

## English 300 Short Story--Fall 2017

Dr. Pat Young

Office: 016 Simpkins

Office Hrs: T,Th, 12:20-1:50 and W 9:30-10:30; also by appointment

Class: 3:30-4:45; Phone: 8-1482; p-young1@wiu.edu

**FIRST THINGS FIRST:** By enrolling and remaining in this class, you are agreeing to abide by the specifications and policies of this syllabus. If you feel that you cannot adhere to the requirements, grading system, and other practices, drop the class today. Please be prepared and eager to work hard and to interact with class members. Do not expect an easy A or an A simply because you show up for class. It is YOUR responsibility to purchase YOUR required texts for YOUR education.

**Course Objectives:** Eng. 300 is a study of the modern short story as a literary form. It provides an introduction to some of the best works of literature and emphasizes the development of the reader's interpretive skills. The course is designed to promote an appreciation of excellence in literature. To give you familiarity with one particular writer, his/her craft, his/her specific work, and the major ideas inherent in it, you will be assigned a presentation and will view films when appropriate.

**Required Texts:** R. V. Cassill's: *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction* and Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, (Linda Brent)

### Course Requirements:

1. Three Exams (which could be essay, objective, short answer, or any combination thereof. In most cases, it is likely that the exam will be a combination of the three forms and will be worth 100 points each) In some cases, you may have an exam that is constructed exclusively of quotations, essays, or short answers
2. One Presentation\* worth 100 points
3. In-class spontaneous writing assignments. The topics will be relative to the currently assigned work. They are designed to promote critical thinking, to improve writing skills, and to address questions that may appear on the exams. In general, these short "papers" will not be graded but will be read and discussed in class.
4. Write all essays in INK--BLACK OR BLUE ONLY. Essays written in pencil will not be corrected.
5. Check your Western Online for grades. Check your e-mail for homework assignments and class announcements.
6. Attend your personally scheduled conference to discuss your presentation.

**\*MORE ABOUT THE PRESENTATIONS:** In general, these presentations will be made as a group, consisting of two or more individuals. Grades, however, will be given on an individual basis. Presentations should treat in depth a single element of fiction e.g., character, setting, and two major ideas inherent in the work. Mention should be made of plot when discussing the works, but plot should not be emphasized. Moreover, the

presentation is to include questions, which the discussants originate. The questions should be only those which promote critical thinking and which generate class discussion. The presentation includes a hand-out containing biographical and bibliographical information regarding the authors. Since the texts contain some biographical data about the dramatists, please try to include some different data. To accommodate the needs of all group members, presentations should be from 20-25 minutes in length. Late presentations are lowered by a single letter grade. Please do not copy and paste your report from web sources. Such copying constitutes plagiarism.

**MORE ABOUT THE HANDOUTS:** In preparing the hand-outs, you may use both sides of the paper to save money and to avoid the excessive use of paper. We might also consider electronic handouts, in light of our budget. There will be an automatic deduction of ten (10) points for presenters who do not have hand-outs at the time of their presentation.

**PARTIAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING PRESENTATIONS:** Least value is assigned to the recitation of the author's life. For example, to receive maximum credit, you cannot simply read a chronology of the life of Ernest Hemingway. Instead, you must address the way in which issues of his life influence or are reflected in his literature. Greatest value is given to the analysis of theme, character, setting, and point of view in a work. With each element, you must provide examples of how the author demonstrates or addresses the element at hand. You may also respond to the writer's treatment of an issue. Additional areas to be evaluated include: Delivery (the voice--is it audible, can the speaker be heard?) Organization--is the material presented in a clear, coherent, and concise manner? Content—is the presentation targeted to a college audience? Is it carefully researched and prepared?

