

LINN-BENTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

6500 Pacific Blvd. SW, Albany, Oregon 97321-3755

ENGLISH 104, Introduction to Fiction
Section: B01 · T/Th · 2:30pm-3:50pm · BC 244

CRN 46795 3 Credits

SPRING 2014

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Patrick J. Misiti

Offices: BC-102c (Benton Center); SSH-210 (Albany Campus)

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BENTON CENTER OFFICE HOURS

Albany Campus no Albany office hours this term

Benton Center Tuesday 1:30pm-2:30pm

REQUIRED TEXT

Charters, Ann. *The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction*. 8th Ed. ISBN: 9780312596231

MATERIALS/SUPPLIES NEEDED

Basic school supplies

Stapler

Access to a computer with a word processor, the internet, and a printer

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Examines fiction through selected literary works, such as the short story and the novel, and increases understanding of the conventions of fiction. Encourages exploration of the human experience through the reading of significant short stories and novels, with an emphasis on analysis, interpretation, and the fiction-writer's craft.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of ENG 104, students should be able to do the following:

Appreciation

- Articulate ways in which the text contributes to self-understanding.
- Engage, through the text, unfamiliar and diverse cultures, experiences and points of view.
- Appreciate an apparently simple text as a complex fabric or document.

Context

- Recognize the text as a product of a particular culture and historical moment.
- Understand the text within the context of a literary tradition or convention.
- Acknowledge the possibility of multiple interpretations of a text.
- Recognize the text's relationship to different art forms.

Form/Structure

- Recognize the variety of stylistic choices that authors make within given forms. This may include decisions about theme, image, character, plot, setting, voice, point of view, figurative language, etc.
- Use knowledge of form as a tool to analyze the text, as well as to demonstrate how form influences meaning.

Analysis

- Evaluate various interpretations of a text and their validity through reading, writing and speaking, and through individual and group responses.
- Through close reading of the text, discover and analyze the support/evidence for a particular interpretation.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS (or prerequisites)

College level writing and reading skills (WR 121) are strongly recommended for success in this course.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete ENG 104 will be able to:

1. Analyze stories using the major elements of literary fiction (plot, characterization, conflict, setting, point of view, irony, and symbolism),
2. Interpret and evaluate works of literary fiction based on analysis of their aesthetic, figurative, and narrative elements.
3. Understand traditional methods of literary analysis (mythological, psychological, sociological, or gender-based) at a basic level and apply them to form interpretations and evaluations of literary fiction.
4. Articulate how reading literary fiction affects their understanding of themselves and the range of human experiences and questions that fiction explores.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Be respectful at all times, even when you find yourself opposing someone else's viewpoint, and, thank you for acting at all times according to the guidelines for student conduct as outlined by LBCC.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Should you choose to intentionally plagiarize, you will fail the plagiarized assignment with zero credit and you will most likely fail this course. Please read more about academic dishonesty at our schools website.

COURSEWORK EXPECTATIONS

While taking English 104, please be sure

- all assigned readings are read before class
- all assignments and essays are submitted as a hardcopy, unless otherwise noted
- all assignments and essays are submitted in class, on the day they are due
- all questions about expectations, assignments, or concepts are posed in a timely manner
- you are engaged and undistracted during class and classroom discussions
- except in the case of verifiable illness or emergency, assignment deadlines are met
- in the case of an absence, except in the case of verifiable illness or emergency, assignments are submitted on time, by email and resubmitted as a hardcopy on the next scheduled class meeting

DISABILITY SERVICES

If you have a documented disability, I will help you in any way I can. Talk to me during the first week of class. If you think you might have a disability, but you are not sure, contact Disability Services, 917-4789. There is a lot more useful information about Disability Services and LBCC's disability policies at www.linnbenton.edu/go/disability-services.

If you have documented your disability, remember that you must complete a Request for Accommodations form every term in order to receive accommodations.

