**Instructor**: Dr. Deborah Gussman

**LITT 2114: Literary Interpretation**

**Fall 2014**

MWF 11:20 am-12:35 pm

B004

**Office phone**: (609) 626-4567

**Office Location**: F-137

**Office Hours**: MW 1 –2 pm & F 10-11 am

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**Course Description**: This course introduces you to the study of literature. We will focus on two related skills: how to produce close readings of texts and how to develop those readings into thesis-driven papers. The course will provide you with a toolbox of techniques and approaches to literature—a set of tools applicable not only to this course but to the critical analysis of the texts you encounter in other classes at Stockton and beyond. This course builds the contents of your literary toolbox, increasing your knowledge of the tools available for interpreting literature, and it also helps you understand how and when to use these tools. Additionally, your close reading skills will be enhanced through an introduction to contemporary literary theory and methods—such as psychoanalytic, Marxist, and feminist criticism. Students should come ready to read and re-read, write and re-write, think and re-think intensively. This is a portfolio course: this means feedback will be given throughout the term but grades on portfolio papers will not be assigned until the final portfolio is complete at the end of the term.

This course has three essential goals. Students will:

* **Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories** (e.g. the basics of close reading and critical literary analysis methods and theories)
* **Learn to apply course material** (e.g., produce a portfolio of writing that demonstrates your ability to apply close reading skills and basic critical reading methods)
* **Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas** (e.g., critically evaluate a range of literary texts, genres, and appropriate methods for reading primary texts)

Other important goals for this course include:

* **Gaining factual knowledge** (terminology, classifications, methods, trends; e.g., building your vocabulary of literary terms, genres, and methods)
* **Developing skill in expressing yourself in writing** (e.g., sharpening your critical writing and analysis skills, particularly in regard to your writing about literature)
* **Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field** (e.g., this course provides foundational knowledge for careers related to literary studies)
* **Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of literature** (e.g., the aim of this course is to learn to appreciate a range of poetry, fiction, and drama)

**Accommodation for Students with Special Needs**: Stockton College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations should contact the Learning Access Program located in J204 or by calling 652-4988. Additional information on the program may be obtained from Stockton web site <http://www2.stockton.edu/wellness/lap.html>.

**Academic Honesty**: Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and risk failing the course. Other sanctions may also apply and all cases will be reported to Academic Affairs. You are responsible for knowing this college policy: <http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=14&pageID=62>. Contact your instructor if you have questions.

**Required Texts**:

* ***Norton Introduction to Literature***, (Booth, Hunter, Mays, eds.) Shorter Edition
* **Blackboard**: If you have questions about using Blackboard, consult a computer lab assistant or your instructor. Log in via goStockton or <https://skimmer.stockton.edu/>.

**Additional Resources on the Web** (See also “Course Links” in Blackboard):

* **Stockton Libraries**: http://library.stockton.edu/
* **Norton Anthology Webpage**: wwnorton.com/litweb

**Email Policy**: Please keep the following in mind when communicating with me outside of class:

1. Use email for all course-related correspondence (don’t leave voice mail!)
2. I check my email regularly during the day, but rarely after 9 pm. Please plan your email questions accordingly and, while I often respond immediately, allow a reasonable time frame for my reply.
3. Always try to visit my office hours if you have specific questions about course material. If you were absent, contact a classmate with questions about missed material and then visit office hours if you still have questions.
4. Visit me during office hours to discuss grades. This includes final grades. Grades should be discussed in person during office hours or other arranged meetings. I will not discuss grades via email.

**Office Hours**: Think of my office as an extension of the classroom and use my office hours to discuss any aspect of the reading and material covered during class: come chat with me about your writing, the portfolio process, questions about the reading, lecture, or discussion, ideas you wish to develop, reading and interpretive strategies you’d like to try, and so on. Students who visit office hours tend to perform better.

