

## English 209, Fall 2009 Major Assignments

### Graded Assignments:

<b>In-class Work</b>	= 10%
<b>Group Presentation</b>	= 10%
<b>Critical Reading Response</b>	= 20%
<b>Midterm Exam</b>	= 30%
<b>Final Paper &amp; Portfolio</b>	= 30%

### Group Presentation Assignment

#### Group Presentations on Theoretical Approaches to Reading Fiction

*By having to grapple with language in a more strenuous, self-conscious way than usual, the world which that language contains is vividly renewed.* – Terry Eagleton

**Goal:** To learn multiple approaches to reading, understanding, and talking about fiction.

**Context:** How do we read literature? Is it a uniform process? Over the semester, and especially during the next few classes, we will explore multiple ways of approaching fiction; we will experience a taste of the ranging and complex feast known as literary theory. In so doing, we will equip ourselves with numerous tools to encounter the literature ahead, as well as develop critical attitudes useful to literary investigation.

**Task:** Your group has two main goals: 1) present the basic ideas and background of your field of literary theory, and 2) apply that theory to a reading of your assigned short story. In effect, your group is responsible for informing the class about the theory, and then demonstrating its use by leading the class through the assigned reading. Your group will have up to 35 minutes to accomplish both aspects of the presentation. In your preparations, you must use at least three sources of information to support your claims. One source *must* be the Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism, available via KU libraries at Libraries/Articles & Databases/"J"/Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism. The other sources may be of your choosing. Your group will submit a bibliography of these sources to me via e-mail, and I will post them on Blackboard.

**Grading Criteria:** A successful presentation will incorporate the following aspects –

- 1) accurate information
- 2) concise, yet thorough presentation of information
- 3) creativeness in presentation (this might be accomplished by using Powerpoint, other media, handouts, etc.)
- 4) effectiveness leading class discussion of the short story, including engaging the class *and* demonstrating the use of your theory as a potential way of interpreting the story
- 5) appropriate use of time
- 6) use of appropriate and effective sources, sent to me via e-mail

## Critical Reading Response Assignment

**Critical Reading Response:** You must write one Critical Reading Response before the mid-term exam. The response before the midterm should reflect the novels we've read to date. The response must be a minimum of three full pages typed and formatted in MLA style (including a Works Cited). This response is not simply a reaction paper (*i.e.* "I liked/didn't like this novel because...") rather, they are a place for you to demonstrate critical reading, thinking, and writing skills. Successful response papers make a specific argument about an aspect (or aspects) of the primary work. You may include quotes or ideas from the auxiliary readings, but you should generate a sustained investigation of the main text. Also, do not reiterate class discussion. You can draw from or leap off from class discussion, but don't rehash what's already been discussed. I've posted examples of Critical Reading Response Papers on Blackboard.

## Midterm Exam

### In-class Portion: 50 points

Using your own notebook paper or Blue Book, answer the following questions during the class time limit. Please make sure to number your answers clearly and write your name on all answer sheets. Also, please write legibly. I will collect this question sheet at the end of our session.

- 1) Name the **six** elements of fiction discussed in *The Story and Its Writer*. (6 pts.)
- 2) Choose **three** of the following stories and discuss them in relation to one another: Boyle's "Greasy Lake," Atwood's "Happy Endings," Updike's "A&P," Viamontes' "The Moths," Woolf's "Solid Objects," Kincaid's "Girl." In other words, deal with some of the similarities and/or differences between the short stories. Use specific details. (6 pts.)
- 3) Choose **two** of the critical lenses that we discussed through the group presentations and describe how these lenses are used; **a fully developed answer will use examples from what we have read to illustrate these critical techniques.** Short stories or novels may be used in generating examples. (8 pts.)
- 4) Drawing from the theoretical readings, describe the specific historical-cultural context(s) for the author Nella Larsen, as well as for her work *Passing*. Describe how the novel demonstrates this/these context(s). (6 pts.)
- 5) Discuss **two specific ways** Toni Morrison deals with race relations in *The Bluest Eye*. (6 pts.)
- 6) From the theory packet on Native American Literature, name **three** conventions of Native American Literature that we've read about/discussed. Then, **show how one of those conventions is at work** within **one of the two** following authors: Leslie Marmon Silko or Sherman Alexie. Use specific details from the texts. (8pts.)