LBCC COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

LBCC prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, use of native language, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, veteran status, age, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state, or local laws.

LBCC sees our differences as a source of strength and an important part of education. Please help build a safe, respectful environment.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Please familiarize yourself with the many campus resources offered to LBCC students. The Albany Campus Library (917.4628) is one such resource. LBCC's Writing Center, Learning center, ELL Resources, Online Writing Lab (OWL), On-campus tutoring, and Computer Resources and Labs (free printing) are examples of other resources available. Be proactive and use these resources to get the most out of your education.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION

Your attendance and participation in this class are essential if you hope to achieve the objectives of this class. Issues with attendance tardiness or participation will be reflected in your final grade, but I will allow two "free" absences from this class so long as your work has been submitted on time for those classes and you stay caught up in the class.

VERIFIABLE ILLNESSES OR EMERGENCIES

If you have a verifiable emergency or you are exceptionally ill, please, first, work to be well, take care of what of yourself or your family, etc. Then, when you are able, let me know what the situation is. I will work with you as best I can to help you stay caught up with work or help you pursue other options if they apply to your situation.

However, if you have sniffles, tickets to the big game, some previously scheduled appointment, or no urge to show up to class, it is not something that should keep you from getting work to me on time. Use your two “free” absences wisely, and make sure you submit your work in a timely manner.

INCOMPLETES POLICY

If you have completed approximately 80 percent of the course work by the end of the term but are unable, for reasons that are generally not your fault, to complete the rest, I will potentially grant you an incomplete. It is something we will need to discuss though, to ensure it is the best option available. You may also want to talk to an advisor to fully understand how an incomplete might affect your financial aid, etc, just to be sure.

IF CLASS IS CANCELED

Weather, illness, family emergencies, or other issues might cause class to be canceled. If this is the case, I will contact you via email as soon as possible. The email will also have some instructions to help us keep on track with our class.

PLEASE BE SURE I HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS.

In the perfect world all students frequently use their Linn-Benton issued gmail account. This is not a perfect world though, and I recognize that. It is a best practice for you to check your LBCC email address for important information from the school. If you have a personal address you check more frequently, though, please be sure I have that email address on record, in case I have to get in contact with you. I will not spam your account, and I will send all group emails as BCC to ensure your privacy.a

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ESSAYS AND ASSIGNMENTS IN THIS CLASS

Important standards are to met when handing in major and minor assignments in an academic environment. If these standards are not met, I will not accept your assignment. In this class, unless otherwise noted, all essays and assignments should be

- formatted to meet college standards including heading, in-text citation, and work cited page when applicable.
- written to an assumed audience unfamiliar with your life, your assignment, and your readings.
- typed in a standard 12 point font.
- Double-spaced
- printed and submitted as a hardcopy unless otherwise noted
- stapled (not folded, taped, paper-clipped, glued, etc) if multiple pages
- completed to meet the key elements of the essay or assignment

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

Failure to complete any of the five major assignments in this class will disqualify you from passing this course.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENT KEY ELEMENTS

Before handing in your major assignments, please make sure that you successfully

- show proof of a deep and meaningful read
- use strong, clear sentence-level and paragraph-level organization
- use and cite any summaries, paraphrases, or quotations in your essay
- draw support from the text
- develop your analysis by integrating appropriate examples
- articulate an understanding of the elements of fiction
- keep your intended reader in mind
- sustain a strongly academic tone throughout the essay
- proofread your essay for errors and issues with flow

MAJOR ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

- English 104 MIDTERM ESSAY
- English 104 FINAL ESSAY

Both major essays in this class share the following prompt:

For both essays, students should construct and polish a strong piece of writing (1400-2100 words) that acknowledges, in some way, a text or texts from our reading and concepts, and/or issues we have explored in this class. This is, therefore, a very open prompt, so I would advise that you informally propose essay topics before pursuing them.

Feel free to pursue your own interests or create your own prompts, but here are some potential prompts that students have had success with in the past.

