

Literary Interpretation

LITT 2114-002

Fall 2018

Tues./Thurs. 8:30 – 10:20 am

C135, Galloway Campus

Dr. Deborah Gussman

Office: F-131

Office Hours: TR 10:30-11:30, 2:30-3:30; and by appointment.

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Pronouns: she/her/hers



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. Students should come ready to read and re-read, write and re-write, think and re-think intensively.

Required Text: *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, 2016 Shorter 12th Edition. ISBN 9780393623574
All other course resources are accessible through the “Course Resource” folder on Blackboard.

Course Goals: 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)
- **Learn to apply course material** (e.g., produce essays that demonstrate 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 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)

Blackboard Access: The online content of this course is delivered through Blackboard, Stockton's Learning Management System. You will use Blackboard to receive assignment guidelines and course resources, submit assignments, and receive grades. To access this course on Blackboard, you will need Internet access and a supported browser. You can log into Blackboard via the [goStockton Portal](#), or you may access the system directly at blackboard.stockton.edu using your goStockton portal username and password. To ensure that you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins please run the Browser Check from Stockton's E-Learning page: <https://elearning.stockton.edu/>.

If you have trouble accessing or using Blackboard at any time during the term, please contact the computer helpdesk by calling (609) 652-4309 or emailing helpdesk@stockton.edu. Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure that you have regular and reliable Internet access throughout the term. Information about Computer Labs (including locations, printing, and cloud storage) can be found here: <https://stockton.edu/information-technology/computer-lab-access.html>

University Policies:

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 university policy: <http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=209&pageID=17>
Please contact me if you have questions.

Accessibility

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, students with a documented disability and who need accommodations are encouraged to register with the Learning Access Program (LAP). Registration for support services is voluntary and confidential. Support services provided by the LAP aim to assist students with devising strategies for meeting the University's educational demands and with fostering independence, responsibility, and self-advocacy. The LAP is located in J-204 on campus, or online at www.stockton.edu/LAP. Please call 609-652-4988 or send an email to LAP@stockton.edu for more information. Once you have received an accommodation letter from LAP, please contact your instructor to privately discuss your needs and to ensure that reasonable accommodations are implemented.

Course Expectations and Policies:

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to your success in this course. On rare occasions, circumstances may arise that may hinder your ability to attend class. Accordingly, I permit each student to miss four classes without penalty. Your final course grade will be subject to a 3-point penalty per each additional absence. In other words, if your calculated course grade is 92%, but you missed five classes, your final grade would be 89%, a B+. Please note that I make no distinction between an excused absence and an unexcused absence, so make sure to save your four absences for true emergencies. If you miss four classes and then get the flu and miss another day, you will lose three points for the fifth absence. Any

exception to this policy requires documentation for all absences from the Wellness Center. If you are absent from class, contact a classmate—not your instructor—to ask about missed material and assignments, and then visit office hours if you still have questions.

Lateness disrupts the learning experience of other students, so be sure to arrive on time. If you arrive to class after attendance has been taken, it is your responsibility to see your instructor after class to be sure that you are marked late and not absent. Two instances of lateness (or leaving before the end of class) will count as one absence.

Participation

The success of this class depends on the engagement and thoughtful participation of each student. You are expected to come to class having completed the assigned reading and writing assignments, and you should be prepared to ask questions, share your insights, and participate in classroom discussions and other activities. Be sure to bring your book, paper, and a pen or pencil to every class meeting.

Classroom Etiquette

For obvious reasons, please silence cell phones and refrain from using mobile communication devices during class. This and other disruptive behavior (e.g., leaving class frequently, sleeping in class, inappropriate language) constitutes grounds for grade reduction and/or dismissal from class. Laptops or other devices may be used in class for note-taking or looking at online course materials only. If I find that you or others are becoming distracted by non-course related material online, I will ask that all devices be put away. If you need an exception to this policy, please let me know privately.

Late Assignments

One of your responsibilities in this course is to complete your work by the specified deadlines. Deadlines for all assignments are listed on the syllabus, and you are expected to manage your time and priorities throughout the semester in order to successfully meet these deadlines.

Please note the following penalties for assignments submitted late:

- Event review, homework, and in-class assignments will be penalized 1 point (out of 5) per day late.
- Close-reading papers will be penalized 5 points (out of 100) per day late.
- Final course portfolios will be penalized 5 points (out of 100) per day late.

