduled for 5:30 Nov. 8, Dec. 6, and Jan. 10. All are in the 1014 S. Michigan Bldg, except for Nov. 8; location tba.

Criteria for Grading Papers about Literature

When I grade the final drafts of your papers, I evaluate them according to recognizable standards. The papers you write should demonstrate your ability to read, analyze, and interpret literature. Your analysis should be based on a close reading of the text you choose. You may analyze any aspect of the text (plot, character, theme, etc.). You must present a clear thesis and use textual evidence to support it. That is, your readers should understand the point you are trying to make, be able to see how the evidence you select from the text supports that point, and be able to follow the logical progression of your ideas. Be sure to provide **sufficient analysis and interpretation of the evidence**. I expect all papers to be well written in clear English prose. I will also consider the quality of your insights.

Highly successful (A) papers will meet the following description: "The writer has successfully analyzed and interpreted a textual element or elements such as plot, character, point of view, imagery, setting, form, theme, irony, tone, symbols, language or any similar elements. The writer has grounded arguments in specific references to text and has thoroughly analyzed and interpreted those references. The essay has a clear thesis supported by sound logic and good organization. The purpose of the essay is clear."

Successful (B) papers will meet the following description: "The writer has analyzed a textual element or elements such as plot, character, point of view, imagery, setting, form, theme, irony, tone, symbols, language or any similar elements. The writer has grounded arguments in at least some specific references to text. The essay has a clear thesis, but may need one of the following: more textual support, more analytical or interpretive development, or clearer logic and/or organization."

Moderately successful (C) papers will fit the following description: "The writer has analyzed or paid some attention to texts or a textual element(s), has made an effort toward interpretation, and has some supporting references and/or evidence, but the essay does not fully develop or support its thesis in a logical fashion, or the thesis may not be sufficiently clear."

Unsuccessful (D or F) papers can be described with SOME or MOST of the following: "The writer has not sufficiently analyzed or interpreted the text; there may be textual references, but not in clear support of an interpretation; AND/OR the writer has failed to offer a clear thesis supported by sound logic; AND/OR has not responded to the assignment."

WRITING CENTER--1st floor, /33 E. Congress-

Even the best writers show their work to someone for feedback before they present it to the public. Just talking over your ideas and planning the organization with a helpful friend or a tutor can save lots of time and diminish your anxiety. Consider signing up for weekly tutoring.

Some tips for writing papers about literature

I. The paper is an **analysis of a text** and an **interpretation based on that analysis**. The audience is **readers who have already read the text**. IF YOU MERELY REPEAT WHAT THE STORY SAYS, WITHOUT INTERPRETATION, YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE A PASSING GRADE. A thesis statement is a debatable proposition, that is, a statement (a complete sentence containing a subject and verb) about which reasonable people might disagree. ("Alienation in Story X" is a title, not a thesis. A possible thesis: "The alienation character Y feels in Story X is a logical response to the crass materialism of her environment." (For evidence you might cite the high number of references to stores, money, valuable material objects, etc.) The thesis should make an interesting point ABOUT the story, poem or idea (not merely to repeat what the story says) and should be clearly stated, preferably at the end of the first paragraph. I also expect a strong conclusion that does more than simply restate the thesis. Show why the thesis was worth proving, after all.

II. Make sure the topic is **NARROW** enough and that you say enough about it. Say something--show us what your mind can do with the text. Select one aspect of the literary work and discuss how it functions and connects with the **WHOLE** work. Show that you have read closely, and that you can **ANALYZE** the significance of **CONTENT** and **FORM**--the two are inseparable, so by analyzing carefully *how* something is written, you are also analyzing meaning. **Be sure to SAY ENOUGH about the part you've chosen or the words you quote. Show me exactly where and exactly how (refer to SPECIFIC words, phrases, lines, events, characters, etc.) the story, poem or play does what you are saying it does.** Keep your quotes very brief. Most drafts need more **DEVELOPMENT**--you need to **SHOW** the reader exactly what your point is, what evidence supports it, and **WHY** your point is so important. I will take points off for fuzzy thinking, vague language, insufficient development, and poor transitions.

III. Read your draft aloud, have friends or fellow students read it, and **rewrite it, cutting redundancy and adding new material to strengthen weak paragraphs. Ask "so what?" at the end of every paragraph--then write at least two more sentences to answer the "so what."** Sometimes you'll need to add much more than just a few sentences to actually pursue the answer.

IV. **AFTER REVISING, BE SURE TO PROOFREAD CAREFULLY.** I will take points off for grammatical mistakes, inconsistent/inaccurate punctuation, or any obstacles that prevent the paper from achieving its purpose. Let your natural voice come through, to the extent possible in standard English. Aim for clarity, economy, conviction: cut away as much phoniness and verbal confusion as you can. No "Englishteacherese." Papers must be typed or computer-printed, 3-5 pages minimum, double-spaced, with 1" margins. Pages must be numbered.