English 220

Introduction to Writing About Literature

Agency: Navigating Power Structures

Hunter College—Spring 2024

Days: Tuesday, Friday

Section 63: 1:00—2:15 / Room: TH412

Section 44: 4:00—5:15 / Room: W611

Instructor: Meg Wise-Lawrence

Email: mwiselaw@gmail.com

Office: M153 HN/TH *Follow signs toward Harriet Gruber Rehearsal Space (door to left then inside around the corner on the left); you may also find me at the Writing Center (Library 7fl).*

Office (individual) and Conference (group) Hours: available by appointment in my office, the Writing Center, or via Zoom.

Course Description

English 220 is a course with a strong emphasis on close reading. It is designed to prepare students for future humanities (and beyond) courses by helping them hone their reading skills along with their writing skills. The readings will elicit student responses that will be firmly grounded in the text, and the focus of the class will be on developing analytical and interpretive skills necessary for both written and verbal critical responses to literature. The course will introduce students to different critical lenses and provide ample opportunities to experience the text through different perspectives. An integral part of the discussion about literature will be familiarizing oneself with figurative language and learning how to unpack rhetorical devices. This course is designed to equip students with the vocabulary and techniques for responding to, describing, and analyzing literary works critically. In addition, the course develops an appreciation and understanding of the aesthetic qualities of literature and the arts, as well as an awareness that literature is part of a larger ongoing cultural, social, and historical dialogue that informs, influences, and inspires our experience. After all, who are we but our stories?

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students should be able to 1) write thesis-driven analytical essays of 3 or more pages on all three genres (poetry, fiction, and drama) that incorporate evidence from the literary texts and demonstrates close reading skills. 2) Write an analytical research paper of 7-10 pages that demonstrates close reading skills and the appropriate use of evidence from literary texts; the ability to create a clear thesis statement; and the ability to incorporate and engage scholarly critical sources as part of well-organized, thesis-driven argument. 3) Discuss fiction, poetry, and Shakespearean drama verbally through the use of close reading skills and, where appropriate, basic literary and critical terminology. 4) Demonstrate some familiarity with literary criticism in class discussion and writing. 5) Demonstrate the ability to compare and/or contrast two literary works.

Required Texts

Macbeth by William Shakespeare. Must be: SECOND Norton Critical Edition. Approx. $20.00
ISBN: 978-0393923261

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley. Must be: THIRD Norton Critical Edition. Approx. $20.00

ISBN-10: 0393927938
Herland by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Dover ISBN-13: 978-0486404 or ANY edition (including free online). Approx. $5.

All texts will be available for purchase online and at Shakespeare & Co. or at the online bookstore: http://hunter.textbookx.com/institutional/index.php?action=browse#books/1627362/

All other readings will be posted on BlackBoard (BB) and you **ARE RESPONSIBLE TO PRINT THEM OUT OR HAVE THEM ON YOUR DEVICE FOR CLASS**. If you do not have the readings with you, you are unprepared. Furthermore, all reading assignments must be completed prior to the date that they appear on the class schedule so that they can be discussed on that date. Failure to due this will count as one lateness (3 lateness's = 1 absence). These rules also apply to **Group Work.** During the first week of classes, you will be assigned a Reading Group (A-E). Your group will be in charge of approximately one weekly reading. This is the main component of your participation grade and will be evaluated by your participation (in class and "behind the scenes," which will be tracked via our MVP Group Reflections).

Grade Breakdown (Approximate)
20% Preparedness and Participation (including attendance, punctuality, engagement, group work, conference, homework, and in-class writing)
20% BlackBoard blog posts and responses
20% *Macbeth* essay (5-6 pages)
20% *Frankenstein* documented research essay (7-8 pages)
20% Midterm and Final Exams (in class)

Late Work
Papers are shared with me as a Google Doc by the due date indicated on the class schedule. Papers submitted up to a week late receive a lower grade. Rewrites must be discussed and approved, when applicable.

BlackBoard and Participation
As each student or group is expected to do the assigned readings for each class, each student is also expected to participate in our class discussions on those readings. Class discussions will be guided by but not limited to the weekly discussion board. Everyone must post responses to the topic by the Monday midnight before Tuesday class by starting a new thread, and must comment on three to five other threads by Thursday midnight before Friday class.

Attendance Policy
Students are allowed to miss three class sessions without it affecting their grade—this includes online synchronous classes (if applicable). You are, however, expected to find out what you missed from a classmate, or your participation grade will be lowered. For every absence after three, including excused absences, your grade will be lowered by one third of a grade. Six absences may result in failure of the course. This rule also applies to BB posts and responses.

Food and Drink
Please refrain from eating in our classroom. It is fine, though, to consume drinks with lids. Since it is a short class, keep your bathroom visits and other distractions to before or after class. If you have extenuating circumstances, alert me.