7) **Choose four** of the following terms to discuss (define and provide appropriate examples or details for): (8pts.)

Paternalism (paternalistic)

Orientalism

Postcolonial(ism)

Binary

Patriarchy

Dominant discourse

8) In a short essay answer, construct a postcolonial reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Use specific details from the novel, as well as specific terminology from the postcolonial theoretical readings. (12 pts.)

### **Midterm Exam**

**Take Home Essay: 50 points**

**due Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>** (at the beginning of class)

The major works we have read thus far: *Passing*, *The Bluest Eye*, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, and *Wide Sargasso Sea* reveal the impact of fractured or multiple identities on the individual and the community. Using two of the main works, develop a comparative essay that shows how identity formation plays an important thematic role to at least two of these authors. In an effort to support your argument, be sure to use as much textual evidence as necessary. This should be a well-crafted argument that takes into consideration the historical and cultural context of the books. Also, a successful comparative analysis should be in the 800+ word range. Please type your answer and format it in MLA style. Include a Works Cited page, too.

### **Final Paper & Portfolio Assignment**

**Due Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup> by 1pm at 2042 Wescoe**

As stated on the syllabus, you may use the prompt suggestion I offer below, or you may develop your own paper topic. I will have a chance to comment on your ideas when you turn in your paper proposal on Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. Strongly consider meeting with me early on in your writing process.

**Prompt:** Through the course of the semester we've been investigating how literature challenges mainstream (dominant discourse) notions of race, class, sexuality, and gender. For your final paper, choose a "lens" through which to investigate at least two of our primary texts (lenses include: psychoanalysis, feminism, postcolonialism, cultural studies, race theory, gender/queer theory, structuralism, post-structuralism, post-modernism). You need to have a clear argument about your comparative analysis and demonstrate a command of the theory/lens you employ.

Also, your paper must use external research. You will use at least three scholarly resources in addition to your textual support. The paper must follow MLA conventions, including a Works Cited page, and it must be a minimum of six full pages (not including Works Cited).

Again, as I have said with the Critical Reading Responses, I am looking for well-developed and well-presented arguments complete with appropriate textual support. Your primary goal here is comparative analysis, not summary.

### **Important dates and additional information about the assignment**

**Paper Proposals:** Proposals should be at least 1 page long, typed, and should have a complete thesis, as well as a sense of the basics of your argument for the final paper. Proposals are due at the beginning of class on 11/19.

**Writing Workshops:** We will have two In-Class Writing Workshops during the last week of class. You will be responsible for bringing in multiple copies of the rough draft of your final paper; more details on this will follow as we set up the workshop groups (12/1). Please **DO NOT** miss any of these dates, as it will be quite difficult to get you into groups, etc. Missing either workshop and/or being unprepared for either workshop will result in a letter-grade drop in your final paper grade.

Tuesday, December 1: assign writing groups; bring multiple copies of rough draft to class on Thursday (enough for all your partners)

Thursday, December 3: Paper exchange with group members (must have multiple copies with you)

Tuesday, December 8: Writing Workshop, groups and peer review; bring 1 revised complete draft on Thursday to work one-on-one with a partner

Thursday, December 10: Writing Workshop, pairs

**Writing Reflection:** After you've finished your final draft, write at least three paragraphs reflecting on your writing process and what you've done to shape your initial ideas into the essay's final form. Also, consider where your writing skills were at the start of the semester, and how you see them at the end of the semester as changed and why.

