English 381.090: Intro. to Literary Analysis
Ferguson 376
Monday and Wednesday 1-215
Fall, 2018

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Office Hours:
Monday: 830-10
Tuesday: 11-12, 2-330
Wednesday: 830-10
Thursday: 11-12, 2-330
Or by scheduled appointment

Catalog Description: “Reading and writing critical analyses of primary texts, including essays, fiction, and poetry. This course, which reviews the mechanics and techniques of literary analysis, should be taken during the first semester the student is eligible for 300 level courses. Prerequisites: nine semester hours of English.”

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce students to the foundations of literary study and writing. Our goal here will not directly focus on the direct interpretation of literary texts, but will instead focus on critically engaging those texts that form the foundation for how and why we engage literary texts. As such, a majority of our study will center on the reading, interpretation and questioning of many of the major essays on criticism. Our discussions will circle around issues of aesthetics, value, questions of craft and talent, and the place and/or purpose of literature in an ever-changing world and culture. We will trace the development of these conversations all the way from Aristotle to Eric Carl Link. The importance behind such a study is that it provides students with a general understanding of where and why literary interpretation begins. In other words, if you have ever asked yourself why your professors find value in certain texts or how your professors have brought such interpretations of texts or questions for discussion to your other classes, these essays will, potentially, provide you with that answer. Beyond introducing students to the purpose of literary study, this course will also introduce students to the discourse of the field, the mechanical and stylistic requirements of writing within the field of literary study, and how to research within field.

This course is designed to “evolve” as the semester progresses; in other words, our readings and assignments will all build off of previous readings and assignments. Initially, we will spend a part of the semester studying canonical works of literary criticism and developing our critical thinking,
speaking, and writing skills through class discussions and the completion of two summary/analysis papers. In the case of these readings and writing, we will be working on single texts. Then, we will move our exploration into understanding how we can use a tertiary source as a “litmus test” of sorts for a primary text. In this case, our writing and reading will encourage the integration of two distinct texts. Finally, we will end the semester focused on the basics and broader concepts that are required of a seminar paper. This will include all of us having an understanding of how to do research for English papers, how to correctly incorporate MLA style (through in text citation and a complete and correct works cited) into our papers, and, finally, how to develop and support a structured, clear argument.

As you can see, this is an intensive course, but it is not so overwhelming that we cannot accomplish our goals. However, in order to accomplish our goals, it is important that you not only attend class, but also be prepared when in attendance (i.e. come to class having read and marked your texts, written out questions, and be open to developing your critical faculties).

**Program Learning Outcomes:**
As this course is a required course for the English major, minor, and writing minor, the following Program Learning Outcomes will be accomplished in this course:

1. The student will demonstrate the ability to read complex texts, closely and accurately.
2. The student will demonstrate the ability to comprehend both traditional and contemporary schools/methods of critical theory and apply them to literary texts to generate relevant interpretations.
3. The student will demonstrate the ability to effectively conduct literary research.
4. The student will demonstrate the ability to write clear, grammatically correct prose for a variety of purposes in regard to literary analysis.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
1) Through class discussion and writing, students will demonstrate the ability to engage and adeptly analyze discipline specific essays on literary aesthetics and theory.
2) At the end of the semester, students will have encountered some of the dominant schools of literary theory/thought. In terms of one specific school of thought, students will read about literary naturalism in conjunction with Stephen Crane’s *Maggie*.
3) Throughout the semester, students will be taught to conduct research within the field of literary studies. The student will employ this research knowledge through a “treasure hunt” assignment and final seminar paper.
4) Throughout the semester, students will complete summary/analysis and literary interpretation papers. These papers will be graded on the argument developed and stylistics.

**Required Texts:**


**Grade Determination:**

Critical Essay: 100 Points each, total 200 points  
Larsen Essay: 100 Points  
Seminar Paper: 100 points x 2 (this essay will be counted twice). In order to turn this in, you must complete the Annotated Bibliography/Abstract.  
Annotated Bibliography/Abstract: Must be turned in to turn in the Seminar Paper.  
Final Exam: 50 points  
Treasure Hunt and MLA Worksheet: Pass/Fail (these two assignments must be completed in order to complete the class)  
Total: 550

