

## ENGLISH 206 SYLLABUS British Literature

**Instructor:** Terrance Millet  
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**Office Hours:**  
**Time & Place:**  
**CRN**  
**Web Page**  
**Required Text:**

**Text's Web Site** [www.wwnorton.com/literature](http://www.wwnorton.com/literature). Your registration code is in the front of your text. If you have a used book, you can purchase the access code on the web site. Alternately, there is free access to much of the site.

**Prerequisites** WR 121 level writing and analytical abilities are required for successful completion of this course. English 104 and 106 are also very strongly recommended.

### **Course Description:**

The goal of this class is to bring literature to life and to help you in the effort to understand the relevance of literature to our own lives and times. We'll learn about the social and historical forces that determine convention and values, and we'll try to relate those elements to what happens in our own lives. We'll look at literary genres such as satire and determine their value as political or social tools. And we'll discuss why long, epic poems once made the best-seller lists but are now out of fashion. In the process, we'll get to know the writers of the times we study, and try to grasp a little of their hopes, aspirations, and skills as men and women.

Specifically, we'll look at more than the crafting of creative writing into literature; we'll look as well into the role of religious/political/social beliefs in the writers because they reflect the philosophy, world-view, politics, and existential reference points, perspectives that are differently nuanced in different historical conditions. Literature is about the human condition, and this is the underlying dynamic for most art and mental constructs outside science. The context here is one wherein human beings try to make sense of the world they find themselves in—a world they cannot control or understand, and they do it in art forms with styles and conventions—in this case, the samples of creative writing through the centuries with enough excellence to have become “literature.”

In trying to understand existence, writers and thinkers deal with imponderables, the questions that are ever asked and always hard to answer. They try to construct a comprehensible world, and we see this in efforts from Beowulf through monotheism,

from philosophy to science and the modern novel. It's an attempt to control and explain natural forces, and results from the interplay of the human mind and physical existence. This attempt to impose order on physical reality, on the world and its forces, embraces magic, superstition, mystery, myth, legend, and modern cosmologies.

In this light, we'll trace the common elements of need, order, intent, cultural and historical context of writers through Hopkins' tortured and beautiful poems down through Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the inspiration for *Apocalypse Now*, and ask what elements their creations have in their drive and origins. The motives remain the same: the language, styles, conventions are time-bound however, and differ.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:** We will be formatting our work using the Chicago Manual of Style for this class (see the Appendix or your handbook for details). You will have the opportunity to demonstrate our learning outcomes by accomplishing the following tasks:

### Tuesdays

1. **Author Biographies.** (25 points each) Handed in Tuesdays w/  $\sqrt{+}$ ,  $\sqrt{\phantom{x}}$ ,  $\sqrt{-}$  (A, B, C) option. These 2-page reviews will be handed in during the Tuesday class and will be used as a springboard for class discussion.
  - a. Go further afield in researching biographical information about writers. The dry statistics aren't that interesting (an obituary of facts) and don't help in bringing the life of the person before our eyes. What made these people interesting? What were they like, personally? Who were their friends, and why? What were they trying to do?
2. **Creative Writing Exercises.** (10 points each) We'll do these in the class Tuesdays for credit/no credit. We'll have the option to read them aloud, if you wish. Attendance & discussion is necessary for credit.
  - a. We'll try to follow the form and intent of the author of the week in order to understand the process of writing.

### Thursdays

3. **Analysis Letter.** (25 points each) Each of us will pick a single element from the list on the Moodle site, read the assigned work with that in mind and be prepared to talk about that aspect in the class discussion. A two-page analysis is to be emailed to me each Thursday before we talk about the work. No late work for this.
  - a. These exercises will take the form of creative writing feedback letters addressed to the author and focusing on a particular fictive or creative element used in the piece of writing we are studying. A list of these topics can be found in the syllabus and on our Moodle website.
  - b. Use the Feedback Template posted on the website. It contains guidelines and a list of topics to analyze.
4. **Final Essay.** (200 points) This take-home exam will be due during the final week

of classes (1200-1800-word paper [5-7 pages]). It will be a self-reflection paper in which you will assess

- a. Changes (growth) in your thinking and attitudes towards yourself, literature, and the human condition
- b. Aspects about your own thinking that you have become aware of
- c. Insights about the relevance of literature and you.

### **The Story Feedback, due each Thursday on the assigned work:<sup>1</sup>**

You will be responsible for turning in, on the dates specified, a thorough, thoughtful, two-page, typed (double-spaced in courier #12 font) analysis of the assigned work from the textbook. Use the template if you need guidance (see appendix).