**Final Paper Portfolio (what you need to turn in on 12/15):** In a folder, submit the following items: 1) completed copy of the final paper, 2) paper proposal with my comments, 3) rough drafts from the group workshop with peer responses, 4) rough draft from the pairs workshop with partner's feedback, 5) writing reflection

**\*\* (see note below)**

**Final Paper & Portfolio Assignment for the Service Learning Participants  
Due Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup> by 1pm at 2042 Wescoe**

**You may choose one of the following options:**

**Regular prompt:** Through the course of the semester we've been investigating how literature challenges mainstream (dominant discourse) notions of race, class, sexuality, and gender. For your final paper, choose a "lens" through which to investigate at least two of our primary texts (lenses include: psychoanalysis, feminism, postcolonialism, cultural studies, race theory, gender/queer theory, structuralism, post-structuralism, post-modernism). You need to have a clear argument about your comparative analysis and demonstrate a command of the theory/lens you employ.

Also, your paper must use external research. You will use at least three scholarly resources in addition to your textual support. The paper must follow MLA conventions, including a Works Cited page, and it must be a minimum of six full pages (not including Works Cited).

**Service Learning Prompt:** Through the course of the semester we've been investigating how literature challenges mainstream (dominant discourse) notions of race, class, sexuality, and gender. For your final paper, develop a comparative analysis of how you see at least one of our primary texts as corresponding with your Service Learning experience. Think of how literary themes as demonstrated through our textual analyses work with the "text" of your community experience. This is an analysis paper, but you will also use personal narrative to detail how your service experiences connect to our literary thematic and cultural concerns.

Also, your paper must use external research. You will use at least two scholarly resources in addition to your textual support and anecdotal evidence. The paper must follow MLA conventions, including a Works Cited page, and it must be a minimum of six full pages (not including Works Cited).

**EITHER WAY:** on 12/15, your Service Learning Final Paper & Portfolio must include: 1) a brief research piece on the organization's history and mission (1-2 pgs.); 2) a Reflection Journal: chronicling your service experiences and learning (3-5 pgs. or a paragraph/service hour); 3) log of your 10+ service hours; 4) completed copy of the final paper, with paper proposal/my comments, rough drafts from the group workshop with peer responses, and rough draft from the pairs workshop with partner's feedback.

### **Important dates and additional information about the assignment**

**Paper Proposals:** Proposals should be at least 1 page long, typed, and should have a complete thesis, as well as a sense of the basics of your argument for the final paper. Proposals are due at the beginning of class on Thursday, 11/19.

**Writing Workshops:** We will have two In-Class Writing Workshops during the last week of class. You will be responsible for bringing in multiple copies of the rough draft of your final paper; more details on this will follow as we set up the workshop groups (on 12/1). Please DO NOT miss any of these dates, as it will be quite difficult to get you into groups, etc. Missing either workshop and/or being unprepared for either workshop will result in a letter-grade drop in your final paper grade.

Tuesday, December 1: assign writing groups; bring multiple copies of rough draft to class on Thursday (enough for all your partners)

Thursday, December 3: Paper exchange with group members (must have multiple copies with you)

Tuesday, December 8: Writing Workshop, groups and peer review; bring 1 revised complete draft on Thursday to work one-on-one with a partner

Thursday, December 10: Writing Workshop, pairs

**\*\*Special Note about English 209 as a Service Learning Course:  
The syllabus reads,**

**Optional Service Learning component:** The University of Kansas emphasizes the importance of community service as part of the education experience. Indeed, KU has its own Center for Service Learning which offers unique classes and special certification opportunities for students. This English 209 class will qualify for Service Learning Credit for the student who commits to achieve the following:

\*10 hours of service at one of the approved Center for Service Learning community organizations

\* Service Learning Final Paper & Portfolio Assignment including: 1) a brief research piece on the organization's history and mission; 2) a Reflection Journal: chronicling service experiences and learning; 3) final paper assignment will incorporate aspects of personal narrative with literary analysis. This paper is not an additional assignment; it counts as your major, final project (30%).

Service Learning is an asset for your academic portfolio, and the experience of blending study with service will be unique and rewarding. For those of you interested in pursuing a Service Learning Certificate, this class counts as "credit" toward that goal.