Electronic Distractions
Use of electronic devices is allowed only insofar as it *directly relates to class*. Absolutely no headphones or earbuds may be worn in class, unless otherwise specified. I also expect you to remain visibly awake, attentive to studies, and not engaged in unrelated discussions (with classmates, your devices, or yourself).

Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct: "In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.

a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).
b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link:
http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-12-1-14with-links.pdf

Academic Integrity Statement: "Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures."

ADA Statement: "In compliance with the ADA and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational access and accommodations for all its registered students. Hunter College's students with disabilities and medical conditions are encouraged to register with the Office of AccessABILITY for assistance and accommodation. For information and appointment contact the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1214 or call (212) 772-4857 /or VRS (646) 755-3129."

The Essays:

Formatting Work

All writing assignments must be double-spaced in 12 pt. font Times New Roman with standard 1" margins, and MLA heading on the first page. Your name and a page number must appear on the top right of every page. Any work beyond a single page should be stapled. I will not accept work that is handwritten, paper clipped or in interesting colors. ***Emails and discussion board responses do not require the assignment heading, as that should appear in the subject line. Emails should be in Standard English and include your full name and class.*** Refer to Purdue OWL and the Hunter College Reading Writing Center for additional support, including MLA and English standards. Refer to rubric for grading.

Drama *Macbeth:* Play + Movie Essay

You will compare and contrast the play to your specific movie, focusing on a particular theme. Using at least two scenes (one early, one late) from BOTH, you will closely examine how and why they work (or don't work) in supporting your narrowed theme or topic. Your thesis should be a unique, arguable observation about the play itself AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, YOUR particular production (see Purdue OWL for citing movies). Outside support or background materials should be consulted. You are expected to use critical lenses while you interpret the drama and the movie, framing these within the historical contexts. MLA works cited should include the drama, the movie, your sources for background information, and at least one deeply engaged critical source (you may use a critical source from the Norton).
6 pages, not including Works Cited.

Fiction *Frankenstein:* Critical Analysis Research Essay: A Focus on Theme and Lens

Choosing a theme and a critical lens through which to examine it, you will write a documented critical analysis essay ("research paper") on *Frankenstein*. Your final draft must have a concrete, arguable claim. As you examine your theme, think about how to narrow it. First contextualize by considering genre and looking through the historical lens. Expand to consider gender/sexuality, class, and race. What issues arise? What makes your thesis current and relevant? Why should your audience (us) care? Your final thesis should be a unique, nuanced claim about the passages that you will analyze with close reading, and using at least 3 critical sources (engage your sources, build from them, don't be afraid to disagree). The focus should be on developing the theme or issue in a conversation with the critical sources, focusing on a close viewing of your movie version. ***Research Stages for in class workshops:***

- *I) Thesis Development: after examining topics and themes, there will be thesis revision workshops and in class writing*
- *II) The Annotation Worksheet (aka Synthesis Matrix on Bb)*
  - *a. Annotated Bibliography (5+ sources): Varied Ethos*
  - *b. Review of the Literature (3+ sources): Include a source you disagree with.*
  - *c. Research Draft: Synthesis and Development*

8 pages, not including Works Cited.

Midterm and Final Exams: Critical Thinking, Close Reading and Explication

You will use close reading, historical context, and a critical lens, to explicate one poem by a poet covered in this class (choices will be announced prior to exams). What is the poet trying to convey and how successful is the poet? Your thesis should focus on a narrowed theme and why you think it is important in the poem. Consider form AND content as you closely read and

analyze, line by line (if it's a long poem, focus on significant sections), connecting your interpretation to your thesis. *Midterm and Final (dates on syllabus)*

If this class must go temporarily online, classes will be presented on Zoom synchronously. Class will only last 40 minutes, with the final time being spent asynchronously on Discussion Board and draft work.

Weekly discussion board responses must be both reflective and critical. Keep up with the course schedule and all assignments-- all readings, all Bb work, including your weekly Discussion Board blog post and responses. Falling behind **will** adversely affect your grades.

Make sure you keep up with ALL readings. Be prepared to hand in assignments and discuss readings. Be prepared by staying ahead of your work—print out readings a week in advance, read and annotate regularly between classes. Stay up to date with the calendar below. Subject to change at instructor's discretion.

Class Schedule *(Subject to Change)*

Week	Readings and Assignments
1	**1/26 Introductions**. Key words: drama, fiction, poetry; form, content. Discussion of the course, preparedness, and reading critically. The Hunter College Writing Center, MLA, and Purdue OWL. In class writing: Reflective Writing Diagnostic (What's in a name?). **HW**: BlackBoard (BB): Be prepared by printing, reading, and annotating BB Assignments and completing Discussion Board. **Print and annotate:** the Syllabus, at least one sonnet, as well as Wolff and Rosenberg. **BB1 WEEKLY Blackboard (Bb): Discussion Board Blog (Introductory).**
2	**1/30 Be prepared to discuss** Shakespeare's Sonnets as well as "Winter Light" (Wolff), and "Reading Games" (Rosenberg). Revisit Assignment: What's in a Name? (consider Sandra Cisneros' "My Name").

