

LITT 2114.001 Fall 2015

Literary Interpretation

MWF 9:55am-11:10am, H116

Instructor: Dr. Kristin Jacobson (a.k.a. Dr. J)

Office phone: (609) 626-5581

Email: Please use our Blackboard email

Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 11:30-12:30pm & by appointment

Office Location: F-243

Mailbox: Arts and Humanities, K-150

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)
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ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: Stockton University 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 university 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.) Portable Edition
- **Blackboard:** If you have questions about using Blackboard, consult a computer lab assistant or your instructor. Log in via goStockton or <https://blackboard.stockton.edu/>.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS (suggested readings listed below):

- **Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms** (Murfin)
- **MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th Edition**
- **Poetic Meter and Poetic Form** (Fussell)
- **How to Read Literature Like a Professor** (Foster)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON THE WEB (See also "Course Links" in Blackboard):

- **Stockton Libraries:** <http://library.stockton.edu/>
 - **Norton Anthology Webpage:** www.norton.com/litweb
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EMAIL POLICY: Please keep the following in mind when communicating with me outside of class:

- (1) Use Blackboard email for all course-related correspondence.
- (2) I usually check my email each day in the morning (before 9am). Please plan your email questions accordingly and, while I often respond immediately, allow a twenty-four hour time frame for my reply.
- (3) Check your Blackboard email before asking me if I have responded to your note.
- (4) Always try to visit my office hours with 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.
- (5) Visit 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, cocktail flu, 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 University 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.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

CLASS PARTICIPATION (100 points): Class participation includes *verbal* contributions and silent *active listening* to your peers and instructor, in class quizzes, and in class writing. 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 course.** *You class participation grade will be based primarily on your performance on reading quizzes, in-class writing assignments, and peer review activities. Consistently active, meaningful participation in class discussions can enhance this grade.*

EVENT REVIEW (100 points): You will write a brief review paper (about 5 full paragraphs or 2 typed pages) to one of the scheduled Visiting Writers readings or plays at the Performing Arts Center (PAC) and post this review to Blackboard within one week of the reading. 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. Papers should include the following:

- **Title & Detailed description of the event (about 1-2 paragraphs):** Describe what was it, where did it occur, and when you attended. Consider describing what happened at the event, what was said or done, describe what the environment was like, and what the other people who attended were like and how they reacted. Summarize the entire event in vivid, carefully chosen language.
- **Analysis of the event (about 2-3 paragraphs):** Now that you've described the event, explain how the event relates to some aspect we've studied in this course. For example, does it remind you of a reading we did? How so? Did you notice any examples of the terms we've studied? Which ones? How can this knowledge enhance understanding of the event?
- **Proof of Attendance.** Give your PAC ticket stub to your instructor. If you attend a Visiting Writers Series, be sure to sign in with your instructor at the event.

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; 50 points possible), one will conduct a close reading of a poem (3-4 typed pages; 50 points possible), and another will conduct a close reading of a play (4-5 typed pages; 50 points possible). Drafts will be reviewed in class using several different formats before submission.

PORTFOLIO: (650 points total): The final portfolio includes 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. See full assignment description in Blackboard for more information.

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):

- Final portfolio version for all three papers (200 points each, 600 points total): Papers will be evaluated on the quality of the argument, writing, and application of literary terms and theories and evidence of thoughtful revision.
- Self-Reflection paper (50 points): The paper should discuss the three close reading assignments, including your draft and revision process and what you have learned in the course. See the portfolio assignment description and rubric for this paper in Blackboard for additional information.

Grading Scale

100-95: A	89.9-87: B+	79.9-77: C+	69.9-67: D+
94.9-90: A-	86.9-83: B	76.9-73: C	66.9-63: D
	82.9-80: B-	72.9-70: C-	62.9-60: D-
			59.9 & below: F

Grades

Class Participation	100 points possible
Event Review	100 points possible
Complete Drafts (50 points x 3 papers)	150 points possible
Portfolio (200 points x 3 papers + Self Reflection 50 points)	650 points possible

Total	1000 points possible
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LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:

I understand that life is full of surprises and sometimes those surprises influence your coursework and your ability to complete assignments. As a community of learners, we also recognize that we have a responsibility to the group, to our instructor, and to ourselves. We understand that every action has a consequence—even when circumstance may limit our power to act. To balance individual and community needs, we have the following guidelines for late assignments.