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Grades</th>
<th>Semester Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: 100-90</td>
<td>A: 492-550</td>
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<tr>
<td>B: 89-80</td>
<td>B: 436-491</td>
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<tr>
<td>C: 79-70</td>
<td>C: 381-435</td>
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<tr>
<td>D: 69-60</td>
<td>D: 326-380</td>
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<tr>
<td>F: 59-0</td>
<td>F: 325-0</td>
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**Major Course Assignments:**

*Critical Essay:*  
As you can see from the calendar, every student will write two critical essays. The date when you write these essays will be determined by the group letter you are assigned. The purpose of each critical essay is to practice and further develop the standard abilities of summary and analysis. Each critical essay is to be 4 pages in length, written in the academic voice, show proper MLA citation (through in text citations and a works cited page), be free of stigmatized errors, and provide a clear, purposeful discussion.

Throughout the semester, we will be reading a number of different essays from *The Norton Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. When you are assigned to complete a critical response essay, you must write on the piece that you have been assigned (your direct assigned essay is found on the calendar). You cannot choose to write on an essay that we have already discussed. The reason for this is so that during every class period there will be several students who can help lead/guide the discussion because they have already thought about and written on the essay.

In terms of structuring this essay, I will be grading each essay based on your ability to offer a quality and succinct summary of the primary source AND then your ability to critically analyze said source through argumentative engagement with one or more of the central ideas expressed by the author. When writing the paper, the summary of the primary source should be no longer than 1 to 1 ¼ pages. The goal of this summary is not to highlight every point that an author has made, but to introduce the essay, recognize the author’s thesis, and then outline or highlight the MAJOR points that are used to support said thesis. After the summary, you will need to smoothly transition into the critical analysis of the primary source. This should be the majority of your paper. The analysis is not a continuation of the summary, but the opening of an argumentative discussion. The purpose of said discussion will
be to either further develop or problematize (argue against or find fault with) some aspect of the essay. Now, it is most important that this analysis does not simply become a response to the primary source. In other words, any discussion that simply states agreement or disagreement with points being made and does not inform readers how and why such points of agreement or disagreement come about and are important will not receive a high grade. Furthermore, arguments that are supported by generalizations (points without specific examples) will also be graded accordingly. Remember, there is a great difference between response and analysis. Any student plagiarizing any aspect of this paper will receive 0 points for the paper.

Application Essay:

The greater purpose of this essay is to display your ability to use a tertiary source as a lens for reading, interpreting, or analyzing a primary source. When developing this essay, you will want clearly inform your audience what tertiary source you are using, the main “argument” that you will be using from said source, and then apply that argument or idea to a primary text (in our case, Nella Larsen’s Passing). The shortest part of this essay should be your introduction where you recognize your tertiary source and the argument that you are taking from said source. The majority of your essay will be dedicated to displaying and supporting the argument that you will make regarding how that source impacted your reading of Larsen and thus impacted your understanding of the novel. This essay is more complex than your summary/analysis papers that will be done earlier in the semester. In order to complete this essay, you will only use Larsen’s novel and our readings. Any student plagiarizing any aspect of this paper will receive 0 points for the paper.

Seminar Paper:

At the end of the semester, you will turn in an 8-10 page seminar paper. This Seminar Paper is one that you will be working on (in different ways) throughout the semester. An explanatory handout for this paper will be provided to you. During the semester, you will complete an Annotated Bibliography and Proposal for this paper. We will peer workshop this “document” on Wednesday, November 14th, and any student who does not turn in the proposal and annotated bibliography on the date it is due will not be allowed to turn in a seminar paper. As you will have an extended period of time to work on this paper and have all the information presented in class, it is my expectation that these essays are your best work. As already noted, a developed explanation of the requirements for this project will be provided. Any student plagiarizing any aspect of this paper will receive 0 points for the paper.

Final Exam:

A final exam for this class will be held during the scheduled exam period.

General Grading Standard:

The following paragraphs offer a “general” description of how essay grades are determined. Of course with each specific assignment that you complete, there will be specific requirements that will be central to your completion of the essay and your final grade, but this will give you a set of general rules that should always be kept in mind.

A: 90-100: Students earning the grade of an A on any assignment will have completed work that obviously demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of
all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of an A is reserved for that work which expertly displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors.

B: 80-89: Students earning the grade of a B on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a B is reserved for that work which adeptly displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. However, the level of thought, while still above average, may fluctuate in terms of analytic abilities and expression.

