

**English 210: Interpreting Literature  
Fall 2002**

MWF 910-1010 Buckman 325

*Begin, ephebe, by perceiving the idea  
Of this invention, this invented world,  
The inconceivable idea of the sun.*

*You must become an ignorant man again  
And see the sun again with an ignorant eye  
And see it clearly in the idea of it.*

--Wallace Stevens

**Instructor:** Bob Watts  
**Office:** Palmer 311  
**Phone:** x3981  
**Email:** [wattsb@rhodes](mailto:wattsb@rhodes)

**Office Hours:**  
**MWF** 1030-1130  
**MW** 145-230  
**T** 2-3

**Required Texts:** John Gardner *Grendel*  
Seamus Heaney *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*  
Andrew Hudgins *After the Lost War: A Narrative*  
Tony Kushner *Angels in America: Millenium  
Approaches*  
Sophocles *Antigone*

Class handouts of poems, short stories, plays, and/or essays. The reading list may change slightly to meet the needs of the class.

**Grading:** Grades are on a 100-point scale (900-1000 A, 800-890 B, and so on.

Participation (Discussion, quizzes and such)	110 points
Reading Responses (3 at 30 points each)	90 points
Poetry Essay	200 points
Fiction Essay	200 points
Exams (2 at 100 points each)	200 points
Final Essay Exam	200 points

**Assignments:**

Participation—Lively, informed, respectful participation in class discussion is an absolute necessity in this course. In order to participate effectively, you must not only have read but have **re-read** the texts scheduled for each day. The reading schedule is fairly demanding; you cannot afford to fall behind. In particular, **you need to begin reading**

**the book-length texts well in advance—even weeks in advance—of the days they are scheduled for discussion.**

Reading Responses—During the course of the semester, each of you will turn in three one-page (typed) responses to assigned readings, one in poetry, one in fiction, and one in drama. These responses should demonstrate critical thinking and an engagement with the material. Individual due dates will be assigned if needed.

Essays—Each student will write two longer (5 typed pages) critical/analytical essays, one examining a poem or poems, and one examining a fiction selection. These should be polished, intelligent essays, demonstrating care, thought, labor, and a mature understanding of the works under discussion.

Exams—The two exams will test your mastery of basic terminology and reading and analytical skills.

Final Essay Exam—The final exam will require you to analyze works from all three genres.

## **Course Policies;**

### Attendance

Attendance is absolutely vital, and any absence could result in a lower grade due to missed work and participation. However, each student is allowed three absences without additional penalty. Use them wisely. Each additional absence will reduce your final participation grade by 20%. Any student missing six classes or more **will receive an "F" for the course.**

Being ten or more minutes late for class, leaving ten or more minutes early, doing work from other courses, or any form of egregious mental non-attendance will count as an absence.

Late Papers—Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Papers turned in on the due date but more than ten minutes after the beginning of class will be dropped one-third of a letter grade. Papers not turned in on the due date will be dropped an additional one-third for every day they are late; papers assigned a grade of "F" for lateness still must be turned in.

**All work in this course will be fully pledged under the Honor System.**

## Department of English

### Expectations and Policies

A college course is more than simply a set of assignments; it is an intellectual process, one which requires active engagement from beginning to end in order to achieve its intended results. With this in mind, the Department of English has formulated a number of expectations and the policies that support them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to the syllabus for a particular course, you should address them to the instructor.

**Attendance:** The success of a course depends to a significant extent upon the presence of students alert and prepared to address the subject under discussion. Unavoidable absences should be discussed with the instructor, ideally before they occur. Excessive absences will result in a lowering of grade, in some cases to an F.

**Deadlines:** Writing assignments, tests, etc., are carefully scheduled as stages toward the fulfilment of the course's goals and cannot be indefinitely deferred without frustrating those goals. Brief extensions for good reasons may be permissible with the instructor's prior approval; otherwise, late assignments will be penalized and may result in their not being accepted for credit.

**Submission of all work:** All major assignments are integral to the goals of the course. Failure to complete any major assignment will result in a grade of F for the course.

**Intellectual honesty:** All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without the instructor's prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, the Internet or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and the student if convicted will receive a grade of F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as the instructor deems appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, consult your teacher.

## Schedule of Assignments:

Aug. 28 W Introduction to course—Stevens, “A Postcard from the Volcano” / Rilke, “Archaic Torso of Apollo”

### Poetry

30 F What Makes a Poem a Poem?—Hayden, “Those Winter Sundays”

Sept. 2 M LABOR DAY—NO CLASS

4 W Sound & Voice—Millay, “Counting-out Rhyme” / Hopkins, “Spring and Fall” / McMahon, “These Same, These Many Birds”

6 F Roethke, “My Papa’s Waltz” / Dove, “Daystar” / Heaney, “Digging” / Larkin, “High Windows”

9 M Rhythm & Meter—Frost, “Stopping by Woods” / Toomer, “Reapers” / Francis, “The Pitcher” / Coleridge “Frost at Midnight

11 W Hughes, “Harlem” / Boland, “Anorexic” / Eliot, “Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”

13 F Imagery & Figurative Language—MacLeish, “Ars Poetica” / Wilbur, “Love Calls Us to the Things of This World” / Appleman, “Desire”

16 M Hopkins, “As Kingfishers Catch Fire” / Olds, “The One Girl at the Boys’ Party” / Lowell, “For the Union Dead”

18 W Donne, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” / Rich, “Rape”

20 F Form—Yeats, “Adam’s Curse” / Kumin, “Morning Swim” / Randall, “Ballad of Birmingham”

23 M Shakespeare, “That Time of Year” / Addonizio, “My First Poem for You” / Keats, “If by Dull Rhymes” / Fennelly, “Poem Not To Be Read at Your Wedding”

25 W Density & Allusion—Hecht, “More Light! More Light!” / Stevens, “Sunday Morning” / Wordsworth, “Tintern Abbey”

27 F Narrative—*Beowulf*

- 30 M *Beowulf* continued
- Oct. 2 W *Beowulf* continued
- 4 F *After the Lost War* **Last day for first response**
- 7 M *After the Lost War* continued

### **Fiction**

- 9 W Introduction to Fiction
- 11 F Plot—Walker, “Everyday Use”
- 14 M Setting—Steinbeck, “The Chrysanthemums” **Poetry Essay Due**
- 16 W Character—Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”
- 18 F Glaspell, “A Jury of Her Peers”
- 21 M FALL RECESS—NO CLASS
- 23 W Point of View—Garcia Marquez, “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” / Boyle, “Astronomer’s Wife”
- 25 F Tone—Alexie, “The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven”
- 28 M Theme—Carver, “What We Talk about When We Talk about Love”
- 30 W Catch-up
- Nov. 1 F EXAM II
- 4 M The Novel—Gardner, *Grendel*
- 6 W *Grendel* continued **Last day for second response**
- 8 F *Grendel* continued
- 11 M *Grendel* continued

## Drama

- 13 W Introduction to Drama
- 15 F Glaspell, *Trifles*
- 18 M Sophocles *Antigone*
- 20 W *Antigone* continued **Fiction Essay Due**
- 22 F *Antigone* continued
- 25 M EXAM II
- 27-29 WF THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY—NO CLASS
- Dec. 2 M Kushner, *Angels in America* **Last day for third response**
- 4 W *Angels* continued
- 6 F *Angels* continued
- 9 M Literature and the Soul
- 11 W Literature and the Soul continued