

English 210
Interpreting Literature

Section 1
Fall 2004
1100 MWF, Palmer 203

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Description

This most accurately titled course will guide you toward a deeper understanding of the major literary forms and their conventions, and an ability to discern and confidently articulate your own special interpretations of a literary work. Short response assignments and three formal five-page essays—one on each of the major genres—are required. Armed with the *Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, we will immerse ourselves in prose fiction, long (C. Brontë, *Jane Eyre* and Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*) and short; drama (Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Overmyer, *On the Verge*); and five hundred glorious years of poetry in English, culled from the *Norton Introduction to Poetry*. Three meetings outside our registrar-appointed class times are also required. All of these will involve the drama portion of our studies: as a group we will screen a recent film rendition of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, attend our own Theatre Department's performance of *On the Verge*, and participate in a conversation with director Teresa Morrow and members of the cast and crew.

Objectives

- To familiarize you with the major literary forms and their conventions;
- To enable you to discern and confidently articulate your interpretations of literature by familiarizing you with some of the terminology and methodology of literary studies; and
- To improve your critical reading and writing skills.

Required Texts

The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms (second edition), ed. Murfin and Ray (Bedford)

The Norton Introduction to Poetry (eighth edition), ed. Hunter, Booth, Mays (Norton)
Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Penguin)

Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (Vintage)

Eric Overmyer, *On the Verge* (Broadway Play Publishing)

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays* (Modern Library)

Other reading material, required and supplementary, is available through the course's WebCT page.

Requirements

- Three **five-page papers (45%)**: these count equally, and you must write on each of the major genres of poetry, drama, and prose fiction. I will distribute a list of topics a week before the paper is due, but I strongly encourage you to explore any topic that the reading or the short

assignments (see below) might prompt you to pursue. Please do run your idea by me before you start writing, though.

Papers are due on the dates (all Mondays) listed below, but you have until the Friday (5 p.m., in my mailbox in the English Commons Room, Palmer 312) of that week to hand in your paper. After that a paper will receive no credit. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Papers receiving grades lower than B- may be revised. In fact, I will strongly encourage you to do so.

- A **reading journal consisting of frequent, short assignments (20%)**: Some of these will be written and some oral, some to be completed individually and some in assigned groups. These assignments will be announced the class meeting before they are due. You can also find them using the Calendar feature of our WebCT page. I will collect and comment upon them, grading them on a check-plus, check, check-minus basis. When I return them to you, please save them in a folder, as they constitute your reading journal. More importantly, these assignments are intended to get you thinking about topics for your formal papers.
- **Regular participation in class discussions (20%)**: English 210 is a discussion. That means that our goal is not to determine "what the teacher is thinking," but rather to encourage you to find and articulate what *you* think about a literary text. We will discuss in pursuit of not a "right" interpretation but rather a set of ideas we can work with.
- Attendance at three events outside of our registrar-appointed meeting times: a screening of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a live performance of *On the Verge*, and a discussion with the director of the production, Teresa Morrow. The film screening will begin at 7 p.m. on Sunday, December 5 in Frazier Jelke FJA. (I will announce times and dates for the performance of *On the Verge* at the McCoy and for our discussion with Teresa Morrow as soon as the theatre's schedule is set.)
- A take-home **final exam (15%)**: Designed to take no more than two hours, the exam is due Tuesday, December 14, at noon in my mailbox.

Grading

Grades for 210 range from A to F, with pluses and minuses in between. For explicit details, consult your "Criteria for Student Grading," available on WebCT.

Attendance

You are allowed three absences, with no distinction made between an "excused" or "unexcused" absence. To illustrate, missing class because you are sick amounts to the same as missing class because you wanted to sleep in, so choose your absences wisely. Each additional absence will reduce your final grade by two-thirds of a letter grade. For example, a student earning a final grade of "B-" will receive a "C" if he or she has four absences, and a grade of "F" for more than six absences. Because straggling in late is disruptive to the class and rude to students who have arrived on time, tardiness of more than ten minutes counts as an absence. You may not leave class early.