C: 70-79: Students earning the grade of a C on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates an average understanding of the course material and completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a C is reserved for that work which displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand (more so through summary and response rather than analysis), recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas (however, the complications recognized will focus more on surface level issues rather than the greater whole), and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. As can be seen from this description, the level of thought will be acceptable and display that a student has read the assignment, but his/her analytic abilities and level of expression will not be nearly as complicated nor developed. Instead, C work will display a student’s hold to traditional methods of expression (simpler construction of sentence and paragraph development) and a struggle to develop complex, critical thinking skills.

D: 60-69: Students earning the grade of a D on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a below average understanding of course material and a lack of completion of all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a D is reserved for that work which displays one’s struggle or refusal to engage the ideas at hand, simply summarizes the work under study with no actual recognition of or dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and the translation of ideas into writing is completed in such a convoluted manner that the audience will have difficulty following the conversation.

F: 0-59: Students earning the grade of a F on any assignment will either not have completed the assignment, will have completed the assignment but not followed the guidelines, or will have completed the assignment and demonstrated a complete misunderstanding of the course material. In this case, it will be obvious that the student has either not completed the required reading and/or given him/herself enough time to develop the work. The grade of a F is reserved for that work which does not engage the issues at hand, offers a base (not complete) summary of the work at hand with no critical engagement, and the translation of ideas into writing is either incomplete or the audience will be unable to follow the conversation. It is important to remember that a student can receive 0 out of 100 points. In the case that a student only partially completes an assignment or completes a work (in terms of page length, but not purpose) s/he may receive 0 points.

Course Policies:
Attendance and Late Work:
While attendance may not be mandatory in all of your classes, I do hold to a strict attendance policy. As much of your success will depend on the deepening of your critical thinking and writing skills,
attendance is imperative. This being said, you will be allowed four absence without receiving any penalty. However, if you miss five classes, you may receive an end grade no higher than a C. If you miss six classes, you may automatically fail the course.

As for late work, I do my best to return all work in a prompt manner. In order to do so, though, I must have all assignments turned in on time. This being said, any assignment that is turned in late will be dropped one half of a letter grade (5 points) for each day that it is late. Assignments will be turned in at the start of class, and any student turning in the assignment any time after the class period may incur the penalty of one day late. If a student turns in a work after the first 15 minutes of class, it may be considered one day late.

The only absences that will count as excused absences will be DOCUMENTED family emergencies, university sanctioned events (this only includes sport/team events and will only count if I have documentation from the “coach”), and extreme medical issues. An excused absence does not include absences due to doctor appointments, absences due to cold/flu, absences for work, etc. In the case of any excused absence, you must remember that any work that is due that day is still due that day. The only exception for late work will be if the student has contacted me in advance and I have agreed to other arrangements.

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1):**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Stephen F. Austin State University defines academic dishonesty as:

- **Definition of Academic Dishonesty**
  - Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.
  - Please read the complete policy at: [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

In terms of this class, any student caught blatantly and purposely plagiarizing or cheating will automatically receive 0 points for the assignment. Furthermore, the incident may be reported.

**Cell Phones:**

Unless instructed otherwise, all cell phones will be put up in your school bag or purse at the start of class. They will remain there for the period.

**Free Speech and Class Conduct:**

In order to help improve our critical thinking and writing skills, we will regularly engage in class discussions and writings. The purpose of such work will be to recognize that while many of the
students in the class may be similar in terms of age or year, there are different academic abilities in the classroom and different ways to look at an issue or piece of writing. In other words, one can always learn from his/her peers. In order for this to happen, students should come to class ready to engage in discussion and debate. Our goal is not to “win” an argument or roll over our peers, but to critically engage the texts and our own responses to these texts. This is a space where one must feel comfortable to express his/her ideas and be willing to questions those same ideas. During any discussion, I will encourage debate, but I will not allow any student to employ sexist, racist, or homophobic speech, to commit a threatening action toward any peer, or to purposely work to silence or roll over peer.

Acceptable Student Behavior
Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy 10.4). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom.

In the case of this course, disruptive behavior will include the following: consistent use of cell phones/texting during class, consistent participation in side discussions that are not part of classroom dialogue, referring to your teacher or peers in an inappropriate way, physically threatening your teacher or peers, and completing homework assignments for another class. Students participating in such activities can be asked to leave the class and will be counted as absent.

Withheld Grades:
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.”
For the complete policy, http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/semester_grds.asp

Students with Disabilities:
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building Room 325, 468-3004/468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices.