ENGL 190-01/02, The American Short Story, Fall 2010

ENGL 190: The American Short Story
Fall 2010
MWF 9 – 9:50 a.m.
Buckman 204

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Office Hours: MWF 10 – 11 a.m., 2 – 3 p.m., and by appointment

Texts

- *Selected Tales*, Henry James (Penguin Classics)
- *In Our Time*, Ernest Hemingway (Scribner)
- *The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty* (Harcourt)
- *The Stories of John Cheever* (Vintage)
- *The Love of a Good Woman*, Alice Munro (Vintage)
- *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, Raymond Carver (Vintage)
- *The Interpreter of Maladies*, Jhumpa Lahiri (Mariner Books)
- *CivilWarLand in Bad* Decline, George Saunders (Riverhead)

Course Description

This course is an introductory survey of the American Short Story, specifically covering the 20th century. What exactly is a short story? How does one behave? Are they simply prose narratives of a particular length or do they have specific aesthetic qualities of their own, making them distinct artifacts with their own conventions? And why has the short story thrived in America of all places? And how has its place within the broader literary culture changed over the past 100 years? These are some of the questions that will guide this introductory literary course. We will read story collections mostly from the past 100 years, beginning in the 19th century with Edgar Allan Poe and ending in the 21st with George Saunders, using the short story as a porthole into the larger aesthetic concerns contained within American literature. The class will be dedicated to close readings of the individual stories, as well as to considering the stories in the context of their publication both in books and periodicals. As with all English 190 courses, this class will introduce you to some of the methods used and issues confronted within the English major.

Administrative Details

1. Enrollment in ENGL 190 is limited to first year students and sophomores only.
2. This course satisfies the F-4 literary texts Foundations requirement, as well as the F-2 writing Foundations requirement.
3. ENGL 151 is not required as a prerequisite; conversely, this course will not fulfill the 151 requirement.
4. If desired, this course will count towards the English Major or Minor.

Writing Load

You will write three papers in this class. Each paper will conduct a close reading of some aspect of one of the assigned works, whether it is an individual story or an entire collection. The first two papers will be 3-4 pages in length and must represent your own interpretation. That is, they

cannot employ secondary critical sources. However, the final third paper, which should be 6-8 pages, must employ at least two critical sources from refereed journals or some other respected critical/scholarly source.

You will also write a brief, 1-2 page response paper at the beginning of the semester, focusing on one story that we have read thus far. This response paper will serve as a warm up for your longer, more formal papers.

There will also be a midterm and a final, which will test your knowledge of the reading as well as the various concepts and terminology we have discussed and deployed in the course.

Attendance
You are allowed to miss three classes for any reason. For every missed class after three, your final grade for the course will be reduced by one third. I make no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. **If you miss more than 6 classes total, you will fail the course.** In addition, consistent tardiness will be counted as an absence.

Quizzes
We will have occasional pop quizzes that will cover that day's reading. They'll be folded in with your participation grade, and they cannot be made up if you are absent.

Grade Breakdown
Paper 1—15%
Paper 2—20%
Paper 3—25%
Exams 1 & 2—30%
Quizzes, Response Paper & Participation—10%

How can you make a good grade? Hand in polished, well-argued papers on time; contribute constructively and frequently to class discussion; come to class with an energetic and thorough reading of that day's material; take notes both in class and as you read; and meet the other particular requirements of the course along the way.

A note about grammar/style: the medium is just as important as the message. Therefore, disregard for standard written English grammar/style conventions in your written work will severely affect your grade. Likewise, papers should typed, double-spaced, pledged in full, and use the MLA documentation format, which we will discuss in class.

The three papers constitute major assignments for this course; as such, if you do not hand in one of these major assignments, you will fail the entire class.

Late Papers
Each paper is due on the day stipulated on the syllabus, placed in the box on my office door (302 Palmer) by 5 p.m. Any late assignment will be reduced 1/3 of a letter grade for each day that it is delayed (A- to B+, etc.). Any assignment turned in 5 class sessions *after* the original due date will receive a grade of F and can result in failure of the course itself.