- How does literature help in understanding the human condition? Pick a story or a few stories and use them to develop your essay-length answer to this question.
 - Enter the great debate: are graphic stories and novels substantial works of literature or are they something else?
 - Are micro-fictions and flash fictions—Hemingway’s “For sale: baby shoes, never worn,” or Wideman’s “Stories” for example—actually stories? Do they meet the needs of fiction? What are those needs?
 - Pick a form of literary criticism and apply it to a story or story set. Consider picking a feminist, or multicultural lens to view a story.
 - Find an interesting interpretation of a theme or section of a story and explore it fully in a larger, essay-sized space.
 - Explore whether culture and identity bleed into stories, regardless of an author’s intent.
 - Research an author and show some connection between his or her work and his or her life and times. Make interesting connections and develop them fully to show their significance.
 - Come up with some brilliant prompt of your own and pursue it all the way through!
- Letter of Critique/Creative Responses (800+words)
Choose to pursue either a letter of critique or a creative response.
- Students who choose to write a Letter of Critique
This approach allows students to write detailed, thoughtful letters to an author from our reading list. These letters should address the failures and successes that the student identifies in the selected author’s story. The letter should offer well-developed, clear, constructive criticism. Remember, just because these stories come from successful authors, it does not mean they have created the perfect story. As students critique and offer advice they should use the terms and elements of fiction explained in this class, as well as their own wonderful critical thinking.
 - Students who choose to write a Creative Response
This approach allows students to respond readings by creating small fictions of their own. For example, a student may be inspired by the work of Flannery O’Connor and choose to mimic her writing by attempting to create a parable that creates a “reasonable use of the unreasonable”. Or the student might want to explore some back story to “The Lottery” or alternative ending to “The Rememberer,” etc. This assignment is not all creative writing though; **all Creative Response assignments should be submitted with a 250+word “explanation of intent,”** describing what the intended goal of the Creative Response was, what inspired that goal, and why the student thought his or her work achieved or fell short of those goal.

OTHER GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

This course may include reading quizzes if necessary, and will also include ten reading responses.

- Weekly Reading Responses (500+words)
- During this course you will be assigned ten reading responses to match ten weeks of reading. These responses are meant to encourage students to explore readings in more thoughtful, critical ways. Unless otherwise noted, each reading response should address at least two of the readings from the current reading week, either by viewing two readings separately or finding a way to synthesize similar elements of two or more readings.

GRADING

Your grade for this course will be based on a 400pt scale where:

A=400-360 B=359-320 C=319-280 D=279-240 F=239-0

The point distribution is as follows:

- 5pts = Weekly Reading Response One (It's a warm up!)
- 90pts = Other Weekly Reading Responses (9x10pts each)
- 105pts = Letter of Critique/Creative Response Assignments (3x35pts)
- 100pts = Essay One—Midterm Essay
- 100pts = Essay Two—Final Essay

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise noted, no late assignments will be accepted in this. If you wish to appeal this policy for some reason, please talk to me in person.

SYLLABUS CHANGES

This policies and assignments noted in this syllabus may change, depending on the circumstances in this class. For example, quizzes may be necessary, etc in order to keep us on task..

READING AND ASSIGNMENT CALENDAR-----

--Week One-----

Tuesday— March 31

In Class: Syllabus, expectations, ice breakers, and assignments

Thursday— April 2

Ray Bradbury's "August 2026:There Will Come

Soft Rains" (172)

Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" (586)

Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s "Harrison Bergeron" (1328)

Due: Reading Response One (500+words)

Make your own prompts or answer any of the prompts below. Be sure to write about at least two stories.

