

ENGLISH 204: THE SHORT STORY

Spring 1996

Section 90

Scott Stankey

Office: H 126

Phone: 422-3366 (Voice Mail)

Hours: T 6:00-6:30 p.m. and by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Analytical study of short stories from world literature.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Read, discuss, and interpret short stories from diverse cultures.
- Understand how these stories reflect the values of the people and times in which they were written.
- Select and apply a critical approach (biographical, feminist, historical, psychological, reader-response, social, etc.) to analyze, interpret, and evaluate selected stories.
- Present, through activities such as group discussion, journals, response papers, and reviews, a personal interpretation and evaluation of selected stories.
- Use literary terminology to describe technical elements and devices found in short stories-- character, plot, theme, style, setting, point of view, allegory, symbol, simile, metaphor, and irony.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Charters, *The Story and Its Writer*, Shorter 4th ed. (1995).

Two-pocket folder and loose-leaf paper.

COURSE PROCEDURE

I have designed this class so that we will closely read, carefully study, and hopefully enjoy some selected short stories. Each week, we will read two short stories, write a set of response notes on one of the stories, and then attend class prepared to discuss both stories. In class, we will use large-group and small-group discussions to explore our reactions to and interpretations of the stories, and we will also do some writing about the stories. Your grade will be based on the response notes, a critical essay, and a final exam.

If this method does not seem to be working for us (lack of participation and discussion, low-quality response notes, etc.), I will revise the syllabus and schedule so that we will read four or five stories each week. The class format will switch to lectures, supplemented by reading quizzes, a midterm, a critical essay, and a final. I do not want to do this, because I value a learning environment where multiple viewpoints are shared and accepted. The best literature classes have stimulating and enjoyable discussions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Response Notes (33%): You will write one set of response notes for most class sessions (marked with an * on the schedule) to reach a total of eight sets for the quarter. I will average the grades on these eight sets of notes to come up with one letter grade. If you are absent, you may not turn in the notes that are due for that class session. This is the case even if you know in advance that you must miss a class; the notes become meaningful only after the class session.

Analysis Paper (33%): You will write a paper of approximately 500-750 words in which you discuss one of the stories. I will give you specific instructions on how to do this. On May 21, a rough draft and two copies of your paper are due. On May 28, a final draft of your paper is due. If you miss either of these deadlines, or if you are not in class on these days, the final grade on the paper will be lowered one letter.

Final Examination (33%): You will write a final essay exam which will synthesize your reading and learning experiences in this course. The final will be explained in class on June 4.

COURSE POLICIES

Participation: This class will be successful if everyone prepares for and participates in each class. I expect everyone not only to do the reading, but also to do some thinking about the evening's stories before coming to class. Come to class with the intention of sharing what you know and seeking out what you don't know.

Attendance: You are expected to attend each entire class meeting. Because this is a night class, I strongly suggest missing no more than one class, since one night class is equivalent to one week of day classes. Missing more than two classes will lower your final grade one letter. Missing more than three classes will result in No Credit for the course. Please notify me in advance if you must miss class.

Notes and Folders: Please keep all of your class notes and written responses to our stories in one folder. You will be expected to come to each class with prepared response notes for one of the two stories, adding to these notes during the class meeting. At the end of each class, you will spend several minutes synthesizing the ideas that evolved from the discussion. Finally, you will staple your responses and hand them in.

Conferences: Please set up an appointment with me anytime to discuss one of the stories or other issues of concern. If you cannot meet me during my office hours, please ask me for an alternative meeting time.

Incompletes: Incompletes will only be given as final grades to students who have had a documented medical emergency during the quarter and have an average grade of C or better on their first six response papers and their analysis paper.

Plagiarism: Knowingly presenting another person's ideas or writing as your own without appropriate citation will result in an F grade for the course.

SCHEDULE

4/02

Introduction to the Course
Elements of Fiction
Ways of Responding to Short Fiction
Chopin, "The Story of an Hour," pp. 169-171

4/09*

Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown," pp. 330-340
Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado," pp. 627-633
Appendix 2, "The Elements of Fiction," pp. 874-886

4/16*

Bierce, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," pp. 73-80
Jackson, "The Lottery," pp. 361-368
Appendix 1, "A Brief History of the Short Story," pp. 865-873

4/23*

Welty, "A Worn Path," pp. 715-722
Cheever, "The Swimmer," pp. 136-145

4/30*

Wright, "The Man Who Was Almost a Man," pp. 723-733
Tan, "Two Kinds," pp. 651-660

5/07*

Carver, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love," pp. 90, 110-119
Mason, "Shiloh," pp. 492-503

5/14*

Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants," pp. 350-354
Kincaid, "Girl," pp. 448-450
Appendix 3, "Writing About Short Stories," pp. 887-910

5/21

Rough Drafts of Critical Paper Due
In-Class Reading and Responding

5/28*

Final Drafts of Critical Paper Due

Porter, "He," pp. 634-641

Oates, "Heat," pp. 558-567

6/04*

Paley, "A Conversation with My Father," pp. 622-626

Atwood, "Happy Endings," pp. 32-35

Moore, "How to Become a Writer," pp. 540-545

Critical Papers Returned

Discuss Final Examination

6/11

Final Examination

Please note that this syllabus and schedule are subject to change. Changes will be announced in advance.