**Course Requirements**: You will be expected to:

1. **Attend class**: you are allotted 6 absences for fatigue, illness, personal reasons, malfunctioning alarm clocks, doctor’s appointments, etc. (Note: I do not distinguish between excused or unexcused absences. If you miss six days and then get the flu and miss another day, you will lose 50 points for the seventh absence. Any exception to this policy requires documentation for all absences and approval for special accommodations with the Wellness Center.) **Students entering class after the instructor records attendance, who leave before class ends, or who disappear for a substantial part of any class will be considered absent.** For each absence after your first six, your final grade **will** **be reduced** **50 points per additional absence**, down to and including "F." Regular, spirited class attendance is a crucial component to passing this course. I will not give incompletes at the end of the semester unless arrangements are made well in advance and you have appropriate reasons and qualify according to College policy;
2. **Attend class meetings prepared**: this means bring the appropriate text(s) and DO THE READING WITH GUSTO; this is a discussion-based class and if you haven't done the reading, thought a little about it, and have ready access to it, you will not be able to contribute and the class (as well as your grade) suffers accordingly;
3. **Participate in large and small group discussions and assignments**: this course is what you make of it and will work *only* if everyone actively contributes;
4. **Complete all assignments**: passing the course requires timely completion of ALL assignments, long and short, in-class and out-of-class. You risk failing the course if you do not complete all assignments. *It is not my responsibility to make sure that you have handed in all assignments; it is yours.* No late/incomplete assignments will be accepted after the last day of class;
5. **Unplug**: silence cell phones before entering class, cease text messaging, and do not surf the web or check email during class. An inability to use technology responsibly will negatively impact your final grade**.** All disruptive behavior (e.g., sleeping in class, inappropriate language directed at students/instructor, perpetual lateness, leaving class frequently, etc.) constitutes grounds for grade reduction and/or dismissal from class.

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**Assignment Descriptions**

**Class Participation**: Class participation—both *verbal* contributions and silent *active listening* to your peers and instructor—is expected. You will find it difficult to earn satisfactory grades on quizzes, in class writing, and interpretation papers if you do not read carefully for each class. You will also find the class to be more interesting if you are prepared. Frequently leaving class, the inability to take part in discussion, tardiness, leaving class early, sleeping, text messaging, and other disruptive behavior creates a negative class environment and, when not corrected, may be grounds for dismissal from the class. **Coming to class with questions, comments about the reading, and/or passages to discuss is what we do in literary studies. If you don’t enjoy doing this, consider a different class.**

**Event Review** (100 points): You will write a brief review (approximately 2 typed pages) to one of the scheduled Visiting Writers readings, Why the Humanities Matters talks, or plays at the Performing Arts Center (PAC) and post this review to Blackboard within one week of the reading. Guidelines for writing the review and a list of approved events can be found on Blackboard. Check with me if there is an event you wish to review that is not listed, and I will consider it.

**COMPLETE DRAFTS:** (150 points total) You will write a complete draft of three close reading papers on assigned texts. One paper will conduct a close reading of a short story (4-5 typed pages), one will conduct a close reading of a poem (3-4 typed pages), and another will conduct a close reading of a play (4-5 typed pages). See assignment description and rubrics on Blackboard for more information. Drafts will be reviewed in class using several different formats before submission. Each of you will have your draft reviewed by the whole class at least one time during the semester.

**Portfolio**: (650 points total): The final portfolio includes your **three revised close reading** **papers** (poetry, fiction, and drama). The portfolio will also include a **self-reflection paper** (2-3 typed pages) that reflects on your development as a close reader and writer about literature. The paper should discuss the three close reading assignments, including your draft and revision process and what you have learned in the course. See assignment description on Blackboard for more information.

**PARTICIPATION**: (100 points): Your class participation grade will be based primarily on your performance on reading quizzes, in-class writing assignments, and peer review activities. Active, meaningful participation in class discussions can enhance this grade.