AUGUST 2026: THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS

- Bradbury has written an unusual story without living human characters. Discuss the effect this omission has on the overall plot
- Identify the theme in the story, which is evident in Teasdale's poem. In what way is Bradbury's use of the poem ironic?
- After reading this story, what can glean about the houses previous occupants. Using inference, tell me about their life, status, values, and/or final moments.
- Compare some of Bradbury's speculative technologies (the technologies he envisioned in his future) with current technologies (the actual technologies of today--his real future)

THE LOTTERY

- Examine the character, Tessie Hutchinson. Is Tessie a tragic heroine? Be sure to define tragic heroine. Consider moments from the story, like her cry, "There's Don and Eva....Make them take their chance!"
- The villagers in this story never speak directly of what the lottery is for. Why not?

Are they ashamed? afraid? Something else, perhaps? What do you think?

- Old Man Warner says, "People ain't the way they used to be." But are they in this case? What does he mean?
- Why are the people is such a hurry to "finish" the lottery?
- It is reasonable to assume that many of the characters in "The Lottery" have had their family members "win" lotteries in the past. Do you think that history makes the characters more likely or less likely to carry out the lottery rituals in future? Why?

HARRISON BERGERON

- Does the "ear radio" worn by everyone possessing above-normal intelligence in Vonnegut's story anticipate the earphones worn now by people listening to mp3 players and iPods? Are they similar to people being distracted by their cell phones? Do these real technologies hurt our ability to engage with the world in the same way Vonnegut's "ear radios" were meant to? Why or why not?
- Analyze the use of simile and metaphor in this story. Is it effective? Why?
- What real life devices could be considered similar to the handicap devices illustrated in Harrison Bergeron.
- Why doesn't Hazel wear a handicap? What does it do for the story?

--Week Two-----

Tuesday—April 7

Ryunosuke Akutagawa's "In a Bamboo Grove" (29)

Margaret Atwood's "Happy Endings" (54)

Junot Diaz's "How to date a Browngirl,

Blackgirl, Whitegirl, or Halfie" (385)

Brad Watson's "Seeing Eye" (1347)

Thursday—April 9

Ernest Hemingway’s “Hills like White Elephants” (539)
Jamaica Kincaid’s “Girl” (760)
Annie Proulx’s “Job History” (1146)

Due: Reading Response Two (500+ words)
Make your own prompts or answer the prompt below. Be sure to write about at least two stories.

THIS WEEK’S STORIES

- All of this week's stories have some quirky components. Each story is trying to tell a narrative in an unconventional way. Pick at least two stories from this week's reading and explore their quirks. Do the unconventional approaches help or hurt the reader's ability to engage and relate with the stories?)

**--Week Three-----
Tuesday—April 14**

Raymond Carver’s “A Small Good Thing” (201)
Raymond Carver's "The Bath" (1612)

Due: Reading Response Three (500+ words)
Make your own prompts or answer the prompt below. Be sure to write about at least two stories.

- Carver writes and publishes a story, and then rewrites and publishes it. "The Bath" is bare and withholding. "A Small Good Thing" is detailed and emotive. Explore how different these two stories are. Which one did you like better, and why?

Thursday—April 16
NO CLASS—LBCC IN-SERVICE

**--Week Four-----
Tuesday—April 21**

Aimee Bender's "The Rememberer" (134)
Haruki Murakami’s “The Ice Man” (967)
Octavio Paz’s “My Life With the Wave” (1102)
Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” (446)

Due: Letter of Critique or Creative Response One (800+words)

Thursday—April 23
Franz Kafka’s “The Hunger Artist” (713)
Crumb & Mairowitz’s “The Hunger Artist” (1458)

Due: Reading Response Four (500+ words)
Make your own prompts or answer any of the prompts below. Be sure to write about at least two stories.

- What is the point of telling a story that isn't realistic?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of telling text-only or graphic-style stories?
- Consider the differences between Kafka's story and Crumb and Mairowitz's interpretation of it.