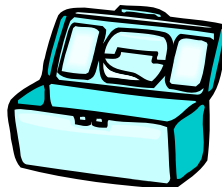
Written Assignments: *Papers and drafts are due at the beginning of class on the dates listed in the syllabus. No portfolio will be accepted late.* For the complete drafts due to the instructor for feedback, students will lose 5 points per day late (including weekends) from the 50 points possible per paper.

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 University'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 service like Dropbox [<https://db.tt/WG1vfhY>] 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. It is the student's responsibility to assure the instructor receives his or her work.*

PAPER REVISION POLICY:

This course is based on the principle that revisions take place *before* the instructor evaluates the final paper for a final grade in the portfolio. To this end, consider dropping by 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 Blackboard email. For feedback on longer drafts, drop by my office hours for a face-to-face meeting. 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>.

LITERATURE TOOLBOX

Syllabus—LITT 2114—Fall 2015¹

Week 1: Introductions, Taking Stock of Your Toolbox, and Questions

Sept 2: **Introductions:** to course, Blackboard, assignments, students and instructor.

Sept 4: **Introduction to Close Reading/New Criticism/Formalism:** Norton “Introduction” 1-10; “Critical Approaches” 1303-1308 and Chapter 17 “Paraphrase, Summary, Description” 1229-1232.

Week 2: Fiction and Introduction to New Criticism

Sept 7: **LABOR DAY: NO CLASSES**

Sept 9: **Fiction:** Norton “Fiction: Reading, Responding, Writing” 12-46; “Gorilla, My Love” 271-76. Introduction to the Fiction paper.

Sept 11: **Close Reading Pre-Test and Writing About Literature:** In-class assessment of your close reading skills. Norton Chapter 19 “The Writing Process” 1243-1257. Chapter 18 “Elements of the Essay” (1233-1242).

Week 3: Fiction—Plot, POV and Character

Sept 14: **Plot:** Norton Chapter 1 “Plot” 57-101.

Sept 16: **POV:** Norton Chapter 2 “Narration and Point of View” 102-121.

Sept 18: **Character and Psychoanalytic Criticism:** Norton Chapter 3 “Character” 122-156 and 1315-1319.

Week 4: Fiction—Setting, Figures, Symbols and Theme

Sept 21: **Setting:** Norton Chapter 4 “Setting” 157-204.

Sept 23: **Figures and Symbols:** Norton Chapter 5 “Symbol and Figurative Language” 205-240.

Sept 25: **Theme:** Norton Chapter 6 “Theme” 241-270.

Week 5: Fiction Workshops, Introduction to Critical Approaches and Introduction to Poetry

Sept 28: **Fiction Rough Draft Workshop:** Workshop fiction papers (at least 3-4 typed pages). Bring two printed copies of your rough draft to class. **Reminder: Select Event for Event Paper**

Sept 30: **Thesis Statements and Critical Approaches:** Norton 1308-1315. Bring a draft (typed) of your thesis statement for your fiction paper to class.

Oct 2: **What is Poetry?** Norton 450-475. Introduction to Poetry paper. **Fiction Complete Draft Due**

Week 6: Poetry—Words, Speaker, Setting

Oct 5: **Words:** Norton Chapter 10 “Language” 548-559. In-class instruction in *OED* and poetry MLA citation.

Oct 7: **Speaker:** Norton Chapter 7 “Speaker: Whose Voice Do We Hear?” 483-492; 497-499.

Oct 9: **Setting:** Norton Chapter 8 “Situation and Setting” 501-515.

¹ Class Schedule subject to changes with notice. Readings and assignments are listed on the day they are due.

Week 7: Poetry—Theme, Tone, Figurative Writing, and Thesis Statement Workshop

- Oct 12: **Theme and Tone:** Norton Chapter 9 “Theme and Tone” 527-540.
- Oct 14: **Figurative Writing:** Norton Chapter 11 “Visual Imagery and Figures of Speech” 560-572.
- Oct 16: **Thesis Statement Workshop:** Bring two typed drafts of your poetry paper thesis statement.

Week 8: Poetry—Rhyme, Meter and Symbolism

- Oct 19: **Symbolism:** Norton “Symbol” 573-585.
- Oct 21: **Rhyme and Meter:** Norton Chapter 13 “The Sounds of Poetry” 586-610.
- Oct 23: **Poetry Paper Draft Workshop:** Bring two printed copies of your draft poetry paper (at least 3 full typed pages) to class.