**Evaluation**: The evaluation the final portfolio will be a be determined by your successful completion of the following (See the Portfolio Rubric as well as the rubrics for each paper):

* Completion final portfolio version of all three papers (200 points each, 600 points total). Papers will be evaluated on the quality of argument, writing, and application of literary terms and theories and evidence of thoughtful revision.
* Quality of the Self-Reflection paper (50 points)

**Grading Scale**

100-95:  A
94.9-90: A-

89.9-87: B+
86.9-83: B
82.9-80: B-

79.9-77: C+

76.9-73: C

72.9-70: C-

69.9-67: D+

66.9-63: D

62.9-60: D-

59.9 & below: F

## Grades

Class Participation **100**

Event Review **100**

Complete Drafts **150**

Portfolio **650**

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**Total 1000**

**Late Assignment Policy**:

**Written Assignments**: *Papers and drafts are due at the beginning of class* *on the dates listed in the syllabus*. No portfolio will be accepted late. For drafts due to the instructor for feedback, students will lose 5 points per day late from the 50 points possible per paper for the completion of work in a timely and detailed format. See the close reading paper rubric for additional information.

**Paper Extensions**: Any student who asks the instructor **prior to** the due date may receive a 2-day extension from the due date listed on the syllabus. After 2 days the late paper penalty will go into effect. No exceptions. *Due to the College’s grade submission deadline, no student may receive an extension for the final portfolio.*

Of course, the extension policy will only help students who have drafted a paper and follow the expected practice of backing up documents. Back up all your files and you will be a much happier and successful individual. (Consider using a free cloud-based back-up program like Dropbox (dropbox.com) or emailing your drafts and papers to your Stockton Gmail). You may not be happy when your computer explodes or your flash drive crashes, but at least you will not be despondent. Students are responsible for keeping a personal copy of every assignment and keeping all returned assignments with my feedback for the final portfolio. Reminder, no assignments will be accepted after the last class meeting.

**Paper Revision Policy:**

This course is based on the principle that revisions take place *before* the final paper is evaluated by the instructor for a final grade in the portfolio. To this end, consider dropping in during office hours or other arranged meetings to discuss your papers well in advance of the final portfolio due date. Drop in at any stage of the writing process: from your initial brainstorming to nailing down those final brass tacks. I will happily read and comment on thesis statements (usually between 1-3 sentences) via email. If you wish me to read longer drafts in addition to the required deadlines outlined in the syllabus, drop by my office hours. Additionally, I encourage you to use your peer resources during the draft and revision process, including Stockton’s Writing Center, located in J105: <http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=70&pageID=2>.

**Syllabus—LITT 2114—Spring 2015[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Week 1: Introductions and Questions**

1/21: **Introductions**: to course, Blackboard, assignments, students and instructor.

1/23: **Entering the Conversation—** Norton “Introduction” 1-10; **New Criticism/Formalism**: Norton “Critical Approaches” 1303-1308; and Chapter 17 “Paraphrase, Summary, Description” 1229-1232.

**Week 2: Fiction**

1/26: **Fiction**: Norton “Fiction: Reading, Responding, Writing” 12-33; Kate Chopin, “The Story of an Hour” (277-280); John Upike, “A&P” (429-435).

 Introduction to the Fiction paper.

1/28: **Close Reading Pre-Test**: In-class assessment of your close reading skills. Norton Chapter 19 “The Writing Process” 1243-1257.

1/30: **Plot**: Norton Chapter 1 “Plot” 57-101.

**Week 3: Fiction**

2/2: **POV**: Norton Chapter 2 “Narration and Point of View” 102-121.

2/4: **Character and** **Psychoanalytic Criticism**: Norton Chapter 3 “Character” 122-148 and 1315-1317 (top paragraph).

2/6: **Setting**: Norton Chapter 4 “Setting” 157-164; Judith Ortiz Cofer, “Volar” 196-198, and William Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily” 298-306.

**Week 4: Fiction**

2/9: **Figures and Symbols**: Norton Chapter 5 “Symbol and Figurative Language” 205-240.

2/11: **Theme**: Norton Chapter 6 “Theme” 241-270.

2/13 **Thesis Statements**: Bring two drafts (typed) of your thesis statement for your fiction paper to class. Chapter 18 “Elements of the Essay” (1233-1242).

