

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS: SHORT STORY Fall 2013

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Pdf password = short fiction

Description: The study of the history and art of short fiction through readings of a variety of world writers. Representative figures include, but are not limited to, Hawthorne, Melville, Joyce, James, Hemingway, Atwood, O'Connor, Cather, Faulkner, de Maupassant, etc.

Schedule of Assignments:

M-9/2-- **LABOR DAY HOLIDAY**

W-9/3--Introduction

M-9/9--Overview

W-9/11--de Maupassant, "The Necklace"

M-9/16--LeGuin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" ; Chekhov, "The Lady with the Dog"

W-9/18--Twain, "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County"; Bierce, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"

M-9/23--Poe, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"

W-9/25--Poe, "William Wilson"

M-9/30--Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener"

W-10/2--Hawthorne, "The Birthmark" PAPER DUE

M-10/7-- " "Rappacini's Daughter"

W-10/9--Crane, "The Open Boat"; Cather, "Paul's Case"

M-10/14--Anderson, "I Want to Know Why"

W-10/16-- Anderson, "A Death in the Woods"

M-10/21--**MIDTERM** (essay form; bring blue book; all material to this point) (Mock Midterm)

W-10/23--Joyce, "Araby"

M-10/28--"The Dead"

W-10/30--James, "The Jolly Corner"

M-11/4--Atwood, "Rape Fantasies"

W-11/6--O'Connor, "Guests of the Nation"

M-11/11--**HOLIDAY**

W-11/13--Dreiser, "The Second Choice"

M-11/18--Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"
W-11/20---Ellison, "The King of the Bingo Game" **PAPER DUE**

M-11/25--Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily"
W-11/27--**HOLIDAY**

M-12/2-- Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"
W-12/4--Wright, "Big Black Good Man"

M-12/9-- O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"
W-12/11--Chopin, "The Story of an Hour" **Take Home Final Due**

TEXTS--R. V. Cassill, ed., *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*; Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*

EXPECTATIONS

- *Complete all reading assignments by dates assigned
- *Participate in class discussions
- *Regular class attendance

Since this is not a correspondence course, attendance is mandatory. A student will be allowed no more than two (2) unexcused absences (and no more than two excused absences). Those who have more than 2 unexcused absences will have one third of a grade deducted from the final grade for each additional absence. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. If a student arrives after attendance has been taken, it is his/her responsibility to see that s/he is recorded as being present. Excused absences will be granted only for extenuating circumstances (neither general malaise nor an assignment in another class will do) and must be cleared no later than the next class period. It is your responsibility to check your attendance; my records are final.

I recommend you date your class notes in order to demonstrate your attendance should there be a conflict in records. Be prepared to show those notes at the time that you inquire about your absences.

Tardiness policy: Class begins on the hour; students arriving consistently late by more than 5 minutes will be considered absent for any time missed. The time missed will be calculated as absences which will affect the final grade as explained above.

GRADING

The final course grade will be based on:

- 1 essay midterm--20% final grade
- 1 essay--50% final grade
- 1 essay final exam--30% final grade
- quizzes--factored in at no more than 10%
- class participation, improvement--swing factors

*To miss any of the assignments above will result in an automatic failure of the course.
NO EXCEPTIONS.

GRADING STANDARDS

Grading standards are identical to those defined by the university in the Catalog (p. 97).

- A Exemplary achievement of the course objectives. In addition to being clearly and significantly above the requirements, the work exhibited is of an independent, creative, contributory nature.
- B Superior achievement of the course objectives. The performance is clearly and significantly above the satisfactory fulfillment of course requirements.
- C Satisfactory achievement of the course objectives. The student is now prepared for advanced work or study.
- D Unsatisfactory achievement toward the course objectives, yet achievement of a sufficient proportion of the objectives so that it is not necessary to repeat the course unless required to do so by the academic department.
- F Ineffective achievement toward the course objectives. The student has made no clearly significant progress.

NB: I do not negotiate grades. If you have questions about performance in the class or on an assignment, I will be glad to explain, but I will not barter a grade up or down. If you wish to discuss a paper, you may not do so on the day it is returned to you; see me at my next office hour. No exceptions.

GENERAL POLICIES

LATE PAPERS--in this class they do not exist; the date an assignment is due is the date the assignment is due. If there is some clear and compelling reason for a late paper (not great powder at one's favorite ski resort, general malaise, or an assignment in any other class), see or call me in advance of submission. All papers must be submitted in class on date due, not some time that day.

TYPING--mandatory for all papers. Papers should be neat and free of extreme typographical errors. Double-space and use 1" margins and only a **12 pt** font. Print on only one side of the paper. Number pages, beginning with second page, in upper right hand corner, and secure pages only with a staple in the upper left hand corner. On a cover page center the title and put in the lower right hand corner your name, the date the assignment is due, the topic number you are addressing, and my name. The topic page is unnumbered.