	2/2: Discussion of Shakespeare's Sonnets and explication; Wolff's "Winter Light" (cont.). Print out for discussion: the Synthesis Matrix and Rhetorical Précis Worksheets. **HW:** Try your hand at writing a sonnet. Bring draft to class to workshop. **BB: What BB Reading Group are you in and what's the reading and responding plan?**
3	**2/6** Poetry Explication and Workshop. "Shitty First Drafts" (Lamott) and "Reflective Writing" (Giles). **2/9** Introducing Shakespeare the playwright and "the Scottish play." Read Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Act I; **HW:** Start reading the Norton *Macbeth* (see due dates below). Letters refer to your reading presentation group. **DUE:** Drama notes, draft, and worksheets in preparation for in class workshopping **BB:** Choose version of *Macbeth* to watch from beginning to end (take detailed notes). Share your Works Cited page, including the Norton Critical edition as well as the movie (or movies or opera) you are watching.
4	**2/13** *Macbeth*, Acts II and III. **2/16** Norton critical readings: Siddons 91, Bell 97, Fleetwood 134; McKellen 116 & Stewart 131 Group work: A) Luther 173 & Erasmus 181; B) Scot 189 & King James 197; C) Church of England 207 & DeMariana 214; D) Garnet 218 & 220 **BB:** Entering the conversation. For example, how and why did Shakespeare update the story of Macbeth into something that reflected the change of monarchs?

5	**2/20** *Macbeth*, Acts IV and V **2/23** Giles and the importance of reflection. **BB:** Reflection and the Writing Process (choose an idea from "Reflective Writing" by Giles to analyze and reflect upon).
6	**2/27** Final *Macbeth* discussion. **3/1** Coleridge 233, Orgel 255, & Holland 270 **DUE:** Draft about the play *Macbeth* for workshopping and instructor meeting. Introducing the Romantic Movement. **3/4** The Romantic Poets (BB) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* **HW:** Read, print, and annotate the Romantic Poets packet (BB) **BB:** *Macbeth* draft
7	**3/5** *Frankenstein* Introduction through Volume I **3/8** Close reading of Mellor 295 (entire class) Group Work (Contexts): A) Genesis 171 & Milton 172; B) Coleridge 184; C) Percy Shelley 204; D) Byron 210; E) Wood 539 **Due: *Macbeth* Essay Due (share as Google Doc to mwiselaw@gmail.com)** **BB Group Work:** Post a précis on one of this week's readings.
8	**3/12** Norton Critical readings: A) Baldick 222; B) Baldick 336; C) St Clair 342; D) Hitchcock 357; E) Pirie 399 **HW**: *Frankenstein* essay draft 1: includes notes, freewriting, outlining, worksheets **3/15 MIDTERM** (Google Doc or blue book) Poetry Explication (Shakespeare sonnet or a poem by Percy Shelley or Lord Byron—one not explicated in class) **BB: Group Work:** Post a précis on one of this week's readings
9	**3/19** *Frankenstein* Volume II

	3/22 Heffernan 411; B) Brantlinger 451; Butler 439; D) Moers 460; E) London 470 as well as the Bb Precis worksheet. Bring all draft work regarding your *Frankenstein* essay to class.
10	**3/26** Catch up week . **BB: *Frankenstein* Annotated Bibliography** **DUE:** Macbeth rewrites (if applicable)
11	**4/2 & 5** *Frankenstein* Volume III Chapters 1-6 **DUE for Bb & class: *Frankenstein* Introduction with thesis and Annotated Bibliography**
12	**4/9 & 12** Continued *Frankenstein* workshops and discussion
13	**4/16** Final *Frankenstein* discussion **4/19** American Romantics: Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman **HW/DUE/BB: *Frankenstein* final draft workshop**
15	**5/3** Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman (Also read "I Sit and Sew") **HW**: Print, read, and annotate one each from Dickinson and Whitman. **DUE**: *Frankenstein* essay for workshop. **BB: Poetry Explication Workshop**
16	**5/7** Charlotte Perkins Gilman "The Yellow Wallpaper" and *Herland* (read through chapter 3). **5/10** Final *Herland* discussion. Final exam review.

	<u>DUE</u>: final draft of *Frankenstein,* the critically researched essay (8-10 p).
17	**5/14** Final exam review. **5/16 FINAL EXAM (Romantic Poets).**