Assignments submitted 1-24 hours after the deadline are considered 1 day late, those submitted 25-48 hours after the deadline are considered 2 days late, and so forth. No late assignments will be accepted after Monday, December 10.

Office Hours and Email

Please email, rather than voice mail, for all course-related correspondence. I generally respond to email within 24 hours during the workweek, and 48 hours on the weekend. I encourage you to visit my office hours if you have questions about course material or your performance in the course. Grades can only be discussed in person during office hours or other arranged meetings, not via email.

Preferred Names and Pronouns: Many people might go by a name in daily life that is different from their legal name. In this classroom, we seek to refer to people by the names that they prefer. Pronouns can be a way to affirm someone's gender identity, but they can also be unrelated to a person's identity. They

are simply a public way in which people are referred to in place of their name (e.g. "he" or "she" or "they" or "ze" or something else). In this classroom, you are invited (if you want to) to share what pronouns you go by, and we will seek to refer to people using the pronouns that they share.

Assignments:

In-class & homework assignments: 20%
 Event review: 5%
 Close-reading papers: 60% (20% each)
 Portfolio: 15%

Grading Scale:

100-93: A	82.9-80: B-	69.9-67: D+
92.9-90: A-	79.9-77: C+	66.9-63: D
89.9-87: B+	76.9-73: C	62.9-60: D-
86.9-83: B	72.9-70: C-	59.9 & below: F

Description of Major Assignments:

In-Class & Homework Assignments: (20%)

You will complete a number of short writing assignments at home and in class throughout the semester. These assignments will allow you to practice your writing and close reading skills and—in some cases—reflect upon your progress as a writer. Due dates for all homework and in-class writing assignments are provided on the syllabus. Homework assignments are due via Blackboard no later than 8:00 a.m. on the date listed. If you are absent on a day that we complete an in-class writing assignment, check Blackboard after 4:00 p.m. that day for assignment guidelines and submission instructions. Lateness penalties will apply.

Event Review: (5%)

You will write a brief review (approximately 2 pages) of a Visiting Writer reading, Performing Arts Center (PAC) play, or other approved literary event. You are required to post this review to Blackboard within two weeks of the event. 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.

Essays (60%; 20% each)

You will write three close reading papers on assigned texts. One paper will conduct a close reading of a poem (3-4 pages), one will conduct a close reading of a short story (4-5 pages), and another will conduct a close reading of a play (4-5 pages). See the assignment description and rubrics on Blackboard for more information. Drafts will be reviewed in class before submission.

Portfolio: (15%)

For the final portfolio assignment, you will substantially revise one of your first two close reading papers (poetry or fiction) and write a self-reflection paper (2-3 pages) that examines your development as a writer and close reader of literature this semester. The reflection paper should discuss all three close reading papers, including your draft and revision process and what you have learned in the course. See the assignment description on Blackboard for more information.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

BB=Blackboard

++=Approved event for event review assignment

Week 1

TH 9/6: Introduction to course

Week 2

T 9/11: Norton "Poetry: Reading, Responding, Writing" (698-719); Norton Chapter 10 "Speaker: Whose Voice Do We Hear?" (735-747)

TH 9/13 : Norton Chapter 11 "Situation and Setting" (761-783); Norton Chapter 12 "Theme and Tone" (794-808) **Homework assignment due via Bb by 8:00 a.m.**

Week 3

T 9/18: Norton Chapter 13 "Language" (822-833); Norton Chapter 14 "Visual Imagery and Figures of Speech" (834-847); Norton Chapter 15 "Symbol" (848-862); Writing about Literature: Norton Chapters 27-29 (1885-1922); Reminder: Select event for Event Review assignment **In-class writing assignment**

++ W 9/19: South Jersey Poets Collective presents Emily August as the featured poet to World Above Free Poetry Night at Stockton University's Noyes Arts Garage (2200 Fairmount Ave, Atlantic City, NJ 08401). Our usual Open Mic, where participants read one poem that is less than two minutes long, will run from 7:00pm-8:00pm. Please arrive by 6:50pm to secure a spot in the Open. After the break, participants will return to a free take-home writing prompt; then, Emily August will read. Emily August is an Assistant Professor of Literature at Stockton University, where she teaches courses in 19th-century British literature, medical humanities, and creative writing. Her poetry has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and has appeared or is forthcoming in Callaloo, Southern Humanities Review, Hayden's Ferry Review, Ninth Letter, Quarterly West, and elsewhere.

