Syllabus for LIT 2000 — Writing about Literature (Fall 2008)

University of North Florida

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
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OFFICE HOURS AND LOCATION
MWF 11:00-11:50 a.m. (drop-in); Fri 1-2:00 p.m. (by appointment)
Building 8, Room 2606 (Yes, I know it’s hard to find—look in the English Department Offices.)

I check my email often during the term, and I try to respond promptly to any questions that require brief answers. For more in-depth conferences, arrange to meet with me during office hours.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In this course, we'll work with literary texts from three broad generic categories: fiction, poetry, and drama. We won’t attempt to survey great literature; we have far too little time to do more than sample a few literary works. However, through the LIT 2000 coursework, we’ll work toward an understanding and appreciation of the basic goals and tools of writers of these genres. We’ll also work on techniques for writing about text.

LIT 2000 builds upon basic college-level reading, writing, and textual analysis skills. It also explores complex fictional, dramatic, and poetic texts. As a general-education writing course, this course requires that students move through observation and summary into analytical, synthesized, argumentative compositions about literary texts. In other words, students must practice close readings of the assigned texts, and then translate their responses into academic writing about them.

As a LIT 2000 student, you must read all of the assigned texts. Since this course requires that you discuss, analyze, interpret, and write effectively about the assigned texts, failing to read them will negatively affect your overall grade. Fiction, poetry, and drama elicit different kinds of questions and observations. This course, however, will ask you to accomplish certain general reading tasks regarding the selected works:

- Analytically examine the rhetorical structure and syntax of the work.
- Consider the use of figurative language and imagery to create tone and elicit associations.
- Explore how the form of the work broadens or contrasts with its themes.
- Examine narration and narrative voice(s).
- Consider the persuasive or argumentative effect of the work.
- Dissect the work to see how the parts relate to the whole.

Next, as you write about the works under study, you’ll attempt to accomplish the following:

- Limit a subject for analysis.
- Present and support a thesis in a soundly structured essay.
- Identify the characteristics of the genre under study.
- Perform rhetorical analyses of the given works.
- Evaluate and make sound comparative judgments about the content and craft of the works under study.

This isn’t an easy course, but it can be an entertaining one. As with any course, what you get out of LIT 2000 will directly correspond to how much you put into it.

TEXTS AND MATERIALS
- An Introduction to Literature (Fourteenth Edition) — Sylvan Barnet, William Burto, and William E. Cain
- Readings -- Instructor's Online Selections
  (Not an additional purchase -- you will access these through our Blackboard site.)
- RECOMMENDED -- Full-function word-processing software, such as that available in Microsoft Office or WordPerfect Office. (If you need such software, you may download a free but otherwise comparable office suite at OpenOffice.org.)

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENT
You’ll need regular internet access for the mandatory Blackboard component of this course. If you don’t have such access, you may use a computer in the library or computer lab. Once online, use your UNF n-number to access Blackboard from the UNF website. The first time you access Blackboard this term, go to “personal information” and update your email address to one that you check regularly.
ASSIGNMENTS
You’ll earn your overall course grade through the quality of your work on the following assignments:

1. **Miscellaneous (Attendance, Participation, Quizzes, In-Class Activities, etc.)** – 200 pts
   (Careful! For each absence over three, you’ll lose 50 points from this category.)
2. **Informal Writings, Creative Writings, Wikis, Genre Worksheets** – 200 points
3. **Out-of-Class Essays** – on Fiction, Poetry, Drama/Film (2-3 pages each) – 150 points
4. **Oral Readings/Presentations/Scenes** – 150 points
5. **Final Essay – (Analysis of Fiction, Poetry, or Drama/Film)** (4-5 pages) – 300 points
   [Total = 1000 points]

**CAUTION:** If you’re absent for one of the in-class activities, you’ll earn a grade of zero on it. These activities include peer reviews, oral readings/presentations, quizzes, etc. So, if you choose to take an allowed absence, plan carefully.

**GRADING SCALE**

Keep in mind that effort doesn’t determine your grade in this class. Making consistent effort should help you do well on assignments, but only the strength of your work determines your grade. To earn the highest grade, your assignment submissions must demonstrate superior quality of analytical thought as well as superior writing craft.

You earn your course grade through the percentage score of all graded work, as described above. Final grades adhere to the following scale. I don’t add “extra” points or fractions of points to “bump up” your numerical score at the end of the term, so make sure you take advantage of opportunities to raise your grade throughout the term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>91.5% or better</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>89.5%-91.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86.5–89.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>81.5–86.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>79.5–81.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76.5–79.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>69.5–76.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>59.5–66.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.4% or lower</td>
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**GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

You must pass this course with a grade of C or better to earn general education credit. To earn a C or better, you must attend regularly, AND you must submit all writing assignments within ONE week of their due dates.

**CLASSROOM GUIDELINES AND POLICIES**

**Attendance**

Plan to attend every class. Each member of a literature discussion class contributes a unique perspective that we lose if that member fails to prepare or to attend. In class sessions, we cover much material not available in our texts. Class time also provides useful opportunities to participate in on-going class discussions about assigned readings and writing projects; to consult with the instructor on writing; to work with peers in writing and revision workshops; and to practice key grammatical, mechanical, and stylistic skills.

Even the best-intentioned student, however, must miss class on a rare occasion. You may accumulate up to three absences without penalty EXCEPT that you will lose credit for whatever in-class work you miss. Please note the following points:

- For each absence after the first three, you will lose 50 points of the “Miscellaneous” portion of your course grade (an equivalent of ½ a letter grade from your overall course grade).
- Absence doesn’t excuse you from assignment deadlines; you must submit all work by its deadline.
- You must attend class to receive full credit on quizzes, exercises, exams, presentations, in-class writing, etc.
- Attendance requires not only your physical presence, but also your full engagement with and attention to this class. If you spend your class time preparing for other classes, text-messaging, listening to music, sleeping, etc., you’re not truly “present” and consequently, you’ll lose attendance points, perhaps without notice.
- If you’ll miss a class due to a university-approved reason (i.e. varsity athletics, religious observation, etc.), you must inform me in advance. In any case, your first three absences count as your “allowed” absences.
- **If you miss more than six periods during the term, you’ll fail the entire course—regardless of your course average on completed work. Credit for LIT 2000 requires a minimum number of “contact” hours. If you fall below this minimum, you fail, plain and simple.** (The ONLY exception is for students who can obtain University-approval of and documentation for EVERY absence.)

**Assigned Work Deadlines**

Late work earns you an F on the assignment! Thus, make sure you submit assigned work by the due date even if you’re absent and even if you’re taking one of your allowed absences. At the instructor’s discretion, you may receive up to half credit for late work submitted within one week of the original due date. If you completely fail to submit an assignment, you earn a zero averaged into your overall grade. IMPORTANT: Note that a NON-submission produces a much greater impact on your grade than does a POOR or a LATE submission. Make sure you don’t procrastinate—I won’t accept “catch-up” assignments submitted more than one week from their original due dates.

**Controversial or “Offensive” Texts**

You may NOT “substitute” another text for a required one that you find “offensive.” Please do not ask to do so. If you don’t wish to read or discuss texts that may run counter to your beliefs, you should withdraw from this class immediately.

Students sometimes ask me to give an example of an “offensive” text—that’s not easy to do, since “offensive” is in the eye of the beholder. I don’t choose texts that I consider offensive, but I can’t guarantee that you won’t find them so.
**Arriving Late or Leaving Early**

Of course, you should come to class on time. If you do arrive late, please come in as quietly as possible and begin work quickly. *(After class, YOU must make sure that I change my attendance record to reflect that you attended after all.)*

If you’re significantly late (10 minutes or more) for any class meeting, you earn an absence. In such a case, however, you may enter the class and receive credit for any in-class work that you complete during the remaining class time. If you repeatedly come to class late—even if you arrive only a couple of minutes late each time—your habitual tardiness may count as one or more “extra” absences.

Similarly, if you must leave class early, you should obtain my specific permission IN ADVANCE, or risk earning an absence for the day. *(Note: Just because you see another student leave early doesn’t mean you ALSO have my permission to do so.)*

**Classroom Courtesy and Classroom Disruptions**

Students at the University of North Florida come from diverse cultural, economic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, and they hold disparate opinions on critical issues. Controversial texts provide an important foundation for our class, since our academic coursework requires that we study how to use language to argue persuasively and logically. When we combine diversified student backgrounds with provocative texts and persuasive argument, we cannot expect consistent innocuousness. We’re aiming always, however, toward CIVIL discourse. That is, the classroom should provide a venue in which students (and instructors) may discuss volatile issues openly, while demonstrating respect for ideas that differ from their own.

In general, my expectations for classroom courtesy follow informal social and professional standards. Thus, as you would in any professional environment, please address others respectfully. *Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, beepers, and other electronic devices (INCLUDING LAPTOPS) prior to the start of class.* Additionally, since we’ll spend some of our classroom time on in-class writing or other work, your conduct should never interfere with your classmates’ ability to work productively. Otherwise, you may leave your seat when appropriate, ask questions at any time, and, at specified times, converse quietly with others regarding coursework.

