



Illustration: Tao Tao Holmes

INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE
ENGL 1001-001 | SPRING 2020
T/H 8:00-9:55 Lind Hall 203
Website: canvas.umn.edu
Instructor: Dr. John Pistelli
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Office Hours: T 10:00-12:00
Office: Lind Hall 256

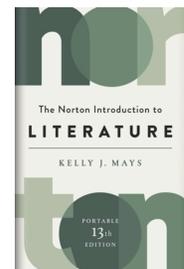
*And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life;
it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony.*
—Viktor Shklovsky, “Art as Technique” (1917)

Description and Goals

This writing-intensive course, organized by genre, will introduce students to the fundamentals of literature. We will study examples of fiction, drama, and poetry from the classical to the contemporary periods, and learn the vocabulary of literary form: speaker, symbol, imagery, figurative language, irony, character, plot, setting, point of view, theme, and genre. We will also explore literature’s relevance to its social and historical contexts and to major themes like race, gender, class, culture, nature, technology, war, politics, faith, heroism, time, death, and the self. We will practice responding to literature in written argument, not only through assigned essays but also through discussions and workshops. Finally, we will investigate the boundaries of genre and of the category “literature” itself; we will ask, “What *is* literature?” and “Why does it matter?”

Required Book¹

Mays, Kelly J., ed. *The Norton Introduction to Literature*. Portable 13th Edition. New York: W. W. Norton, 2020.



¹ Available in the campus bookstore. One required film, *Hamlet* (dir. Almeriyeda), will be screened in class; the DVD will be on reserve at Walter Library for optional reviewing.

EngL 1001W satisfies the Literature Core requirement

EngL 1001W satisfies the Literature Core requirement in three ways. First, it focuses on analysis of written works of literature. Students study the meanings of a wide range of short stories, poems, and dramas. Second, the course pays particular attention to the formal dimensions of literature. Finally, students examine the social and historical contexts of literary works as well as their content.

EngL 1001W satisfies the General Core guidelines

EngL 1001W is designed to introduce students to ways of understanding and appreciating creativity and imagination across cultures and historical periods through the study of literature, thus helping to fulfill the goals of a liberal education. In this class, students do not just listen to other people's interpretations of the works in question. Instead, through essay writing, conversation (in small groups, in discussion sections, and in lectures), and examinations, students themselves do the work of engaging closely and directly with works of literature.

EngL 1001W fulfills Student Learning Outcomes

Primarily, students in EngL 1001W learn to understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression, not only by studying literature that is creative and innovative, but also by studying literature that describes and explores the creative act. Because the course studies works from a variety of times and places, it helps students understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies. Other goals are met through the process of writing interpretive essays, which requires problem-solving, the location and evaluation of information, and effective communication.

EngL 1001W is a Writing Intensive course

This course meets the Council on Liberal Education guidelines for a Writing Intensive course. This means that the course:

- integrates writing into course content, through writing assignments that work toward specific course objectives and writing activities that take place throughout the semester
- provides explicit instruction in writing
- requires a cumulative minimum of 2,500 words of formal writing apart from any informal writing activities and assignments
- includes at least one formal assignment that requires students to revise and resubmit drafts after receiving feedback from the course instructor
- requires that at least one-third of each student's final course grade must be tied to the written work done in the course and that a student cannot pass the course and fail the writing component

Assignments

Grade Breakdown.

Class Participation	10%
Online Participation	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Writing Assignments	60%

Participation. I do not directly give an attendance grade but roll will be taken in each class. There will be in-class exercises, assignments, and activities in this course that you will miss if you are absent. If you cannot be in class for any reason, please ask a classmate rather than the instructor for notes or a summary. If illness or other problems require you to miss more than a small amount of class (1 or 2 meetings), please let me know. If you miss more than 2 meetings without explanation, your course grade will be affected. If you miss more than 4 meetings, you may be danger of failing the course. Class participation includes speaking up at least once a week, contributing to in-class activities, and/or attending office hours or otherwise getting in touch with your instructor. This course also requires your participation in online activities on the Canvas course site, such as discussion posts or other submissions; these assignments may not be strictly graded, but failure to do them will lower your overall course grade.

