

Comparative Literature

Spring 2000, MWF 10:10

Instructor: Beverly Weber, Bartlett 15, bweber@complit.umass.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday, 3:30 - 5:00; Friday, 11:00 - 12:00. Bartlett 15.

20th Century International Short Story

Course Description: This course will introduce students to 20th century short stories from a variety of cultures. The course is designed to address a wide range of styles, themes, and contexts. There will be a heavy emphasis on developing critical reading and writing skills; for this reason, no tests or quizzes are planned (see below). Instead, there will be a major writing component to the course which will be reinforced by a series of three writing workshops preceding the first three (shorter) papers. Students who have difficulty with reading and writing are encouraged to get extra help from the instructor early on in the course.

Course Goals:

- Enjoy the stories!!!!
- Introduce students to short stories from the last century and from a variety of cultures
- Improve logical and analytical skills
- Improve writing skills
- Improve discussion skills
- Improve reading skills

Grade Breakdown:

- Class Participation and Attendance: 15%.
- Response Papers: 15%. (Graded plus, check, or unacceptable; one per week in which literary analysis is NOT due, length and topic up to writer, may be handed in at any point during the week)

PAPER TOPICS FOR THE FOLLOWING PAPERS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE INSTRUCTOR IN ADVANCE

- Short Paper 1: 10%. (Literary Analysis of ONE story, 3 pages minimum)
- Short Paper 2: 15%. (Literary Analysis of ONE story, 3 pages minimum)
- Paper 3: 20%. (Comparative Literary Analysis of TWO stories, 5 pages minimum)
- Paper 4: 20% (Comparative Literary Analysis of THREE stories, 6 pages minimum)
- Peer Review for Paper 4: 5%.

Required Texts:

The Short Story and Its Writer. 5th Edition, Unabridged. Ed. Ann Charters. Available at Food for Thought Books, Amherst.

Supplementary Reader. Available at Paradise Copies, 30 Crafts Avenue, Northhampton.

Absences: Attendance is required and is factored into your participation grade. Absences must be explained in a written note to the instructor in order to be excused.

Late Assignments: Stories should be read by the date they appear on the syllabus. The instructor will use unannounced quizzes to calculate daily class participation grades in the absence of class discussion. So long as discussion remains active and students read the stories, no quizzes will be given.

Arrangements for late papers must be made in advance with the instructor. Late papers for the two DRAFTS (2nd and 3rd paper workshops) will not be permitted, as participation in these workshops will be impossible without a draft.

Response Papers may be turned in any time during the week. If a student is absent, the response paper for that week must include a discussion of the work addressed during the student's absence.

Papers: Detailed instructions and tips will be distributed during the course of the semester. Note that the final paper requires that you read a peer's paper outside of the course and provide your peer and the instructor with a copy of your written comments.

Course Web Page: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~bweber/cmlit121.html> All course information will be posted on the web in addition to distribution in class. Students who are not web-literate should contact the instructor early on in the course for help.

Course Plan:

(please note that the groupings are very loose -- many stories would fit into several of the groupings, and many other potential groupings are possible)

1. Wednesday, January 26th: Introduction to the course: course goals, tips on using the anthology and reader, a definition of comparative literature.
2. Friday, January 28th: Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants."
3. Monday, January 31st: What is a short story? Questions of genre, theory of short story. Ann Charters, "A Brief History of the Short Story." Anton Chekov, "Technique in Writing the Short Story." Flannery O'Connor, "Writing Short Stories." Edgar Allan Poe, "The Importance of the Single Effect in a Prose Tale."

Realism in short stories

4. Wednesday, February 2nd. Doris Lessing, "Old Chief Mshlanga."
5. Friday, February 4th. Chinua Achebe, "Civil Peace."
6. Monday, February 7th. Flannery O'Connor, "Everything That Rises Must Converge." Flannery O'Connor, from letters 1945 - 1955. V.S. Pritchett, "Satan Comes to Georgia."
7. Wednesday, February 9th. Tim O'Brien, "The Things They Carried." Bobbie Ann Mason, "On Tim O'Brien's 'The Thing's They Carried.'"
8. Friday, February 11th. Tadeusz Borowski, "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentleman." Elie Wiesel, "Ethics and Memory" (READER). Vaclav Havel, "In Memory of Our Holocaust Victims" (READER).
9. Monday, February 14th. Paper Workshop. How to write a literary analysis.

The Fantastic

10. Wednesday, February 16th. Franz Kafka, "In the Penal Colony" (READER). Franz Kafka, "The Hunger Artist." Franz Kafka, from the Diaries (READER). Milan Kundera, "Kafka and Modern History."

11. Friday, February 18th. Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths." Jorge Luis Borges, "The Labyrinth in 'The Garden of Forking Paths.'" Jorge Luis Borges, "Borges and I" (READER).

Monday, February 21st, HOLIDAY.