Week 9: Poetry Structure and Form and Introduction to Drama

- Oct 26: **Internal Structure:** Norton Chapter 14 “Internal Structure” 611-627.
- Oct 28: **External Form:** Norton Chapter 15 “External Form” 632-656.
- Oct 30: **Introduction to Drama:** Norton “Drama: Reading, Responding, Writing” 740-756; Chapter 16 “Elements of Drama” 772-783. Introduction to the Drama paper. **Poetry Complete Draft Due.**

Week 10: Drama—Practice Close Reading

- Nov 2: **Historical and Ideological Criticism and *The Piano Lesson*:** Norton 1321-1333; *The Piano Lesson* Act I 845-881.
- Nov 4: **Preceptorial Advising—No Class (classes resume after 3:35pm).**
- Nov 6: ***The Piano Lesson*:** Norton Act II 881-917. **Dr. J will be out of town for a conference.** Select a passage from Act II and conduct a short close reading (3 paragraphs, about 250-300 words) analyzing tone, language or symbol. Type and bring to the Nov. 9 class.

Week 11: Drama—*The Piano Lesson* and Practice Using Close Reading Evidence and Providing Feedback

- Nov 9: ***The Piano Lesson*:** In-class discussion of Act I and II and assigned close reading of Act II.
- Nov 11: **Portfolio Revision and Drama Paper Work Day:** **Dr. J will be out of town for a conference.** No formal in-class meeting. Use class time to work on your revisions of your fiction and poetry papers, draft your drama close reading paper, and prepare for Friday’s workshop.
- Nov 13: **Portfolio Revision Workshop:** **Dr. J will be out of town for a conference.** **Formal in-class meeting.** Work with one other student to create plan for your final revisions of the poetry and fiction papers. Share peer and instructor feedback on your fiction and poetry papers. Provide your peer with a list of suggested revisions to focus on for the final portfolio. Using your peer feedback, type of your revision plan. Be sure to include the following: list revisions to complete for the fiction paper; list of revisions to complete for the poetry paper; outline a timeline for when over the next three weeks you will complete this work. Submit this typed revision plan to your instructor on Nov 16. Begin reading *Antigone*, Norton 1191-1227.

Week 12: Drama— *The Piano Lesson* and *Antigone*

Nov 16: **Antigone:** Norton 1191-1227. **Due: Portfolio Revision Plan for Fiction and Poetry Papers.**

Nov 18: **Monologues:** Norton 994-999.

Nov 20: **Drama Paper Rough Draft Workshop:** Workshop draft drama papers (draft must be at least 2 typed pages). Bring two printed copies of your rough draft to class.

Week 13: Portfolio Preparation

Nov 23: **Drama Paper Rough Draft Workshop II:** Workshop revised draft of your drama paper (draft must be at least 3-4 typed pages). Bring two copies of your revised draft to class.

Nov 25: Catch up day. **Drama Complete Draft Due.**

Nov 27: **No classes: Thanksgiving Holiday.**

Week 14: Portfolio Preparation and Completion

Nov 30: **Revision Strategies:** Make a list of at least three writing strengths and weaknesses based on your peer and instructor feedback. Bring this list to class. In class: review your fiction, poetry and drama papers. Revise your portfolio revision plan and writing strengths/weaknesses. Bring entire portfolio for group feedback.

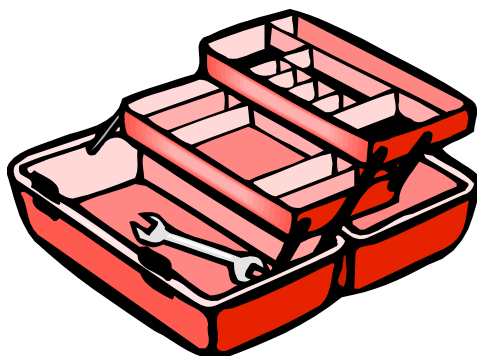
Dec 2: **Portfolio Workshop:** Bring your entire portfolio for feedback about its organization and revision strategies and completion. Use writing strengths and weaknesses as points to stress in your self-reflection essay. Start draft of self reflection essay.

Dec 4: **Self Reflection Essay Workshop:** Bring two copies of your self-reflection essay to share with your peers for feedback.

Week 15: Portfolio Preparation and Completion

Dec 7: **Close Reading Post-test and Final Portfolio Workshop:** In-class close-reading post-test (9:55am-10:35am). The remaining time will be devoted to finalizing the portfolio.

Dec 9: **Final Meeting:** All portfolios must be submitted by 11am to the instructor in her office. **Final Portfolio Due.** (NOTE: There is NO FINAL EXAM MEETING DURING THE EXTENDED SCHEDULE, DECEMBER 14-17.)



What's in your Literary Interpretation toolbox?