

**English 113–General Literature (WL)**  
**Pittsburg State University**  
Course Syllabus, Fall 2011

Instructor: Dr. Donald Judd  
Office hours: Mon. & Wed: 11-12, 1-4,  
Tue. & Thur: 11-12  
or by appointment.

Office: 425 Grubbs Hall  
Phone: 235-4697  
djudd@pittstate.edu

**Purpose and Class Objectives:**

The central purpose of General Literature (WL) is to enhance the student's critical thinking skills through analysis and discussion of, and writing about, various literary genres. Students will read, discuss, and write about a variety of literary texts (both traditional and non-traditional), interpreting them through their own experiences, with attention to close readings of the texts. The objectives of the class are fourfold: to make the analysis of texts more accessible to students; to give students a basic understanding of literary terms and genres; to cultivate students' critical reading and thinking habits; and to utilize writing as a means to understanding course content.

**Writing to Learn**

*Philosophy of Writing*

The philosophy behind using writing as a way to learn course material is that as students write about concepts, they become active learners, articulating ideas in their own words and thinking about ideas from their own perspectives. Writing about course content is a skill that needs to be practiced; that is why you will be writing often and why the kinds of writing assignments may vary.

*Statement of Intent*

This is a Writing to Learn class. In this course we will write frequently as a way to learn course material. The writing may range from quizzes and in-class writing assignments to formal journals and essay exams. But expect to write about course content regularly.

*Writing to Learn Requirements*

- This is a Writing to Learn course, which means that in addition to earning an overall passing grade on other course components, you must also earn an average passing grade on the formal writing assignments to pass this course. If you do not earn an average passing grade on the formal writing assignments, you cannot pass this course.
- You will receive feedback from me on all your formal journals. Pay attention to that feedback and use it to help improve your writing on the next formal journal.
- If/when you use sources in your formal journals, give credit for the words or ideas of others by documenting your sources, using the MLA style of documentation.

- In this course, you will write a minimum of 15 pages of formal writing in the form of the formal journals. You will write 10 journals of 1½ to 2 pages each. See the handout and policies on journals (available on Canvas).
- The due dates for all formal journals are indicated in the course schedule. Journals are to be turned in at the beginning of class and before we have discussed the story or poem on which your journal is based.
- All journals will be evaluated according to the PSU Writing Rubric (available on Canvas).

**Texts:** *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Michael Meyer.  
*Off the Map*, Joan Ackermann.

**Grades:**

Grades will be based on journals, quizzes and exams or papers according to the following breakdown:

|              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| Journals     | 10%                  |
| Quizzes      | 30%                  |
| Exams/Papers | 60% (each worth 20%) |

*Journal* entries will be type-written (#12 Times New Roman font, double-spaced, one inch margins) and 1-1½ pages long. While journals only account for 10% of your grade, you must receive an average passing grade on your journals to pass this course. See handout for instructions and policies on journal entries. **Warning:** Journals that deviate from the stated guidelines or that are shorter than the minimum 1½ pages will receive no credit.

*Quizzes* will be given on a random basis covering the materials assigned for that day. Some quizzes will be open book, many will not. Quizzes cannot be made up. Since I have no attendance policy, quiz points are a reward for those who attend class regularly. **Warning:** those who miss several classes may find it difficult to pass this course.

*Exams* will cover the three genres we will study: fiction, poetry, and drama. While exams may consist of some short answer questions, most will be essay questions that require detailed answers that are clearly supported with evidence and logic. The drama exam will have two options: group-based oral, or individual-based written. **To qualify for the oral exam, you must not miss more than two days of class during the term.**

**Cell Phones, Pagers, and Laptops:**

Cell phones and pagers are to be turned off and put away during class. Students who have cell phones out during class (for whatever reason) will be asked to leave class for that day and will not be allowed to make up any missed work. If you use a laptop for taking notes, **do not** check email, play games, or browse the web. If you do so, you will not be allowed to use your laptop during class.

**Disabilities:**

The English Department is committed to equal opportunity in education to all students, including those with documented physical disabilities or documented learning disabilities. University policy states that it is the responsibility of students with documented disabilities to contact instructors during the first week of each semester to discuss appropriate accommodations to ensure equity in grading, classroom experiences and outside assignments. The instructor will meet with the student and appropriate university staff members to formulate a written plan for appropriate accommodations, if required.

**Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy:**

The university does not condone academic dishonesty in any form from plagiarism to cheating on exams. For a full explanation see the following:

<http://www.pittstate.edu/audiences/current-students/policies/rights-and-responsibilities/academic-misconduct.dot>

**Rights, Responsibilities, and Resources:**

For an explanation of students' rights, responsibilities and campus resources, please see the following: <http://www.pittstate.edu/office/registrar/forms.dot>

### Course Schedule

- 8/23 Course introduction. "Story of an Hour," Chopin (handout).  
25 Plot: 69-78; "A Rose for Emily," Faulkner.
- 30 Character: 117-22; From *Hard Times*, Dickens; "The Prisoner Who Wore Glasses," Head (handout). **Journal 1 due today or Thursday.**
- 9/1 Setting: 162-64; "Soldier's Home," Hemingway.
- 6 Point of View—188-93; "The Lady with the Pet Dog," Chekhov; "Who's Irish," Jen (handout). **Journal 2 due today or Thursday.**
- 8 Symbolism—237-40; "Battle Royal," Ellison.
- 13 Theme—262-65; "Miss Brill," Mansfield. **Journal 3 due today or Thursday.**
- 15 Style, Tone and Irony—283-87; "Carnal Knowledge," Boyle (handout).
- 20 Practice fiction exam.
- 22 Review of exam questions and answers.
- 27 **Fiction Exam.**
- 29 Suggestions for Approaching Poetry—588-89; "Those Winter Sundays," Hayden; "Dog's Death," Updike; discuss 'Tips for Reading Poetry' (handout).

- 10/4 Word Choice–622-29; “To Virgins to Make Much of Time,” Herrick. “A  
 Valediction Forbidding Mourning,” Donne. **Journal 4 due today or Thursday.**  
 6 Images–659-63; “London,” Blake; “Dulce et Decorum Est,” Owen. **Last day to  
 drop, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>.**
- 11 Figures of Speech–681-91; “she being Brand,” Cummings; “The Chimney  
 Sweeper,” Blake. **Journal 5 due today or Thursday.**  
 13 Symbol–702-08; “Richard Cory,” Robinson; “Seventeen,” Hudgins (handout).
- 18 “To His Coy Mistress,” Marvell. **Journal 6 due.**  
 20 **Fall Break**
- 25 “My Last Duchess,” Browning. **Journal 7 due.**  
 27 Practice poetry exam.
- 11/1 Review of exam questions and answers.  
 3 **Poetry Exam.**
- 8 *Oedipus*. **Journal 8 due today or Thursday.**  
 10 *Oedipus*.
- 15 Class discussion.  
 17 *A Doll House*. **Journal 9 due today or next Tuesday.**
- 22 *A Doll House*.  
 24 **Thanksgiving Break**
- 29 Class discussion.  
 12/1 *Off the Map*. **Journal 10 due today or next Tuesday.**
- 6 *Off the Map*.  
 8 Class discussion.
- 13 **Final Exam**

English 113 (WL)  
Journal Instructions

You will write one journal entry per week on any of the stories or poems assigned that week (your choice); however, your journal must be written before class discussion and turned in at the beginning of class on the day we begin discussion of the story or poem. Once we've begun discussing a story or poem in class, I will not accept any journals on that story or poem.

Journals should be used to clarify your thinking about the readings. For example, you may pose a question and then seek to answer it, or point out a dilemma and then seek to resolve it. I do not care whether or not you answer your question "correctly." What I am looking for in your journals is evidence of you grappling with the reading and trying to understand it by *paying close attention to the details* of the story or poem. Quote appropriate phrases from the story or poem to explain/support your answer, but quotations should not make up the majority of your journal.

*Format:*

Journal entries will be type-written, double-spaced, #12 Times New Roman font, one inch margins, and 1½-2 pages long. Begin your journal with your question. After your question, explain in a sentence or two why you are asking this question. In other words, explain why you were initially confused. Then use the rest of the journal to try to answer your question. Be careful to clearly develop your ideas and support your claims.

*Grading:*

Journals are graded on the criteria in the PSU Writing Rubric, but especially on the clarity of your question, on your effort in trying to answer your question with appropriate supporting details from the story or poem, and on basic mechanics. Write in complete sentences, and attend to proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

**CAUTION:**

**Do not summarize the story in your journal.**

You may feel that some summary is necessary in order for me to understand your journal. But I have read these stories dozens of times and do not need to be reminded of what occurred.

**Make sure you actually try to answer your question.**

For example, do not ask why a character behaves in a particular way and then spend your time explaining how the character should have acted or how you would have acted in a similar situation. Rather, use your journal to try to understand why the character acted the way he or she did. Assume the character has a plausible motive, even if you don't understand it initially.

**Do not ask a series of questions.**

Ask one question and focus your efforts on constructing an answer that is supported by the details of the story or poem.