PLAGIARISM--Plagiarism is the false assumption of authorship, and, as the *MLA*

Handbook notes, it constitutes the "use of another person's ideas, information, or expressions without acknowledging that person's work. . . Passing off another person's ideas, information, or expressions as your own to get a better grade or gain some other advantage constitutes fraud." Simply put, if you didn't think of it, didn't say it, or didn't write it, you must give full attribution in the form of proper citation. I will not tolerate plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, and I will fail anyone I catch cheating and report that student to the Dean of Students. For information on the university's policy concerning plagiarism and academic honesty, see <http://www.csus.edu/um anual/student/UMA00150.htm>.

BEHAVIOR--recently a professor in another department did a survey of standards of behavior, and the results suggested there is some confusion about what is (and is not) acceptable in university classes. She has advised that professors define their standards, so here are mine: certain fundamental standards of behavior must be observed in this class. Common courtesy and respect is demanded of all enrolled in this class. Therefore you are not to read the newspaper or a textbook for another course once the class meeting has begun. **Turn off your cell phones**; no one is to take or make a call during class; the same goes for texting, don't send or view any during class. **Turn off the laptops**; no one may use a laptop during class. No ereaders with internet connectivity. Likewise, no one is to work on assignments for another course in this class. Do not talk or otherwise interrupt me or another student who is speaking, and under no condition will anyone be permitted to sleep during class lectures or discussions. Those who cannot or will not follow these obvious rules of behavior will be counted as absent for that class period and may be subject to dismissal from the course.

MISCELLANEOUS--Students must keep abreast of assignments; I will not accept the excuse that because someone misses a class s/he did not know there was a change in the syllabus or an assignment. If there are any changes in the syllabus, they will be announced in class, and students are then responsible for these on dates announced.

STUDY QUESTIONS: ENGLISH 170E

"The Necklace"--Maupassant

- 1.) Who is Mme Loisel; examine her carefully. What kind of person is she; what is most important to her; how would you describe her values?
- 2.) We have discussed already the notion of unity in short fiction, yet this story covers a span of 10 years and details a change in life, circumstances, and the personality of the protagonist. Does the tale have any unifying structure; if so, what is it?
- 3.) Much has been made of the story's conclusion. What makes it so memorable; does it work? Explain its effect on the reader.
- 4.) What does the story suggest about the nature of life itself?

"The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"--Le Guin (925)

- 1.) What, exactly, is the story suggesting; consider the ideas being developed here.
- 2.) Apart from those ideas or that message, is the story interesting; how and why?
- 3.) Describe the narrative perspective. Who is telling the story and what is the effect of this point of view on the story and our appreciation of it?
- 4.) What is this place that the travellers are destined for after leaving Omelas? What qualities does this new place have?

"The Lady with the Dog"--Anton Chekov

- 1.) Consider each of the story's three settings (Yalta, S., and Moscow). What kind of towns or cities are these; who comes or lives there; what is the general atmosphere of each place and how do those figure in the events that unfold?
- 2.) What happens to Gurov as a result of his relationship with Anna?
- 3.) Explain the importance of Gurov's realization about his double life (247).
- 4.) explain the significance of the conclusion; what is going on here?

"The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County"--Twain

- 1.) Since the story is obviously evidence of Twain's humorous abilities, what makes the tale comic?
- 2.) What is the role of the narrator?

3.) What is the point of the particular method of narration (look closely at the 3 ¶s on p., the body of the story, and the ¶ on p.)?

"The Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"--A. Bierce

- 1.) This is certainly a disorienting story; what makes it so disorienting besides the shocking conclusion
- 2.) Account for Farquhar's intense sensitivity to his surroundings after his "escape."
- 3.) At what point do we get the first hint that the escape is an hallucination? At what point can we be certain?
- 4.) Who is the narrator and describe the narrative point of view.

"The Murders in the Rue Morgue"--Poe

- 1.) Chart the development of the plot; is there any logic to the unfolding of the action?
- 2.) Look closely at the characters; who are these people and what functions do they have in the story?
- 3.) Describe the setting of the story; what are its features and what significance does it have and how does it contribute to the story?

"William Wilson"--Poe

- 1.) Look closely at the narrator's description of himself. Who is this person and what is the reader's impression of him?
- 2.) Why does Poe go to such specific lengths to describe the setting of the first school and gradually less detail as we move through other settings?
- 3.) Who is William Wilson II and what is his importance?