For the written critique, allow at least two readings of the work, then choose one of the following topics, and be prepared to talk about it. Write a three-paragraph “micro-analysis” focusing on your subject and its role in the story. **Please Note:** this is not to be a critique or review of these works. It is to be an example of your own close reading abilities and your understanding of the relationship between a writer’s craft and your interpretation of the story’s subject or psychological conflict.

In your analysis, use direct quotations from the text to support and explore your topic. I’ll evaluate these based on 1) the quality of your questions or inquiry; 2) open, but careful thinking; 3) clarity of presentation; 4) specifics from the text for support.

I’ll collect these in class and grade them on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high).

### **Written Analysis Topics for These Readings:**

These topics are selected for each piece of writing and listed on the web site.

1. The handling of time.
2. Place and imagery.
3. Voice and/or point of view.
4. “Focal” character.
5. The role of a minor character.
6. Humor.
7. Mythological (or other literary) motifs.
8. The pattern of the sentence.
9. The art of the dialogue.
10. The pattern of the paragraph.
11. Transitions.
12. The use of formal repetition.

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<sup>1</sup> Please read the work and examine its meaning closely. Do mark the pages in your texts. **Allow at least two hours of outside work for each hour of class** and be sure to have all assignments done before class. Your grade will reflect your preparedness.

13. The opening.
14. The pattern of development.
15. The dramatic moment or crisis—is there one?
16. Ending or resolution.
17. Poe's Single Effect.
18. The initial problem and its development.

**NOTE:** Submit your work electronically. E-mail it to me at [Terrance.Millet@linnbenton.edu](mailto:Terrance.Millet@linnbenton.edu) as attached documents in **Microsoft WORD format or .rtf and in Courier 12 font**. These assignments are due by midnight on the due dates. You will get them back sooner than written work (which is due in class), and have the opportunity to get more feedback on them. Electronic submissions must be attached files that are named with your last name, the class days, and the assignment. For example: **Smitheng104TRessay#1**. However, this option requires that you send your work only in proper format (not WordPerfect or Works) and that the subject line of your mail follow the protocol above. Otherwise, the work will be returned unread.

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(Further information at <http://po.linnbenton.edu/BP1015 - Nondiscrimination and Nonharassment Policy.pdf>)

## Tentative Schedule

(Subject to revision, with notice)

### A Note<sup>2</sup>

As with any survey course, there is just not enough time to cover everything that should be covered. Read widely and do not limit yourself to the works covered in class.<sup>3</sup>

### Course Introduction: *Who Writes This Stuff, and Why?* Syllabus and overview

- Tuesday      What is literature and who wrote it? Who cares?
- Literature through the ages has been more than an art form.
  - A little bit about you: What's your name; where do you come from; where are you going; what time is it?
- Thursday:      Poe's Single Effect.
- The Heart of the story: two levels.
  - Writing Exercise #1: Who Speaks? Point of View. An autobiographical short-short story. First person POV, then a rewrite from third person POV. Think of a significant event that stands out in your life, and write a one-page story about it. Then rewrite it in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person POV: "he" or "she."

### Week 2:      Robert Browning.

- T      • *Bio background on an author report due: Robert Browning.*  
 • Creative Writing Exercise: Seeing is Believing. Significant detail. Rewrite cwe#1 as a piece from Caliban's POV: a universalization of your experience. (The human as monster, monster as human)
- R      Critical Analysis due. Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to talk about *Childe Roland*. We'll discuss this using the workshop model.

*My Last Duchess; Love Among the Ruins; Caliban Upon Setebos; Prospice.*

<sup>2</sup> **The Victorian Age:** Introduction to the text and course. Note how the worldview evolves in this period with the exploration of the individual through poets and writers who explore the human condition in largely existential terms. The origin of the search for that meaning has moved from exterior to interior, from physical confrontation with the forces of nature to the landscape of the mind and soul. It is now a moral or immoral world depending upon who defines it; a world with notions of sin and consequences, of moral struggle and exploration not so much of the physical world as was the case with early literature, but with the landscape of the soul and mind and the cosmos. But again, survival is more than that of the body.

<sup>3</sup> Items that really should be included are:

1. Samuel Beckett: Endgame
2. Pieces from Thomas Carlyle, Mathew Arnold, Oscar Wilde, and Bernard Shaw.

**Week 3:** Tennyson.

T • *Bio background on an author report due: Tennyso* • Creative Writing Exercise: Myth and Symbol. Allusions and hyperlinks to the unconscious.

R • Analysis due. Pick your approach from the list on the Moodle site schedule, and be ready to discuss *The Lady of Shallot*.

ALSO:

Gerard Manley Hopkins: *God's Grandeur; As Kingfishers Catch Fire; Spring; The Windhover; Pied Beauty; Spring and Fall; No Worst, There is None; I wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, Not Day*.

