

## Syllabus Fiction

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### English 104: Introduction to Fiction

Instructor: Chris Riseley

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Required Texts: *Short Fiction: Classic and Contemporary, 6th ed.* by Charles Bohner

### Welcome

Welcome to this course! The purpose of this class is to help you enjoy, interpret, and reflect on fiction, particularly short stories. It's partly a class about literature, and partly a class about humanity, psychology, and philosophy. We'll look at how to read and enjoy stories more, as well as how to interpret them and reflect on them so we can understand ourselves and the world better.

During the course, I'd like to explore some questions with you: Is fiction practical and relevant, or is it just a form of entertainment? How do you interpret a story so that you don't feel you're dissecting it, but finding meaning in it? How can seeing our own lives as a story, as a "Hero's Journey," give us wisdom and insight on how to live?

Good stories are entertaining - they tell an interesting tale that we love to just hear. But they also concern themselves with the same things we do: love, power, identity, spirituality, ambition, conformity & individuality, fame, money, death, failure, fear. What issues are important to you?

### Course Outcomes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Be aware of, record, and analyze your initial experience of reading a story.
- Analyze the ways different structural elements in a story help create meaning, awareness, and/or experience.
- Understand and use different methods of reading and interpreting/finding significance in a story.
- Form an overall interpretation of a story's meaning or impact.
- Assess the value of the story – did it accomplish something worthwhile? Did it create a worthwhile experience?
- Apply an insight or awareness from your reading of a story to an issue or question in your life.
- Research online and library sources to learn about the author's life or ideas, other people's insights into a story, and cultural or historical material that helps you understand a story.
- Express your experiences, interpretations, evaluations, research, and application in both writing and conversation.
- Apply these ideas about fiction to help you understand and interpret a movie.
- Create the basic elements of a story (character, setting, conflict, plot).
- Understand and appreciate the range of human questions and issues that fiction explores.

### Expectations

**Important note: In order to succeed in this class you will need to be able to read and write at the WR 121 level** for the papers and projects. There is extensive writing and writing in this class, and if you can read and write at the college level your chances of getting an A or B are usually significantly higher. If you haven't taken WR 121 or aren't taking it this term, please see me.

## Learning Activities

### Reading Responses

Each week you'll write 1 short (.75-1 page) and 1 long (1.5-2 pages) response about the stories we read. These will help you think through a story, practice the course's reading and analysis strategies, begin to form an interpretation of it, and see the story's connection with your own life. These will be *informal* (graded on thoughtfulness, quotes, and detail, not spelling and grammar), and due at midnight of the day they're due.

### Midterm and Final

During the term you'll write a midterm and a final. My goal will be to have you explain and apply the concepts we explore in class as you interpret, analyze, evaluate, and respond to one or more stories

### Grading

Midterm and Final (2 @ 100 points ea): **200 points**

Reading Responses/Discussion (8 @ 10 points, 9 @ 20 points, 8 @ 5 points): **300 points**

**Total 500**

**VERY IMPORTANT NOTE:** To receive an A, you must earn 90% of the total points possible **and your midterm and final must average 90% or higher**. For a B, must earn 80% of the total points **and your midterm and final must average 80% or higher**. For a C...you get the idea. Please note: I reserve the right to modify these requirements during the term.

We will be proceeding through the course one week at a time. Each week we will be reading and responding to at least two stories. The material for each week will be opened at the beginning of each week so that we all stay together in our forum discussions.

**Late Work - Late reading responses will be worth a maximum of 75% and may be turned in a maximum of one week late.** Late tests will lose 5 points per day that you're late taking the test.

**Communication** - I understand that occasionally health, work, and personal situations arise that make it hard to complete work on time. Please call and let me know when something is making it impossible for you to get your work done, or when you have questions or difficulties.

**Plagiarism Policy:** All work must be your own. You must document all appropriate quotations, paraphrases, data, images, etc. using either MLA format. Failure to cite and document your sources will result in a loss of credit, ranging from a drop of one grade to an F, depending on the severity of the plagiarism. Turning in a paper (or significant portions of a paper) that someone else has written or that has been copied off the Internet will result in no credit for the paper, and your name will be given to the Academic Dean so that a permanent note may be attached to your LBCC records. Mistakes and unintentional plagiarism will not result in such penalties, but in my asking you to correct them.

**Disability statement:** If you have emergency medical information for your instructor, need special arrangements to evacuate campus, or have a documented disability, please meet with me no later than the first week of the term to discuss your needs and present your ODS accommodation letter. If you have a documented disability that will impact you at college and you have yet to seek accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) for intake and to document your disability with LBCC. Only students who document a disability and present an accommodation letter to an instructor are entitled to academic accommodation. Each term, 2-3 weeks prior to the start of the term, submit your "Request for

Accommodations” form to ODS. During Week 1, deliver the letters to each instructor during office hours or by appointment. I may need time to arrange your accommodations. ODS may be reached from any LBCC campus/center by email to [ODS@linnbenton.edu](mailto:ODS@linnbenton.edu) or by calling 917-4789.

**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.

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