"Bartleby, the Scrivener"--Melville

- 1.) Who is the narrator and how do we respond to him?
- 2.) Who is Bartleby and what is his importance?
- 3.) What is the importance of the concluding paragraph and its information about Bartleby's former occupation?

"The Birthmark"--Hawthorne

- 1.) What is the significance of the mark on Georgiana's cheek?
- 2.) What does the story say about the secrets of nature and about human attempts to learn them?
- 3.) What is the relation between Aylmer's love for science and his love for Georgiana?
- 4.) What is the significance of Georgiana's touching and blighting the plant which Aylmer gives her? How does Aylmer interpret this event?
- 5.) Look closely at the ways in which Aylmer is described; who is this man and what is his significance?

"Rappacini's Daughter"--Hawthorne

- 1.) What kind of garden is this; what kind of plants are here; how is the fountain important?
- 2.) How are we to interpret Dr. Rappacini; how and why is he important?
- 3.) How are we to interpret Beatrice; how and why is she important?
- 4.) How do we interpret Giovannni; who is he?
- 5.) How are we to interpret Baglioni?
- 6.) What is the importance of the brief introduction ("Writings of Aubépine")?

"The Open Boat"--Crane

- 1.) What is the major conflict of this story? What minor conflicts accompany it?
- 2.) Why does the indifference of nature to fate of the men seem worse than hostility?
- 3.) What is the tone of the narration? Does it mask feelings contrary to the significance of events?
- 4.) Interpret the tone & meaning of the expression "nibble the sacred cheese of life?"
- 5.) Consider the passage in Pt. 4 about the "old ninny_woman Fate." What does this contribute to the story?
- 6.) Analyze the role that nature, in its various manifestations, plays here?

7.) Is there irony in the story; discuss this.

"Paul's Case"--Cather

- 1.) Explain the story's title; what does it mean?
- 2.) Does Paul suffer from some defect of character; if so, what is it?
- 3.) What is the connection between Paul's fascination with the theatre and his crime?
- 4.) Why does he commit suicide?

"I Want to Know Why"--Anderson

- 1.) Who is the narrator; describe who this figure is; what portrait emerges here?
- 2.) Does this story have any structure? If so, describe and explain what it is.
- 3.) Explain the story's title.
- 4.) Look closely at the narrator's relationships, especially with the other stable hands, the horses, and Jerry Tillford. What is the nature of these relationships and why is the narrator so disturbed by what he sees through the window?

"A Death in the Woods"--Anderson

- 1.) What is the method of narration, the narrative point of view?
- 2.) Why is this narrator telling the story?
- 3.) What is the point of repeating the phrase "Horses, cows, pigs, dogs, men"?
- 4.) What is meant by the line, "A thing so complete has its own beauty"?
- 5.) What *actually* happens in this story?

"Araby"--Joyce

- 1.) Explain the title; what does it mean both literally and figuratively?
- 2.) The story abounds in religious imagery. Trace some of this and explain what its significance is?

3.) What is the point of the series of seemingly unrelated bits of information--disappointment with the dead priest's belongings; standing apart from the girl when speaking to her and his companions at the same time; gossip over the tea table; his uncle's tardiness and inane remarks about the boy's departure; etc.?

4.) Explain the meaning and/or significance of the last line, "Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger."

"A Little Cloud"--Joyce

1.) Who is Little Chandler; how are we to respond to him?

2.) Are we to share Chandler's opinion of Gallaher: explain why or why not?

3.) Chandler dreams of being a poet; what is poetry for this man; why does he want to be a poet?

4.) In the last paragraph Chandler has "tears of remorse start . . . to his eyes": explain this passage. What are these tears in response to?

"The Dead"--Joyce

1.) Analyze how this story similar to or fits with the two stories of Joyce's we have already read?

2.) Analyze how the story is unlike or atypical of those which precede it.

3.) What role does Miss Ivors play in the story; why does Joyce include her?

4.) How does an epiphany figure in this story? Who has the epiphany and what is the nature of it?

5.) What is meant by the sentence, "The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward"?

6.) What is the importance of the snow imagery, especially at the close of the story?

7.) To whom does the story's title refer?

"The Jolly Corner"--James

- 1.) Who is Spencer Brydon and what is significant about him?
- 2.) Who is Alice Staverton and how is she important here?
- 3.) What is the point of the conclusions, with Brydon awakening in Alice's lap?

"Rape Fantasies" (10)--Atwood

- 1 . What is the tone of this story and how is it related to the characterization and the method of narration? How is it related to the general subject announced by the title?
- 2.) Whom do you imagine as the person listening to the narrator? What is the occasion for telling such a story?
- 3.) Consider the content of these fantasies and what stands out?
- 4.) What seems to be the point of these stories; look especially at the title.