Midterm Exam. There will be a midterm exam covering the first third of the course. It will ask you to identify or produce vocabulary/facts and identify and explain passages from the works studied. The main point of the exam is to reward participation: if you attend class regularly, pay attention, and take notes, you will do well. This cannot be made up except in the case of a documented emergency.

Writing Assignments. There will be three formal writing assignments in this writing-intensive course. The first will be a 1000-word essay response to a prompt about the fiction from the course's first third. The second will be a 1000-word essay response to a prompt about the drama read in the course's second third. The final will be either a 500-word introduction to a poem of your choosing from the textbook or a poem of your own composition accompanied by a 350-word essay explaining your creative choices. The first and third assignments will have a process component. For the first essay, you will do a graded in-class peer and instructor review to get feedback from both your classmates and from me before submitting the final draft. For the third assignment, you will present your work to the class before submitting it to me. Full instructions for each assignment can be found starting on page 10 of this syllabus. Late submissions will be lowered by a letter grade for every day not submitted.

Grades

- *Grading Policy.* A (90-100): Outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements; B (80-90): Significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements; C (70-80): Meets the course requirements in every respect; D (60-70): Worthy of credit, even though it fails to meet course requirements fully; F (0-60): Work was not completed. Note: The University uses plus and minus grading within the above range.
- *Incompletes.* A grade of incomplete (“I”) is given only in a genuine and documented emergency, and only for work which is due during the last 2 weeks of the course. You must make arrangements for an incomplete before the last day of class.

Disability Accommodations

The University of Minnesota views disability as an important aspect of diversity, and is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- If you have, or you think you have, a disability in any area such as mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical, please contact the DRC office on your campus (612-626-1333) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
- Students with short-term disabilities, such as a broken arm, can often work with instructors to minimize classroom barriers. In situations where additional assistance is needed, students should contact the DRC as noted above.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have a disability accommodation letter dated for this semester or this year, please contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have questions or concerns about your accommodations please contact your access consultant/disability specialist.

Additional information is available on the DRC website: diversity.umn.edu/disability or email drc@umn.edu with questions.

Student Academic Integrity and Scholastic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as: plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course.

Student Writing Support

Student Writing Support (SWS) offers free writing instruction for all University of Minnesota students—graduate and undergraduate—at all stages of the writing process. In face-to-face and online collaborative consultations, SWS consultants from across the disciplines help students develop productive writing habits and revision strategies. Consulting is available by appointment online and in Nicholson Hall, and on a walk-in basis in Appleby Hall. For more information, call 612-625-1893 or go to writing.umn.edu/sws. In addition, SWS offers a number of web-based resources on topics such as avoiding plagiarism, documenting sources, and planning and completing a writing project.

Students for Whom English is a Second Language (Department Policy)

University policy requires that undergraduate students in the same class be held to the same standards of academic performance and accomplishment. Students for whom English is a second language, however, may have difficulty with the readings, lectures, discussions, and writing assignments in a course. The University offers many resources to assist non-native speakers of English, including courses and consultations through the Minnesota English Language Program, the Center for Writing, the Department of Writing Studies, and International Student and Scholar Services.

Student Conduct Code

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community. As a student at the University you are expected to adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code. Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities." To review the University's Student Conduct Code, please see: [http://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Student Conduct Code.pdf](http://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Student%20Conduct%20Code.pdf)

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Instructors determine if personal electronic devices (such as cell phones and laptops) are allowed in the classroom. Students may be directed to turn off personal electronic devices if the devices are not being used for class purposes. Students are not permitted to record any part of a class/lab/other session unless explicitly granted permission by the instructor. If the student does not comply, the student may be asked to leave the classroom. For complete information, please reference the policy on Student Responsibilities: <http://policy.umn.edu/education/studentresp>

Sexual Misconduct

I want to let you know that, in my role as a University employee, I am required to share information that I learn about possible sexual misconduct with the campus Title IX office that addresses these concerns. This allows a Title IX staff member to reach out to those who have experienced sexual misconduct to provide information about the personal support resources and options for investigation that they can choose to access. You are welcome to talk with me about concerns related to sexual misconduct. You can also or alternately choose to talk with a confidential resource; the University offers victim-advocacy support professionals, health services professionals and counselors that will not share information that they learn about sexual misconduct.