Plagiarism
As per the Honor Code, all work you hand in during the semester must be entirely your own, produced exclusively for this class, and visibly pledged.

Disability Accommodation
If you need any accommodations related to a disability, please schedule an appointment with Melissa Butler McCowen, Coordinator of Disability Services, 843-3994, mbutler@rhodes.edu.

This syllabus and the following daily schedule are subject to change with adequate notice.

Tentative Daily Schedule

8/25 Introduction to class
8/27 Poe: "The Black Cat"; essay on Hawthorne (handout)

8/30 Hawthorne: "The Minister's Black Veil"; "The Birthmark" (handout)
9/1 James: "The Real Thing"; "The Middle Years"
9/3 James: "The Death of the Lion"; "The Figure in the Carpet"

9/6 Labor Day: No class
9/8 James: "The Beast in the Jungle"; "The Jolly Corner"
9/10 Hemingway: "On the Quai at Smyrna"; "Indian Camp"; "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife"; "The End of Something"; **Response Paper due**

9/13 Hemingway: "The Three-Day Blow"; "The Battler"; "A Very Short Story"; "Soldier's Home"
9/15 Hemingway: "The Revolutionist"; "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot"; "Cat in the Rain"; "Out of Season"
9/17 Hemingway: "Cross-Country Snow"; "My Old Man"; "Big Two-Hearted River," parts I and II

9/20 Welty: "Lily Daw . . ."; "A Piece of News"; "Petrified Man"
9/22 Welty: "The Key"; "Keela . . ."; "Why I Live . . ."
9/24 Welty: "The Whistle"; "The Hitch-Hikers"; "A Memory"

9/27 Welty: "Clytie"; "Old Mr. Marblehall"; "Flowers for Marjorie"
9/29 Welty: "A Curtain of Green"; "A Visit of Charity"; "Death of a Traveling Salesman"
10/1 Welty: "Powerhouse"; "A Worn Path"; **Paper 1 due**

10/4 Cheever: "Preface," vii; "Goodbye, My Brother," 3; "The Enormous Radio," 33
10/6 Cheever: "O Youth and Beauty!" 210; "Reunion," 518
10/8 **Midterm**

10/11 Cheever: "The Housebreaker of Shady Hill," 253; "The Country Husband," 325;
10/13 Cheever: "The Swimmer," 603; "Just One More Time," 248;
10/15 Cheever: "The Worm in the Apple," 285; "The Brigadier and the Golf Widow," 498

10/18 Fall Break
10/20 Cheever: "Another Story," 624; "Torch Song"
10/22 Barthelme/Barth (handout)

10/25 Barthelme/Barth (handout)
10/27 Munro: "The Love of a Good Woman"
10/29 Munro: "Jakarta"; "Cortes Island"

11/1 Munro: "Save the Reaper"; "The Children Stay"
11/3 Munro: "Rich as Stink"; "Before the Change"; "My Mother's Dream"
11/5 **Paper 2 due**

11/8 Carver, pp. 3-37
11/10 Carver, pp. 37-79
11/12 Carver, pp. 79-123

11/15 Carver, pp. 123-159
11/17 Lahiri: "A Temporary Matter"; "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine"; "Interpreter of Maladies"
11/19 Lahiri: "A Real Durwan"; "Sexy"; "Mrs. Sen's"

11/22 Lahiri: "This Blessed House"; "The Treatment of Bibi Haldar"; "The Third and Final Continent"
11/24 Thanksgiving
11/26 Thanksgiving

11/29 Saunders "CivilWarLand in Bad Decline"; "Isabelle"
12/1 Saunders: "The Wavemaker Falters"; "The 400-Pound CEO"
12/3 Saunders: "Offloading Mrs. Schwartz"; "Downtrodden Mary's Failed . . ."

12/6 Saunders: "Bounty"
12/8 Last day: TBA; **Paper 3 due**

12/11 **Final: 5:30 p.m.**

***Everything is listed on the day that it is due.**