"Guests of the Nation"--O'Connor

- 1.) Examine the story's structure; how are events organized and related, and what effect does this structure have on the audience and our reading of the tale?
- 2.) Discuss Jeremiah Donovan's character and his role in the tale.
- 3.) Look closely at the old woman in whose house the soldiers stay. What is her function in the story; is it important?
- 4.) How does the method of narration contribute to the effect of the story?

"The Second Choice"--Dreiser

- 1.) Who is Barton Williams and what do we learn about him?
- 2.) Who is Shirley and what do we learn about her? What does she want; what exactly is happening to her?
- 3.) Who is Arthur Bristow and what do we learn about him? What kind of person is he and what is his relationship to Shirley?
- 4.) Knowing that Dreiser is a naturalist, would you say this story is an example of literary naturalism? Is so what qualifies it as such?

5.) Explain the last scene in the story.

"The Yellow Wallpaper," Charlotte Perkins Gilman
(1890)

- 1.) Describe the husband John. What is his profession and how does the narrator view him?
- 2.) Characterize the narrator's initial reaction to, and description of, the wallpaper.
- 3.) Why does John so oppose his wife's writing? Why might this not be seen as a beneficial form of therapy?
- 4.) Consider John's form of therapy. Describe its efficacy and effects on its patient.
- 5.) Explain the significance of the female image in the wall paper. What's this all about?
- 6.) Why isn't the narrator named in the story. How is she referred to; why are the other characters named? What is the effect of this feature on the narrator and the reader?

"King of the Bingo Game," Ralph Ellison
(1944)

- 1.) What do we know about the protagonist; who is he, where does he come from, what are the details of his life and character?
- 2.) What is significant about his immediate environment; why a theater?
- 3.) What do the bingo game and wheel of fortune represent for him?
- 4.) What is the prevailing tone or fictional approach here?
- 5.) What is the point of the story; what is Ellison telling us about this man and how is he somehow important?

"A Rose for Emily" (1898)--Faulkner

- 1.) Who is the narrator; what do we learn about him?
- 2.) What is the meaning of the title, especially the word "rose"?

3.) Does the story have any significance beyond its macabre details? Might one see it as having symbolic or allegorical significances?

“Hills Like White Elephants” (755)--Hemingway

- 1.) What are these people talking, or trying to talk, about; what's going on here?
- 2.) What is the importance of the scene where the young woman comments on the hills looking like white elephants and then the one later when she says they don't look that way after all?
- 3.) Has the quarrel been resolved when the story ends?
- 4.) Look closely at the story's method; what is significant about this?

"A Clean, Well-Lighted Place"--Hemingway

- 1.) Who is the old, deaf man and why is he important?
- 2.) Who is the young waiter and why is he important?
- 3.) Who is the older waiter and why is he important?
- 4.) What is the point of the last section of the novel after the older waiter leaves the cafe and eventually returns to his room? (Look especially at the version of the Our Father and the Hail Mary.)
- 5.) Look at the story's style; what is significant about it?

"A Good Man is Hard to Find" (1266)--O'Connor

- 1.) Analyze the vision of family life presented in the story. Who are these people, and what are they like?
- 2.) Look closely at Red Sam; who is this man, what does he represent, and how is he important?
- 3.) The villain is called The Misfit; analyze this name for its significance.
- 4.) Late in the story The Misfit rails against Jesus; what exactly is he saying; what does he mean when he says Jesus "thrown everything off balance" (1279)?

5.) Just before her death the grandmother tells The Misfit, "'Why, you're one of my babies. You're one of my own children!'" (1279). What are the implications of her words?

“Big Black Good Man”--Wright

- 1.) What is the point or dominant theme of this seemingly plotless tale?
- 2.) Who is Olaf Jensen and why is he important?
- 3.) Who is the sailor and why is he important?
- 4.) Why are there so many references to the sailor's color and size? What is the importance of the particular nature of these references?
- 5.) What is the importance of the story's very last line?

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"Brain Cell 9, 999, 999, 999"--West

- 1.) Who is the narrator; where is this figure; and what is talking about?
- 2.) He refers to "mine host"; what does he mean by this phrase; to what is he referring?
- 3.) What drives, inspires, or agitates this figure? What is so important to him; what is he trying to convey to the audience?

4.) The story ends abruptly; what is going on?

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE SHORT FICTION

Name_____

email_____

Major_____

Phone (optional)_____

Year_____

Previous Contemporary Short Fiction Classes:

Reasons for Taking This Class:

Expectations in Taking this Class:

I have read the syllabus and agree with and accept the terms outlined there. In signing this, I agree to abide by those terms and accept all consequences.

Signature

Date