Although I’ve never yet imposed this penalty, I do reserve the right to penalize (by a grade reduction of ½ of a letter grade) repeated or flagrant tardiness, instances of “significant classroom disruption,” or other substantive classroom discourtesy. *(Note that my judgment determines these offenses.)*

**Special Dispensations**

Students with disabilities who seek reasonable accommodations in the classroom or other aspects of performing their coursework must first register with the UNF Disability Resource Center (DRC) located in Building 10, Room 1201. DRC staff members work with students to obtain required documentation of disability and to identify appropriate accommodations as required by applicable disability laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). After receiving all necessary documentation, the DRC staff determines whether a student qualifies for services with the DRC and if so, the accommodations the student will be provided. DRC staff then prepares a letter for the student to provide faculty advising them of approved accommodations. For further information, contact the DRC by phone (904) 620-2769, email (kwebb@unf.edu), or visit the DRC website [http://www.unf.edu/dept/disabled-services](http://www.unf.edu/dept/disabled-services).

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**UNIVERSITY POLICIES ON PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

As a University of North Florida student, you commit to UNF’s standards of student conduct, including the Academic Integrity Code, available in its full form at [http://www.unf.edu/registrar/forms/misconduct_policy.pdf](http://www.unf.edu/registrar/forms/misconduct_policy.pdf). The Honor Code requires UNF students to neither give nor receive unauthorized aid in completing all assignments. Violations include cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submissions, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty.

The University of North Florida considers any form of “academic dishonesty” a serious violation of University standards. You should know that violations could result in your expulsion from the University. FOR YOUR PROTECTION, review the UNF Academic Integrity Code, and make sure you understand University standards. Remember, you are responsible for understanding the University’s definitions of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Examples include the following:

- Submitting all or part of someone else’s work as if it is your own.
- “Borrowing,” without crediting the source, any of the following:
  - Any part of song lyrics, poetry, or movie scripts
  - Any part of another person’s essay, speech, or ideas
  - Any part of an article in a magazine, journal, newspaper
  - Any part of a book, encyclopedia, CD-ROM, online WWW page, etc.
  - Any IDEA from another person or writer, even if you express that idea in your own words.
- “Borrowing” verbatim text without enclosing in quotation marks and citing the source.
- Making “duplicate submissions” of assignments - that is, submitting work in one class that you also submit (or have previously submitted) in another class.
- “Collaborating” or receiving substantive help in writing your assignment unless such collaboration is part of the given assignment. *(You may receive general advice from tutors or writing lab instructors.)*
- Failing to cite sources, or citing them improperly.

**Important Tip:** You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without providing the exact location from which it came.
Plagiarism is a serious violation of the student academic integrity code. You commit plagiarism when you present the IDEAS or WORDS of someone else as your own. If a student “plagiarizes” all or any part of any assignment, he/she will earn a failing grade on the assignment. University policy also requires that instructors report imposed penalties to the Registrar’s Office, which will maintain a permanent record of the incident in the student’s file. Other forms of academic dishonesty (examples include cheating on a quiz or citing phony sources or quotations) will also result in a failing grade on the assignment as a minimum penalty.

Protect yourself! Make sure the assignments you submit for grading reflect your own work, and they properly cite any sources from which you obtained ideas, quotations, or information.

**SCHEDULE**

The schedule for the course often changes throughout the term to accommodate class needs. Thus, for homework, reading, and assignment schedules, you should always check the most current version of the course schedule, maintained on our course site on Blackboard. Remember, you’re responsible for all assignments on the class schedule even if I fail to remind you of them in class! In general, I MAY, but PROBABLY won’t, remember to remind you of them.

**USEFUL STUDENT RESOURCES**

Many students experience stress while adjusting to college. Although I certainly sympathize if you are experiencing non-course-related problems, you’ll find better and more helpful resources elsewhere on campus. The services below are available free to students, so if you feel you need help, please don’t wait. Contact the appropriate office below—each of their staffs include trained, caring professionals who have experience helping students deal with specific academic, security, psychological, and emotional issues.

ACE (Academic Center for Excellence) – Academic Advising and Tutoring
Founder’s Hall, 2/2120, (904) 620-1012, www.unf.edu/es/ace

The UNF Counseling Center
Founder’s Hall, 2/2068, (904) 620-2602, www.unf.edu/dept/counseling_center

UNF Campus Police, http://www.unf.edu/dept/upd/index.htm
Building 41, on UNF Drive, across the street from the Information Booth
Emergency Number: (904) 620-2801
   Note: Police officers are available 24 hours a day to provide safety escorts to any member of the University Community. To request an escort you may contact the UPD at 620-2800.

The Women’s Center (and Victim Advocacy Program)
Student Life Center Building, 14/2623, (904) 620-2528, Email: womenctr@unf.edu
   24-hour Crisis Helpline: (904) 620-1010

**LIT 2000 Questions (5 points)**

Syllabus Questions:

- Using a separate sheet of paper, develop five questions regarding this course or the syllabus you have just (presumably) read. Your questions may ask for clarification of confusing points, or you may ask for information that you did not find in the document. However, avoid asking for information that the syllabus already includes.

- Number your questions 1-5.

- Make sure you put your name at the top of the page before you submit it.

- We’ll discuss student questions at the class session designated on the schedule, but you should also submit your written version to receive credit for this assignment.