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**Week 4:** Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein: A Modern Prometheus*<sup>5</sup>

T • *Bio background report due: Mary Shelley*. Creative Writing Exercise: Winging it. The writer as creator: human as monster, monster as human<sup>6</sup>.

R • Micro Critique due.

Suggested Topics:

1. The Initial Problem and Its Development
2. The Ending or Resolution
3. The "Focal" Character
4. Ideas and morality

- Pick your approach from the list above, and be ready to discuss *Frankenstein*.
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**Week 5:** Virginia Woolf

T • *Bio background on an author report due: Virginia Woolf*

• The film *The Hours*. We begin watching this film. Come to class early

R • *The Hours*. We finish the film and discuss it and the book. Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list, and be ready to discuss *Mrs. Dalloway*.

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**Week 6:** D. H. Lawrence. *The Horse Dealer's Daughter*

- T • [Summary Response due on Lawrence: Why the Novel Matters](#)  
• Creative Writing Exercise: Is and is not. Symbol and allegory.
- R • Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list, and be ready to discuss it.

Also *Snake; Piano*.

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**Week 7:** James Joyce.

- T • [Bio background on an author report due: James Joyce](#)  
• Creative Writing Exercise: Structure. Form and the arc of the story.
- R • Micro Critique due. Pick your approach, and be ready to discuss *Araby*.

Also  
*The Dead; Finnegans Wake*.

NOTE: get the film *Apocalypse Now* and watch it for your assignments in week 10.

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**Week 8:** T.S. Eliot.

- T • [Bio background on an author report due: Eliot](#)  
• Creative Writing Exercise: Winging it. The writer as creator.
- R • Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list, and be ready to discuss *The Waste Land*.

Also  
*Little Gidding; The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*.

NOTE: get the film *Apocalypse Now* and watch it for your assignments in week 10.

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**Week 9:** Joseph Conrad

- T • [Bio background on an author report due: Joseph Conrad](#)  
• Creative Writing Exercise: The Full Monty. Using your arsenal.
- R • Micro Critique due. Pick your approach from the list, and be ready to discuss *The Heart of Darkness*.

• Final exam handed out Last day of class this week. You have one week to complete it.

NOTE: get the film *Apocalypse Now* and watch it for your assignments in week 10.

**Week 10:** Conrad

**T** *Bio background on an author report due: FFC and the film*

**R** • **Microcritique for discussion (no paperwork due on this one)**Film:

*Apocalypse Now*. We'll sum everything up and talk about how the film bring the classics into our times.

**Final Exam due Thursday, your last day of class.**

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**APPENDIX I**

FEEDBACK TEMPLATE

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Work Reviewed: ..... by .....

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ ;

I think the heart of your story about *(a one sentence summary here)* is ... *this is where you discuss the thematic core or the pertinence to the human condition—a good half page for this bit)*

The reasons the heart seems to center on this aspect are

- .....as indicated by the passage "....."
- .....as indicated by the passage "....."
- .....as indicated by the passage "....."

The strongest aspect of your story struck me as being the ... as instanced by the passages "....." and ".....". What this does to strengthen the story is.....

*Remember, this bit is not about what you personally liked: it's about one of the fictive devices the writer uses to cook up the story.*

Critical Overview.

I've chosen the aspect of characterization *(or scene, or dialogue etc.)* to focus on in the story, and I want to be very specific in the way this element both works well in the piece and areas where the story may demand greater attention to it. I'll give examples, and state how the story would benefit from more development here.

First, *Now write a good solid page here with technical specifics.*

Sincerely,

## APPENDIX II

### Resources:

- My Web Page ( <http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/english/millet/web.cfm?pgID=54> ) has a list resources and templates.
- See pages 18-19 in the General Catalogue for a list of **campus** resources. The Writing Center is an excellent place to get professional help with your essays.

### PLEASE NOTE:

1. You are responsible for all the material that is assigned in the text as outlined in your syllabus.
2. You can be tested on any of this material at any time once it's come due.
3. You are also responsible for material handed out, discussed, or lectured on during class, so take notes and ask questions about issues that elude you.<sup>1</sup>
4. If you miss a class, get in touch with your classmates and/or consult your syllabus so that you can stay current.
5. Please consult your materials and schedule if you have questions before emailing or telephoning for obvious answers.
6. Do the reading (a minimum of an hour for every hour of class).
7. If you do not follow the above tips, and are caught “unawares” by a quiz or test, do not whine. I will not try to trick you; quizzes and tests are a necessary part of evaluating progress. If you are taken unawares, pay attention so that it doesn't happen again.
8. There are no opportunities for “bonus” points. The concept of getting 110/100 is illogical and unfair to those who perform excellently on the required assignments.

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*Onward!*

*Terrance*