

# ENGL450: Studies in Genre / The Short Story

## SPRING 2019

Dr. Jaime Cantrell

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OH: T/R 10-11am and 12:15-1pm

**REQUIRED TEXT:** Charters, Ann, *The Story and Its Writer*. Tenth Edition. Bedford/ St. Martins/Macmillan Learning, 2019 (print).

**OVERVIEW:** This course is designed to give you the opportunity to read a wide variety of short stories and to think critically about them. Questions that we will continually ask in this course included: What can a literary work reveal about our understanding of ourselves and of our world? How does a work of fiction reveal the complex web of influences that shape one's identity and how one views the world? How does an author suggest these influences in the concise form of a short story? In addition to reading works of short fiction, we will enhance our understanding by considering secondary sources about the fiction, including: authors' comments about their work and the work of others; scholarly commentary about particular works; commentary that provides context for a particular author or story.

**COURSE GOALS:** In this course you will learn to read, analyze, and write about works of short fiction in order to become a more active and critical reader and to develop your skills in analysis and writing. You will learn to recognize the major literary elements and be able to connect the critical elements at play to a work's larger theme; you will gain an understanding of several critical approaches to interpreting literature.

We will explore each week's assignments in the context of a theme, but additionally the course is divided into four general sections. First, we will explore the elements of fiction as we engage in the close reading and analysis of stories. Next, we will consider how additional sources and information about the text affect our interpretations. Then we will examine stories through specific critical lenses. Finally, we will study an author in depth and then look at particular genres or issues in fiction such as graphic storytelling and works in translation.

### **STUDENT LEARNER OUTCOMES:**

Upon successful completion of ENGL450, students will be able to

- Evaluate those works as expressions of individual and human values within a historical and social context;
- Construct a critical response to works of literature;
- Discuss and assess the influence of literature on intercultural experiences;
- Classify and evaluate contemporary and classic works of literary theory.

### **CLASSROOM DECORUM:**

Active participation is mandatory, and a significant portion of your grade is determined by the voice you bring to our discussions. Thoughtfulness trumps volume in this regard. I encourage you to be a lively and engaged voice in the discussions and lectures, and I require you to be a respectful one.

Please do not eat in class, no texting, and I reserve the right to answer any cell phone that rings, buzzes or bleats during class time.

If you email me during the semester be sure to address me with respect (this means formally as Dr. Cantrell or Professor Cantrell, because trust me, you wouldn't believe number of "Hey" or "Ms. Cantrell" emails I get from students!). Please also understand that in the interest of a work/life balance, any emails sent during nights and weekends will wait for a response until business hours; allow at least a 24-hour response time for all non-emergency notes. **Please note that if your email doesn't include: 1) a salutation, 2) the course information, 3) your name and section number, and 4) a closing, then I will not respond to it. This digital age begs you to not be neglectful of basic email etiquette—all your professors will appreciate this fast and easy courtesy.**

### **GRADING:**

1 <sup>st</sup> Essay 10%	Blog Posts 10%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Essay (Final) 25%	Quizzes 15%
Midterm Exam 25%	Individual Presentation 15%

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

\* **Essays:** 2 short analytical essays

Paper # 1 (1,000 words) Close reading of one story with no additional sources. No prompt will be provided.

Paper # 2 (1,500 words) Analytical essay that contextualizes one author's work by considering 1-2 secondary sources such as a commentary. Prompts will be provided.

\* **Tests/Quizzes:** Daily reading quizzes and a midterm exam

Almost every class will start with a quick quiz on the assigned reading. Your midterm will take place in March and will encompass material from the first half of the term.

\* **Homework:** Two blog posts (at least 300 words each)

In your assigned blog posts, you will often be required to respond to a prompt on each assigned reading or group of readings. Your response must be posted to the thread on Blackboard at least 2 hours before class time on the day we discuss the text.

\* **Individual Presentation**

During the second week of class, you will select a reading from the syllabus on which to present for half a class meeting. I will distribute a document detailing presentation guidelines.

\* **Attendance**

You are expected to attend every class meeting. I allow 2 unexcused absences. Each absence after the third will result in a reduction of your final grade by 5 points unless there is a valid, documented excuse (such as a doctor's note to explain an illness that prevents you from attending class).

### Disability Accommodations Statement

University policy provides for reasonable accommodations to be made for students with verified disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis as specified under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Students with

disabilities who believe they may benefit from classroom or other accommodations should contact the Office of Student Disability Services for information: Carl Greg, Office of Student Life UC126 or by phone at 903-223-3062.

### Academic Integrity Policy

Academic honesty is expected of students in this course. Plagiarism and cheating may result in a failing grade for the course and will be reported accordingly; I will recommend a failing grade for the course (not just the assignment in question). None of the assignments in this course requires outside research—*just you, your Norton, and your thoughts*. For additional information on university academic integrity policy, see the university catalog.

### Drop Policy

To drop this course after the census date, a student must complete the drop/withdrawal request form, located on the university website or obtained in the Registrar's Office. The student must submit the signed and completed form to the instructor of each course indicated on the form to be dropped for his/her signature. The signature is not an "approval" to drop, but rather confirmation that the student has discussed the drop/withdrawal with the faculty member. The form must be submitted to the Registrar's Office for processing in person, by email at Registrar@tamut.edu, mail (7101 University Ave. Texarkana, TX 75503) or fax (903-223-3140). Drop/withdrawal forms missing any of the required information will not be accepted by the Registrar's Office for processing. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the form is completed properly before submission. If a student stops participating in class (attending and submitting assignments) but does not complete and submit the drop/withdrawal form, a final grade based on work completed as outlined in the syllabus will be assigned.