**Presentation Etiquette:** Seldom, at this level, is it necessary to have such policies. Nevertheless: gum-chewing, internal talking, and blatant day-dreaming/disinterest are rude behaviors and will lower your grade. Also, please refrain from walking out of class. Doing so will result in an absence. Thank you for taking care of your business BEFORE class.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Gum-popping and eating in class are exceedingly rude and distracting behaviors. They vitiate the academic atmosphere. Thank you for refraining from these acts. The following behaviors also vitiate the academic atmosphere, and repeated violations may result in dismissal from the class and possible judicial referral. Therefore please:

- \* Do not do homework for other courses while in this class
- \* Do not read material in class that is not related to English 300
- \* Please keep your head off the desk
- \* Do not text message, play games, listen to music, etc. on handheld devices

Cell Phones: Please turn off all cell phones before entering class. Please submit them to the professor before each exam. They will be returned.

Attendance: Class attendance is vital. Examination and presentation dates are confirmed in class. Make-up and late exams are given only when sufficient documentation is produced. For example, if you submit a physician's excuse, it must contain your name and the date(s) of your class absence. Four or more undocumented absences will result in the automatic subtraction of forty (40) points from your overall grade-point average. This policy applies to everyone. If you have an outstanding reason for violating this policy, I will only refer you to this syllabus in response. To ensure that there are no questions regarding this policy, you will highlight it with your marker during our initial class meeting.

**Final Grades:** Grades will be assigned according to the point system, which contains a maximum of 400 points. Each assignment--that is--each exam and presentation affords the potential of 100 points. Thus, the breakdown is:

360-400pts = A  
320-359pts = B  
280-319pts = C  
240-279pts = D  
239 and below = F

Reading List: (Should changes in the reading assignment or due dates occur, you shall be advised.)

1/17 Review Syllabus  
1/19 and 1/24 Fiction Overview  
1/26 *I Want to Know Why*  
1/31 *The Enormous Radio*; Receive Short Story for Group Assignment  
2/2 *Hills Like White Elephants*  
2/7 *Every Day Use*  
2/9 *The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*; Sign up for Conferences  
2/14 Meet the Authors of Eng. 300  
2/16-2/21 Conferences; Bring in notes and outline for your presentation  
2/23 Review

2/28 EXAM I (on material above)

3/2 *A Rose for Emily* Student Presentations Begin  
3/7-3/9 Film Days Cathedral

3/13-3/17 SPRING BREAK!

3/21 *Shiloh*  
3/23 *Linda Brent*  
3/28 Linda Brent lecture  
3/30 Review

4/4 EXAM II (over material dating from 3/2-3/30)

4/6 Film Day  
4/11 *Rules of the Game*  
4/13 *The Lottery*  
4/18 *King of the Bingo Game*  
4/20 *Cathedral*  
4/25 *Paul's Case*  
4/27 *Paul's Case*, The Movie!

5/2—5/4 Review and Tie-up

EXAM III (on material dating from 4/11--4/25)

#### SAMPLE WRITING TOPICS

1. We've read what Shirley Jackson has to say about mob brutality and tormenting scapegoats. But after being in college, what can you add to her argument?
2. When was the last time that you defended the underdog? What were your actual reasons for doing so?

#### Presentation Rubric

Content - How well did you cover your assignment? Did you provide relevant and important information? What was the breadth (wideness, scope) of your coverage? 40pts.

Organization - Did you present information in a clear, coherent, and concise manner? 20pts.

Knowledge - How knowledgeable were you about your topic? Were you able to answer questions directed at you? Did you include a Works Cited page, acknowledging the source of your information? 20pts.

Delivery - Did you speak in an audible and understandable voice? Did you: chew gum during your presentation? talk while your classmates were speaking? daydream and/or stare out of the window during the presentation?

Did you READ your presentation? Did you sit down--in a chair, or on top of a desk--during your presentation. 20pts

#### Partial Data for Meet the Authors Assignment

Name, Hometown, Major, Five-year plans; favorite musical groups, hobbies;

what the person would be doing now--if not in class doing this assignment;

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