

# Introduction to English Fiction and Poetry

Summer 2020



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## Course Description

This course aims to introduce students to English short stories, shorter fiction and poetry. Students will learn to read, discuss and write analytically about a variety of literary works written in English. They will learn to read closely, understand critical ideas, explore characterization and identify themes. They will also learn about poetic form (specifically, the lyric and the sonnet). Students will further learn to be attentive to the uses and effects of language as well as the larger cultural, political, and historical contexts of literature. While the course emphasizes reading skills, it will also aim to improve students' critical thinking and develop analytical writing skills.

**Reading skills** taught in the course may include:

- *Being an active reader:* taking notes, highlighting, compiling evidence, facts and examples
- *Identifying and analyzing the major themes*
- *Understanding the plot*
- *Analyzing characters*
- *Understanding literary form*
- *Understanding historical/political/cultural context*
- *Analyzing literary language and devices (figurative language, symbols, imagery)*
- *Identifying the audience and aims of the text*
- *Learning new vocabulary*
- *Summarizing and synthesizing*

## Discussion and Debate

Students will share their responses to the reading material by engaging in group discussion and debate. They will learn the benefit of engaging in discussion to yield broader interpretations and to share critical insight.

## Writing Skills

Through the writing of short response papers and essays, students will learn how to structure and express their critical thoughts in writing clearly and logically. The aim is that they will go beyond demonstrating accurate knowledge of plot to offering their own analyses and interpretations supported by appropriate quotations from the texts.

## Assessment

Attendance and participation	10%
Midterm and Final Presentations (15 mins in groups of 3 and 20 mins in groups of 4)	20%
Exam	30%
Short Essay (1,000 words)	15%
Final Essay (1,500 words)	25%

## **Policies**

- If you are absent, you are responsible for obtaining any handouts and assignments that were given in class. Absence in one class does not excuse lack of preparation in the next.
- Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes cheating on assignments and exams, plagiarism and submitting papers already used in other classes without approval from your instructor.
- No phone use is allowed during class.
- Never forget to bring the assigned text to class. Those who sit idly in class without the texts or inconvenience their classmates by sharing the texts will be penalized with low participation grade.
- Students must check emails regularly for class communications.

## **Schedule**

### **Week 1: Re-reading Children's Literature**

#### **Oscar Wilde's Short Stories and Shorter Fiction**

Wednesday, 23 June:

Introductions, Figurative Language and Irony: "The Nightingale and the Rose"

Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> June:

The Self and the Outsider: "The Birthday of the Infanta"

Learning to compare and contrast.

### **Week 2: Poetry – the Lyric**

Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> June:

John Donne's "The Flea" and "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" and Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress"

Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> July:

Anna Letitia Barbauld's "The Mouse's Petition", William Wordsworth's "We are Seven" and John Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale"

Thursday: 2<sup>nd</sup> July:

Dramatic Monologue: Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess", Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Bertha in the Lane"

### **Week 3: Thinking about Historical Contexts**

Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> July:

Thomas Hardy, "The Withered Arm"

First essay due

Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> July: Group presentations and Discussions

### **Week 4: Poetry – the Sonnet**

Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> July:

Selections from William Shakespeare and John Milton

Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> July:

Selections from Charlotte Smith and Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> July:

Selections from Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen

### **Week 5: Thinking about Gender**

Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> July:

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"

Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> July:

Final Presentations and Final Reflections

Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> July

Final Exam