TH 9/20: Norton Chapter 16 "The Sounds of Poetry" (863-883); Norton Chapter 17 "Internal Structure" (897-913); Norton Chapter 18 "External Form" (918-929); Norton Chapter 31: "Quotation, Citation, and Documentation" (1934-1970). **Homework assignment due via Bb by 8:00 a.m.**

Week 4

T 9/25: "Emily Dickinson: An Album" (987-995); Read additional Dickinson poems on p. 727 and p. 839. **Bring completed prewriting assignment to class.**

++ Visiting Writers Series at Stockton presents Mimi Schwartz, creative non fiction and essayist. 6-8 PM in L-112, Galloway Campus. Many of Mimi's essays are here: <http://mimischwartz.net/essays/>

TH Sept 27: **Poetry draft workshop**: Bring two printed copies of your draft to class (at least 3 typed pages).

Literature program Meet and Greet, 4:30 pm. Room TBA

Week 5

T 10/2 : Norton "Introduction" (1-9); Norton "Fiction: Reading, Responding, Writing" (12-45) **Poetry paper due via Bb by 11:59 p.m.**

TH 10/4: Norton Chapter 1 "Plot," (85-92); Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues" (93-115); Norton Chapter 2 "Narration and Point of View" (174-178). **Homework assignment due via Bb by 8:00 a.m.**

Week 6

T 10/9: Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado" (178-184); Kincaid, "Girl" (184-186); Norton Chapter 3 "Character" (218-225); Morrison, "Recitatif" (238-253). **In-class writing assignment**

TH 10/11: Norton Chapter 4 "Setting" (284-290); Tan, "A Pair of Tickets" (302-316); Díaz, "Wildwood" (413-429.) **In-class writing assignment.**

++ F 10/12 Aquila Theatre: *Frankenstein*, Stockton Performing Arts Center at 7:30 pm. (Tickets required, may be purchased at the PAC Box Office).

Week 7

T 10/16: Norton Chapter 5 "Symbol and Figurative Language" (334-339); Hawthorne, "The Birth-Mark" (339-351); Danticat, "A Wall of Fire Rising" (366-378)

Homework assignment due via Bb by 8:00 a.m.

TH 10/18: Norton Chapter 6 "Theme" (383-387); Crane, "The Open Boat" (387-404); Kawabata, "The Grasshopper and the Bell Cricket" (410-413). **In-class writing assignment.**

Week 8

T 10/23: **Preceptorial Advising Day – No class meeting**

Th 10/25: **Bring completed prewriting assignment to class**

++ Ravenswood Reading with Yusef Komunyakaa, poet and Pulitzer Prize winner
Campus Center Theatre and adjoining reception area 6-8PM

A selection of Komunyakaa's poems can be found here:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/yusef-komunyakaa#tab-poems>

Week 9

T 10/30: **Fiction draft workshop**: Bring two printed copies of your draft to class (at least 3-4 typed pages).

[** Wed. 10/31: Preceptorial Advising Day; Classes begin 3:25PM]

TH 11/1: Norton "Drama: Reading, Responding, Writing" (1152-1172) **In-class writing assignment Fiction paper due via Bb by 11:59 p.m.**

Week 10

T 11/6: Norton Chapter 23 "Elements of Drama" (1178-1187); Wilson, *Fences* Act I (1187-1217) **Homework assignment due via Bb by 8:00 a.m.**

TH 11/8: ***NO CLASS—Prof. Gussman is at a conference. *** View *Fences* (on Blackboard). **Homework assignment due on Bb by F 11/9 11:59 pm.**

Week 11

T 11/13: Discuss *Fences* Act II (1217-1238). **Bring completed prewriting assignment to class.**

TH 11/15: **Drama draft workshop**: Bring two printed copies of your draft to class (at least 3-4 typed pages).

Week 12

T 11/20: Portfolio guidelines. **Drama paper due via Bb by 11:59 p.m.**

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

TH 11/22: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY: NO CLASSES

Week 13

T 11/27: Individual conferences with instructor

TH 11/29: Individual conferences with instructor

Week 14

T 12/4: **Portfolio workshop**. Bring to class two copies of your reflection essay and revised paper.

TH 12/6: **Final Portfolios due**. Class post-mortem.

Week 15

T 12/11, 4:00 p.m.: **Deadline for submitting late portfolios. Lateness penalties apply.**