**Week 5: Fiction draft workshops and Introduction to Poetry**

2/16: **Fiction draft workshop**: Workshop fiction papers (4 typed pages) on Elmo. Bring one copy of your rough draft to class.

2/18: **Fiction draft workshop**: Workshop fiction papers (4 typed pages) on Elmo. Bring one copy of your rough draft to class.

 **Historical and Ideological Criticism**: Norton 1321-1333 and “Gorilla, My Love” 271-277.

2/20: **What is Poetry?** Norton 450-465. Introduction to the Poetry Paper.

 **\*\*\*Fiction Paper Due\*\*\***

**Week 6: Poetry**

2/23: **Responding to Poetry**, Norton 466-475; **Speaker**: Norton Chapter 7 “Speaker: Whose Voice Do We Hear?” 483-492; 497-499.

2/25: **Setting**: Norton Chapter 8 “Situation and Setting” 501-515.

2/27: **Words:** Norton Chapter 10 “Language” 548-559. In-class instruction in *OED* and poetry MLA citation.

**Week 7: Poetry**

3/2: **Theme and Tone**: Norton Chapter 9 “Theme and Tone” 527-531.

3/4: **Figurative Writing**: Norton Chapter 11 “Visual Imagery and Figures of Speech” 560-572.

3/6: **Symbol**: Norton “Symbol” 573-585.

**March 8-15: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASSES**

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**Week 8: Poetry**

3/16: **Rhyme and Meter**: Norton Chapter 13 “The Sounds of Poetry” 586-610.

3/18: **Internal Structure**: Norton Chapter 14 “Internal Structure” 611-627.

3/20: **External Form**: Norton Chapter 15 “External Form” 632-656

**Week 9: Poetry draft workshop and Introduction to Drama**

3/23: **Poetry draft workshop**: Workshop poetry papers (3-4 typed pages) on Elmo. Bring one copy of your draft to class.

Tues. 3/34: Preceptorial Advising Day

3/25: **Poetry Draft Workshop**: Workshop poetry papers (3-4 typed pages) on Elmo. Bring one copy of your draft to class.

3/27: **Drama**: Norton “Drama: Reading, Responding, Writing” 740-756. Introduction to the Drama paper.  **\*\*\* Poetry paper due.\*\*\***

**Week 10: Drama**

3/30: Norton, Ch 16 “Elements of Drama” and Henrick Ibsen*, A Doll House*, Act I 772-807.

4/1: **Preceptorial Advising—No Classes**.

4/3:Ibsen, A Doll House, Acts II -III 807-843.

**Week 11: Drama**

4/6: ***Antigone***: Norton 1191-1227

4/8: Continue discussion of Antigone.

**Deadline to withdraw from full-term course(s) with a W grade.**

4/10: Catch-up day.

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**Week 12: Drama—Draft Workshop**

4/13: **Drama draft workshop**: Workshop draft drama papers (3-4 typed pages) on Elmo. Bring one copy of your rough draft to class.

4/15: **Drama draft workshop**: Workshop draft drama papers (3-4 typed pages) on Elmo. Bring one copy of your rough draft to class.

4/17: **Monologue**: Norton 994-999. \*\*\***Drama Paper Due**\*\*\*

**Week 13: Portfolio Preparation**

4/20: Individual conferences with students (sign up sheet in class)

4/22: Individual conferences with students (sign up sheet in class)

4/24: Individual conferences with students (sign up sheet in class)

**Week 14: Portfolio Preparation and Completion**

4/27: **Close Reading Post-test and Reflection Essay Draft Workshop**: Close reading post-test (approximately the first 40 minutes). The remainder of the class will be a draft workshop for your self-reflection essay.

4/30: Class does not meet.

5/1: **Final Meeting**: Extended Schedule—11:30-2:00 pm. All portfolios must be submitted in class. \*\*\***Final Portfolio Due\*\*\***

1. Class Schedule subject to changes with notice on Blackboard. Readings and assignments are listed on the day they are due. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)