This syllabus is subject to change, but all modifications will be announced in lecture meeting or via the announcements tab on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to be aware of possible alterations and adjust accordingly.

## Reading Schedule (have texts read by this date):

- Jan. 21 Introduction; Lydia Davis, “The Mother”, p. 265 (in class) & Anthony Doerr, “On Reading The Story and Its Writer”, p. 1020 (in class)
- Jan. 23 Margaret Atwood, “Happy Endings” (story), p. 21 and “Reading Blind” (commentary), p. 1000

### Approaches to Reading

- Jan. 28 Appendix 2 “The Elements of Fiction”, p. 1240; Ralph Ellison “Battle Royale” (story), p. 294 and “The Influence of Folklore on ‘Battle Royale’” (commentary), p. 1029; **BLOG POSTS:** Gomez & Harris
- Jan. 30 Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown” (story), p. 355; Melville, “Blackness in Hawthorne’s ‘Young Goodman Brown’” (commentary), p. 1069; Poe, “The Importance of the Single Effect in a Prose Tale” (commentary), p. 1097

### Approaches to Writing

- Feb. 4 Appendix 4 “Writing About Short Stories”, p. 1265; Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephant” (story), p. 368; Anderson, “Form, Not Plot, in the Short Story” (commentary), p. 997; **BLOG POSTS:** Jackson & James
- Feb. 6 Toni Cade Bambara, “The Lesson” (story), p. 62; Munro “How I Write Short Stories” (commentary), p. 1078; **PRESENTATION 1**

### Authorial Intentions

- Feb. 11 Jamaica Kincaid, “Girl” (story), p. 509 and “On ‘Girl’” (commentary), p. 1051; **BLOG POSTS:** Wagner & Gomez
- Feb. 13 William Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily” (story), p. 314 and “The Meaning Of.” (commentary), p. 1033; **BLOG POSTS:** Jarrett & Parks

### Retellings

- Feb. 18 Anton Chekhov, “The Lady With the Dog” (story), p. 214; Vladimir Nabokov, “A Reading of Chekhov” (commentary), p. 1079; **PRESENTATION 2**
- Feb. 20 Joyce Carol Oates, “The Lady with the Pet Dog” (story), p. 669; Brennan “Plotting Against Chekhov” (commentary), p. 1005; **PRESENTATION 3**

### Critical Perspectives: Psychological Criticism

- Feb. 25 Classroom Work Day; bring your laptops
- Feb. 27 Edgar Allen Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher”, p. 788; D.H. Lawrence, “On ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’”, p. 1052; **BLOG POSTS:** Pugh & Taylor

### Critical Perspectives: Gender Criticism

- Mar. 3 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” (story), p. 342
- Mar. 5 Gilbert & Gubar, “A Feminist Reading of Gilman” (commentary), p. 1178; Gilman, “Why I Wrote ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’” (commentary), p. 1174-1189

### Critical Perspectives: Poststructuralist Criticism

- Mar. 10 MIDTERM EXAM
- Mar. 12 Herman Melville, “Bartleby, the Scrivener” (story) p. 598; J. Hillis Miller “A

Deconstructive Reading of Melville” p. 1073; **PRESENTATION 4**

Mar. 17 No Class; Spring Break.

Mar. 19 No Class; Spring Break.

**An Author in Depth: Flannery O'Connor**

Mar. 24 O'Connor, “Good Country People” (story), p. 721; “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” (story), p. 735; **BLOG POSTS:** Harris & Jackson

Mar. 26 O'Connor, “From Letters” (Casebook), p. 1191; O'Connor “Writing Short Stories” (Casebook), p. 1193; McFarland, “On ‘Good Country People’” (commentary), p. 1212

**An Author in Depth: Zora Neale Hurston**

Mar. 31 Zora Neale Hurston, “Sweat” (story), p. 373; **PRESENTATION 5**

Apr. 2 Hurston, “How It Feels to Be Colored Me” (commentary), p. 1037; Alice Walker, “Zora Neale Hurston: A Cautionary Tale and a Partisan View” (commentary), p. 1122; **PAPER #1 DUE IN CLASS**

**Greatest Hits Series**

Apr. 7 Kate Chopin, “Desiree’s Baby” (story), p. 227

Apr. 9 Junot Diaz, “How to Date a Brown girl, Black girl, White girl, or Halfie” (story), p. 278; **PRESENTATION 6**

**Greatest Hits Series**

Apr. 14 Shirley Jackson, “The Lottery” (story), p. 396 and “The Morning of June 28, 1948” (commentary), p. 1040; **BLOG POSTS:** James & Jarrett

Apr. 16 Zadie Smith, “Crazy They Call Me” (story), p. 866; **PRESENTATION 7**

**Greatest Hits Series**

Apr. 21 Alice Walker, “Everyday Use” (story), p. 949; **BLOG POSTS:** Parks & Pugh

Apr. 23 Alison Bechdel, “The Fellowship” (story), p. 86; **PRESENTATION 8**

**Greatest Hits Series**

Apr. 28 Jhumpa Lahiri, “Interpreter of Maladies” (story), p. 512; **BLOG POSTS:** Taylor & Wagner

Apr. 30 Sandra Cisneros, “Barbie-Q” (story), p. 234; **PRESENTATION 9**

May 5 **PAPER #2 due in class;** No readings; Course Evaluations.