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.

Offensive Material (Department Policy)

In this course, students will be required to read words or view images that they may consider offensive. The ideas expressed in any given text do not necessarily reflect the views of the instructor, the English Department, or the University of Minnesota. Course materials have been selected for their literary, cultural, and/or historical value, in order to achieve specific learning objectives and course goals. These materials are meant to be examined in the context of intellectual inquiry and critical analysis, as appropriate for a university-level course. If you are easily shocked and/or offended, please contact the instructor to discuss whether this course is suitable for you.

Other Policies

For extensive information about UMN policy regarding the above topics and others— Student Conduct Code; Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences; Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials; Grading and Transcripts; Sexual Harassment; Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action; Disability Accommodations; Mental Health and Stress Management; and Academic Freedom—I strongly encourage that you visit the following link: <https://cla.umn.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/classroom-policies>

SCHEDULE OF MAJOR READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

*Readings and assignments are due on the date listed.
Supplementary assignments will be posted to Canvas, as will any
changes to the syllabus, so please check the site regularly.*

WEEK 01 | PROLOGUE: THE CASE FOR LITERATURE

01/21: Syllabus

01/23: J. Hillis Miller, "What Is Literature?" (Canvas); *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, Introduction (1-13)

WEEK 02 | FICTION: PLOT

01/28: Fiction: Reading, Responding, Writing (16-27); James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues" (225-47)

01/30: Plot (48-55); Ralph Ellison, "King of the Bingo Game" (56-64); Joyce Carol Oates, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" (64-76)

WEEK 03 | FICTION: POINT OF VIEW AND CHARACTER

02/04: Narration and Point of View (77-81); Edgar Allan Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado" (81-7); Jhumpa Lahiri, "Interpreter of Maladies" (325-40)

02/06: Character (94-101); Toni Morrison, "Recitatif" (101-15); William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" (295-301)

WEEK 04 | FICTION: SETTING AND SYMBOLISM

02/11: Setting (122-5); James Joyce, "Araby" (126-30); Amy Tan, "A Pair of Tickets" (130-44)

02/13: Symbol and Figurative Language (147-52); Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birth-Mark" (152-64); A. S. Byatt, "The Thing in the Forest" (164-79)

WEEK 05 | FICTION: THEME

02/18: Theme (184-8); Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (356-67); Franz Kafka, "A Hunger Artist" (317-23)

02/20: The Literature Essay (1046-57); The Writing Process (1066-78)

WEEK 06 | INTERLUDE: EXAM AND ESSAY

02/25: MIDTERM EXAM

02/27: WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE IN CLASS FOR PEER/INSTRUCTOR REVIEW; ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE TO CANVAS BY 11:59PM ON 02/28

WEEK 07 | DRAMA: CONTEMPORARY REALISM

03/03: Drama: Elements of Drama (676-85); Quiara Alegría Hudes, *Water by the Spoonful*, scenes one to six (738-60)

03/05: Quiara Alegría Hudes, *Water by the Spoonful*, scenes seven to fifteen (760-85)

WEEK 08 | SPRING BREAK

03/10, 03/12: No class

WEEK 09 | DRAMA: ANCIENT TRAGEDY

03/17: Sophocles, *Antigone* (1005-19)

03/19: Sophocles, *Antigone* (1019-37)

WEEK 10 | DRAMA: EARLY MODERN TRAGEDY

03/24: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act 1 (906-28)

03/26: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, acts 2-3 (928-69)

WEEK 11 | DRAMA: POSTMODERN TRAGEDY

03/31: Michael Almeyeda, *Hamlet* (in-class screening)

04/02: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, acts 4-5 (969-1005)

WEEK 12 | POETRY: SOUND, SENSE, AND SPEAKER

04/07: Poetry: Reading, Responding, Writing (398-421); Rhyme, Other Sound Devices, Poetic Meter (517-27); Bashō, “A village without bells—” (588); Ezra Pound, “In a Station of the Metro” (623)