**--Week Five-----
Tuesday—April 27**

Lynda Barry’s “San Francisco” (97)
Alison Bechdel’s “From Fun Home: Old Father, Old Artificer” (112)
Joe Sacco’s “From Palestine: Refugeeland” (1165)
Marjane Satrapi’s “From Persepolis: The Veil” (1172)
Art Spiegelman’s “Prisoner on the Hell Planet: A Case History (1241)

Due: **ESSAY ONE—TERM ESSAY (1400-2100 words)**

Thursday—April 30

Ann Beattie’s “Snow” (108)
Angela Carter’s “The Werewolf” (188)
Nadine Gordimer’s “Homage” (498)
Amy Hempel’s “Church Cancels Cow” (544)
Jayne Anne Phillips’s “Stars” (1107)
John Edgar Wideman’s “Stories” (1382)
Six-Word Stories (click link)

Due: Reading Response Five (500+ words)
Make your own prompts or answer the prompt below. Be sure to write about at least two stories.

GRAPHIC STORIES

- How important is the style of the art in a graphic story? Does it benefit or hinder stories? Is it innocuous? Does it all depend?
- Which graphic story did you like most or least? Why?
- Write/draw a graphic reading response. I dare you.

MICRO FICTIONS, NANO FICTIONS, FLASH FICTIONS, AND SIX WORD STORIES

- Are six word stories really stories? Why or why not?
- What are some tricks to telling an effective short-short story?
- Which short-short did you like best or worst? Why?

**--Week Six-----
Tuesday—May 5**

William Gay’s “The Paperhanger” (online)
Don Shea "Jumper Down" (online)
(links available at my instructor page)

Thursday—May 7

Edward P. Jones' "Bad Neighbors" (646)

Due: Reading Response Six (500+ words)
Make your own prompts or answer the prompt below. Be sure to write about at least two stories.

THE PAPERHANGER (<--REQUIRED PROMPT)

- Like many author's, William Gay illustrates a dark narrative in "The Paperhanger." Why are tragic and macabre themes so present in the world of literature? What do these dark tales do for their readership?

THE REST OF THE STORIES THIS TERM

- From this point on, your reading responses are "open prompt." You're on your own. Remember to explore, analyze, and make inferences based on basic components of the story--plot, characterization, conflict, setting, point of view, irony, and symbolism--and consider how the authors employ literary devices to help affect their readerships' understanding of themselves and the range of human experiences and questions that fiction explores. How do they attempt to explore the human condition?

--Week Seven-----

Tuesday—May 12

Flannery O'Connor's "Good Country People" (1027)
Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (1042)

Due: **Letter of Critique or Creative Response Two (800+ words)**

Thursday—May 14

Anton Chekhov's "The Lady with the Little Dog" (266)
Joyce Carol Oates' "The Lady with the Pet Dog" (975)

Due: Reading Response Seven (500+ words)
Be sure to write about at least two stories.

--Week Eight-----

Tuesday—May 19

Edgar Allen Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" (1109)
Edgar Allen Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1128)

Thursday—May 21

Fantasy Draft Day Rules & Reg.s (in class)
Nikolai Gogol "The Overcoat" (475)

Due: Reading Response Eight (500+ words)

--Week Nine-----

Tuesday—May 26

In Class:
Fantasy Draft Day!!

Thursday—May 28th

Lorrie Moore's "How to Become a Writer" (921)
Carol Shield's "Love so Fleeting, Love so Fine" (1199)
Helen Simpson's "Homework" (1212)

Due: Reading Response Nine (500+ words)
Be sure to write about at least two stories.

Week Ten-----

Tuesday—June 2

Due: Reading Response Ten (250+ words)
Answer the following prompt

- How was your experience in this class. Be candid and constructive. What worked this term? What didn't?

Thursday—June 4

Due: **Letter of Critique or Creative Response Three or FANTASY DRAFT STORY!! (800+ words)**

Week Eleven-----

Tuesday—June 9th

LAST DAY OF CLASS!!!

Due: **ESSAY TWO—FINAL ESSAY (1400-2100 words)**

and any eligible revisions or back-work.