12. Wednesday, February 23rd. PAPER 1 DUE. Gabriel García Marquez, "A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings."

13. Friday, February 25th. Julio Cortázar, "A Continuity of Parks." Julio Cortázar, "Blow-Up" (READER).

14. Monday, February 28th. Cristina Peri Rossi, "The Threshold" (READER).

15. Wednesday, March 1st. Rosario Ferré, "The Poisoned Story" (READER). Rosario Ferré, "On Destiny, Language, and Translation or: Ophelia Adrift on the C&O Canal" (READER).

16. Friday, March 3rd. Paper Workshop: Peer Editing. Paper 2 DRAFT DUE.

A Native American Literature?

17. Monday, March 6th. Louise Erdrich, "The Red Convertible." Paula Gunn Allen, Introduction to Song of the Turtle (READER).

18. Wednesday, March 8th. Sherman Alexie, "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven." PAPER 2 DUE.

19. Friday, March 10th. (Screening of film will be scheduled this week). Assignment: Literature into Film. Watch Smoke Signals or Blow-Up. Read Ann Charters, "Short Stories into Film and Video." Two page response paper on making literature into film and Smoke Signals (or Blow-Up) required, may be turned in any time between March 8th and March 22nd.

SPRING BREAK

20. Monday, March 20th. Leslie Marmon Silko, "Yellow Woman." Paula Gunn Allen, "Whirlwind Steals Yellow Woman." Leslie Marmon Silko, "Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective."

Gender and Literature

21. Wednesday, March 22nd. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper." Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "A Feminist Reading of Gilman's 'The Yellow Wallpaper.'" Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Undergoing the Cure for Nervous Prostration." Weir Mitchell on his rest cure (READER).

22. Friday, March 24th. Ingeborg Bachmann, "The Barking" (READER).

23. Monday, March 27th. Alice Walker, "Roselily."

24. Wednesday, March 29th. Bessie Head, "Life."

25. Friday, March 31st. Edna O'Brien, "The Scandalous Woman" (READER).

Modernist Literature

26. Monday, April 3rd. Virginia Woolf, "Kew Gardens." Katherine Manfield, "Review of Virginia Woolf's 'Kew Gardens.'"

27. Wednesday, April 5th. Thomas Mann, "Mario and the Magician" (READER).

28. Friday, April 7th. James Joyce, "The Dead." Richard Ellman, "A Biographical Perspective on Joyce's 'The Dead.'" Frank O'Connor, "Style and Form in Joyce's 'The Dead.'"

29. Monday, April 10th. William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily." William Faulkner, "The Meaning of 'A Rose for Emily.'"

30. Wednesday, April 12th. Regular class time: Modernism Wrap-Up; Introduction to Existentialism

31. Wednesday, April 12th: 5:00, Advance Make-Up session. Paper Workshop & Peer Editing. PAPER 3 DRAFT DUE.

32. Friday, April 14th. Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Wall" (READER). Jean-Paul Sartre, "We Write for Our Times" (READER). Jean-Paul Sartre, "On Being a Writer" (READER).

Monday, April 17th. HOLIDAY.

Philosophy and Literature

33. Wednesday, April 19th. Albert Camus, "The Guest." PAPER 3 DUE.

34. Thursday, April 20th. Milan Kundera, "Let the Old Dead Make Room for the Young Dead" (READER).

35. Friday, April 21st. Clarice Lispector, "The Smallest Woman in the World." Julia Alvarez, "On Clarice Lispector's 'The Smallest Woman in the World.'"

An Unfairly Short Introduction to East Asian Literatures

36. Monday, April 24th. Lu Xun, "Diary of a Madman." Lu Xun, Preface to A Call For Arms" (READER).

37. Wednesday, April 26th. Yukio Mishima, "Swaddling Clothes."

Friday, April 28th. No class (Advance make-up, Wednesday, April 12th).

Monday, May 1st. No class. (Make-up, Wednesday, May 3rd)

38. Wednesday, May 3rd. Regular time: Abe Akira, "Peaches."

39. Wednesday, May 3rd. 5:00 p.m. (Make-up session). Rohinton Mistry, "Swimming Lessons."

Finishing Up

40. Friday, May 5th. Sandra Cisneros, "The House on Mango Street." Sandra Cisneros, "Straw into Gold." Ellen McCracken, "On Cisneros's 'The House on Mango Street.'" Mark Zimmerman, "U.S. Latino Literature: History and Development." PAPER 4 DUE (option to rewrite).

41. Monday, May 8th. Ursula LeGuin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas." PAPER 4 DUE (no rewrite option).

42. Wednesday, May 10th. William Gibson, "Johnny Mnemonic" (READER). David G. Hartwell, Introduction to A Science Fiction Century.

Monday, May 15th: REWRITES DUE FOR PAPERS SUBMITTED ON FRIDAY, MAY 5th