04/09: Speaker: Whose Voice Do We Hear? (428-41); T. S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (600-4); Sylvia Plath, “Daddy” (616-18); WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE TO CANVAS BY 11:59PM

WEEK 13 | POETRY: SITUATION, SETTING, AND LANGUAGE

04/14: Situation and Setting: What Happens? Where? When? (442-61); Derek Walcott, “A Far Cry from Africa” (629-30); Seamus Heaney, “Digging” (605-6)

04/16: Language: Word Choice and Order (476-85); Gerard Manley Hopkins, “God’s Grandeur” (606); Emily Dickinson, “I heard a Fly buzz—when I died” (595-5); Wallace Stevens, “The Emperor of Ice Cream” (627)

WEEK 14 | POETRY: IMAGERY AND SYMBOLISM

04/21: Visual Imagery and Figures of Speech (486-502); Symbol (503-17); W. B. Yeats, “The Second Coming” (636); John Keats, “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (609-10)

04/23: POEM FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE TO PRESENT TO THE CLASS

WEEK 15 | EPILOGUE: STUDENTS’ CHOICE

04/28: POEM FOR ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE TO PRESENT TO THE CLASS

04/30: ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE TO CANVAS BY 11:59PM

ENGL 1001W WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment #1 - Essay on Fiction (1000-1100 words)

Your assignment is to choose at least three elements of fiction (plot, point of view, character, setting, symbolism) in one of the short stories read for the course and write an essay about how these elements are used to convey the story's overall meaning.

Your essay will be driven by an argument, or thesis, that communicates your interpretation of how the literary devices express the theme and that organizes the essay's evidence toward the end of proving your claim.

Your thesis should be as concrete as possible, and it should go beyond the obvious or summary. For example, an unsuccessful thesis would say, "Hawthorne discusses science in 'The Birth-Mark.'" This merely states a fact about the text without offering an interpretation of its broader significance or its complexity. A more successful thesis: "Hawthorne uses point of view, symbolism, characterization in 'The Birth-Mark' to criticize science as a destructive quest for perfection." (Please do not use that thesis in so many words.)

This thesis should be stated near the beginning of your essay; it does not necessarily need to be confined to a single sentence, but it should be worded as concisely and specifically as possible. You may only arrive at a definite idea of your thesis after having written most or all of the paper, but it is imperative that you then go back and place it at the beginning to offer your reader a map of your argument.

Please note: this essay should not be a summary of the text, nor should it be a recitation of historical or biographical facts about the life and times of the author. It is a literary interpretation—a characterization of the text's meaning and effect through a careful selection and explication of its elements. A plot summary or a historical or biographical recitation cannot be given a high grade for this assignment. Historical information should only be used to contextualize your interpretation; as for plot, assume your reader already knows it. You may allude once or twice to the author's biography for context, but there is no need to do so, and your argument should not depend on it.

Your essay following the thesis should be divided into discrete sub-topics organized as individual paragraphs (e.g., paragraph one examines the story's setting, paragraph two discusses its symbolism, etc.). You may want to give these paragraphs opening sentences that announce their theme, but you do not have to do so as long as the organizing principle of the paragraph is clear.

You should make judicious use of quotations; do not quote more of the text than you plan to discuss in detail. Also be sure to introduce the quotation rather than dropping it into the middle of a paragraph, and to follow the quotation with an explanation of its significance for your argument.

Your opening paragraph should provide some context for the ensuing discussion: you might begin with historical or literary information. Your conclusion should not only restate your argument but also suggest an avenue for further exploration; in resting your case, invite others to respond.

Grading criteria: an interesting and persuasive thesis, an attention to language that goes beyond summary or statements of the obvious, and a general understanding of the text you quote. Be sure to proofread carefully for spelling and grammar—such errors may overwhelm your ability to communicate with the reader—and also revise for eloquence, wit, verve and all else that makes writing worth reading. The first draft is graded, and your final grade on the assignment will be an average of the grades on the first and final drafts, so please make sure that the first draft is itself a complete and well-written work.