Class Schedule

	August 25 Introduction Reading: Pound, "In a Station of the Metro"	27 Keyword (from <i>Bedford Glossary</i>): poetry Readings: cummings, [l(a)]; Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow"
30 Keywords: tone, diction Reading: Ali, "Postcard from Kashmir"; Heaney, "Digging"; Walcott, "A Far Cry from Africa"	September 1 Keywords: connotation, denotation Reading: Blake, "London"; Stevens, "The Emperor of Ice-Cream"	3 Keywords: speaker, audience Reading: Arnold, "Dover Beach"; Hecht, "The Dover Bitch"; Whitman, "I Hear America Singing"; Hughes, "I, Too"; Plath, "Daddy"
6 LABOR DAY CLASS CANCELLED	8 Keywords: Bildungsroman, gothic, sentimental, romance, realistic Reading: <i>Jane Eyre</i> , ch. 1-13	10 Reading: <i>Jane Eyre</i> , ch. 14-17
13 Reading: <i>Jane Eyre</i> , ch. 18-26	15 Keywords: theme, motif, Victorian period, domesticity Reading: <i>Jane Eyre</i> , ch. 27-29	17 Reading: <i>Jane Eyre</i> , ch. 30-32
20 Reading: <i>Jane Eyre</i> , ch. 33-38	22 Keywords: metaphor, metonymy, simile, synecdoche, allusion, symbol Reading: Auden, "Musée des Beaux Arts"; Blake, "The Sick Rose"; Collins, "Taking off Emily Dickinson's Clothes"; Hardy, "Neutral Tones"; Rich, "Diving into the Wreck"; Shakespeare, [That time of year thou mayest in me behold]	24 Reading: no new reading
27 Essay #1 Due Keywords: short story, point of view, metaphor, symbol Reading: Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" (WebCT)	29 Keyword: epiphany Reading: Joyce, "The Dead" (WebCT)	October 1 Keyword: stream of consciousness Reading: Mansfield, "Miss Brill" (WebCT)
4 Reading: Overmyer, <i>On the Verge</i> , Act I	6 Keywords: drama, comedy Reading: no new reading (but feel free to read ahead)	8 Keywords: dramatic illusion, realism, magic realism Reading: no new reading

11 Keywords: convention, unities, act, scene Reading: <i>On the Verge</i> , Act II (finish)	13 Keywords: soliloquy, malapropism Reading: no new reading	15 Keywords: postmodern, pastiche Reading: no new reading
18 FALL RECESS CLASS CANCELLED	20 Keyword: persona, dramatic monologue Reading: Browning, "Porphyria's Lover," "My Last Duchess"; Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"	22 Keyword: point of view Reading: <i>The Remains of the Day</i> , read through Day 1
25 Keywords: unreliable narrator, naïve hero, implied author, irony Reading: <i>The Remains of the Day</i> , through Day 2	27 Reading: no new reading	29 CLASS CANCELLED
November 1 Keywords: close reading, gaps, plot, realism Reading: <i>The Remains of the Day</i> , through Day 3	3 Reading: <i>The Remains of the Day</i> (finish)	5 Keywords: see October 25 Reading: the remains of <i>The Remains of the Day</i> ; James, "Brooksmith"
8 Essay #2 Due Keywords: enjambment, end-stopped Reading: cummings, [in Just—]; Dickinson, [Because I could not stop for Death]; Moore, "Poetry"; Williams, "This is Just to Say"; Komunyakaa, "Tu Do Street"; Stevens, "The Idea of Order at Key West"	10 Keywords: rhyme, assonance, consonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia Reading: Brooks, "We Real Cool"; Dove, "Parsley"; Harper, "Dear John, Dear Coltrane"; Hopkins, "Spring and Fall"; Lee, "Persimmons"; Keats, "Ode to a Nightingale"; Pope, "Sound and Sense"	12 Reading: no new reading
15 Keywords: scansion, meter, rhythm, prosody, iamb, trochee, anapest, dactyl, spondee, pyrrhic Readings: Herrick, "Delight in Disorder"; Larkin, "Church Going"; Milton, "Lycidas"; Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz"; Tennyson, "Ulysses"	17 Reading: Auden, "In Memory of W. B. Yeats"; Dickinson, [After great pain, a formal feeling comes]; Donne, "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"; Frost, "Design"; Hopkins, "The Windhover"; Yeats, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree"	19 Keywords: stanza, sonnet, villanelle, sestina, ballad, refrain Reading: Bishop, "Sestina,"; Blake, "The Tyger"; Cullen, "Yet I Do Marvel"; Dickinson, [My Life has Stood—a Loaded Gun]; Hopkins, "God's Grandeur; McKay, "The Harlem Dancer"; Jordan, "Something Like a Sonnet for Phillis Miracle Wheatley"

<p>22</p> <p>Reading: Muldoon, "Milkweed and Monarch"; Rossetti, "In an Artist's Studio"; Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night"; Wordsworth, "Nuns Fret Not"; Yeats, "Leda and the Swan"</p>	<p>24</p> <p>THANKSGIVING RECESS CLASS CANCELLED</p>	<p>26</p> <p>THANKSGIVING RECESS CLASS CANCELLED</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Keywords: satire, wit, comedy of manners Reading: Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>, Act I</p>	<p>December 1</p> <p>Reading: <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>, Act II</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Reading: no new reading</p>
<p>6</p> <p>Essay #3 Due Keywords: Aestheticism, form, denouement Reading: <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>, Act III</p>	<p>8</p> <p>DENOUEMENT: The Promised Land!</p>	