This essay should be at least 1000 words and no more than 1100 words. Use a standard font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Provide a heading with your name, date and the assignment, and include a descriptive, arresting title (e.g., “‘The Perfect Future’: Science as Destruction in ‘The Birth-Mark’”) centered one line above the essay’s first line. This assignment does not require a bibliography, but in-text parenthetical citations should follow MLA guidelines.

Assignment #2 - Essay on Drama (1000-1100 words)

Write an argumentative analysis of 1000-1100 words in response to one of the following prompts: 1. Compare and/or contrast how the themes of war, gender, or the relation of private to public life (or a theme of your choosing) are portrayed in *Water by the Spoonful* and *Antigone* (or, if you prefer, *Hamlet*). 2. Discuss changes made in setting, structure or character portrayal—and the effect of these changes on the theme or meaning—between Shakespeare’s text of *Hamlet* and Almeriyeda’s film version.

Like the first essay, this one will be organized around a non-obvious thesis; this thesis will be most effective if it states your overall argument about how your chosen theme is treated in both your chosen works. Most theses for this assignment will probably either have a comparative and contrastive structure: for example, “Both *Antigone* and *Water by the Spoonful* show that violence...” (comparative), or, “While *Antigone* demonstrates [X] about violence, *Water by the Spoonful* shows [Y]” (contrastive). Either way, your thesis, stated near the beginning of your essay, at the conclusion of a contextualizing introductory paragraph, should sum up your whole claim.

The remainder of your paper will consist of paragraphs, each organized around a discrete sub-topic of your argument, which substantiates your claims through the use of clearly introduced and explicated textual evidence, either direct quotations from your chosen texts or citations of specific events from them. As for the essay’s structure, there are at least two possible ways of proceeding. You could arrange your argument by topic: each paragraph will compare or contrast your chosen texts on the grounds of their relevance to the subtopics of your thesis. On the other hand, you could spend the first

half of the paper on one text and the second half on another. An example of each structure (see also “The Comparative Essay” in the *Norton*, pages 1058-62):

Thesis: Both *Antigone* and *Water by the Spoonful* show [X] about violence through [a], [b], and [c]

Topical structure:

[a] in *Antigone* and *Water*

[b] in *Antigone* and *Water*

[c] in *Antigone* and *Water*

Text structure:

[a, b, and c] in *Antigone*

[a, b, and c] in *Water*

Your essay should conclude with a paragraph that sums up your argument and suggests areas of further inquiry.

Grading criteria: an interesting and persuasive thesis, a clear and orderly structure, good use of textual evidence, and a general understanding of the texts you cite. Be sure to proofread carefully for spelling and grammar—such errors may overwhelm your ability to communicate with the reader—and also revise for clarity and eloquence.

Format: This essay should be at least 1000 words and no more than 1100 words. Use a standard font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Provide a heading with your name, date and the assignment, and include a descriptive, arresting title (e.g., “Violence and Heroism in *Antigone* and *Water by the Spoonful*”) centered one line above the essay’s first line. This assignment does not require a bibliography, but in-text parenthetical citations should follow MLA guidelines.

Assignment #3 - Introduction of a Poem or an Original Poem (500-600 words)

Choose a poem in the anthology that was not assigned in the course and introduce it in an expository essay of 500-600 words. What is its form and genre? Who is the speaker? What is the situation? What figurative language is used? How do these literary devices communicate the poem’s theme? Answer these questions in one paragraph designed to read like an appealing introduction to the poem for readers who have never encountered it. (Format: give the whole poem and then your commentary.)

Alternately, you may write a short poem of your own (15-25 lines) and include a commentary of 300-400 words on your own artistic choices about form, genre, speaker, situation, figurative language, and theme. Please also discuss in your commentary how you have been influenced by at least one poem read in the course.

You will also present your poem to the class in a 10-minute presentation. Please prepare a brief slideshow that includes your chosen or original poem—you should begin your presentation by reading it aloud—as well as your introduction or commentary in the form of a bulleted list or other types of text. Feel free to also include pictures, video, or other audiovisual elements.