English 2370: Introduction to Fiction

Spring 2015

T/R: 10:50 am – 12:05 pm, Irby 303

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***Instructor*: Dr. Sonya Fritz**

***E-mail*: sfritz@uca.edu**

***Office*: Irby 317 C**

***Office phone*: 450-5127 (email, however, is a much better idea)**

***Office Hours*: MWF 10:30 am-12 pm and 3-4 pm, T 1-2 pm and 3-4 pm, R 1-2 pm, and by appointment**

**Course description**

Fiction is an essential part of the fabric of our lives. Stories entertain, comfort, challenge, and convict us—stories tell us who we are. Throughout this semester, we will be reading, discussing, and analyzing fiction in a variety of forms, including short story, novel, sequential art, and film. In the process, you will be initiated into beginning-level literary study from the perspective of a practitioner of English as a discipline; in other words, we will be focusing on learning how to both read and write deeply, critically, and rigorously. We will address the following questions, among others: How can the elements of a story be understood as working together to communicate greater meaning beyond a basic sequence of events? What kinds of social, cultural, political, and moral values can a story have? How can a work of fiction support a variety of interpretations? How are typical components of fiction, such as characterization, plot, and theme, incorporated and communicated across a variety of media? How can reading stories make us better people?

Additionally, this course has been designated as a First-Year Seminar (FYS). This means that, in addition to offering instruction in the discipline of English, our course will also address some of the larger issues of what it means to seek a college education, including the values and skills we hope for you to acquire through the UCA Core, as well as offering some information and guidance regarding how to approach college-level study.

The primary goals of this course are to:

* Read and analyze fiction in various genres, by various authors
* Better understand the elements of fiction and how they relate to meaning
* Engage with themes and ideas found in fiction through writing and class discussions
* Consider how stories can expand our world and connect us more fully to humanity as a whole
* Practice reading and writing as an activity for inquiry, discovery, reflection, and analysis
* Develop stronger analytical, academic reading and writing skills

Keep in mind that the texts examined in this course may contain language or material that you may find offensive or controversial. As adults enrolled in a university course, you are expected to use discretion and engage the assigned readings and participate in class discussions in a manner that is careful, mature, respectful, and objective.

**Required texts and materials**

-*Through the Woods*, Emily Carroll

-*The Catcher in the Rye*, J.D. Salinger

-copies of online texts that you access through Blackboard

The texts listed above are the ones that you are required to access on your own, read, and bring to class with you. Our required reading for the course also includes online texts of which you will not have to purchase hard copies. I will post files of the texts on Blackboard for you to access. **You are required to print copies of these files from Blackboard and bring them to class with you.**

You are also required to have:

* a functional UCA e-mail account that you check ***daily***
* access to a good dictionary and a handbook with up-to-date information on MLA format
* opinions and insights that you develop and voice in class. The success of this course depends in large part on its members’ willingness to seriously and actively engage the material and participate in discussions.

## Policies

Attendance. Daily attendance will be taken in this class. You are allowed **two unexcused absences**. Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in the deduction of **five** percentage points from your final grade. Please use your two absences wisely—they are not intended for those days when you feel like sleeping in, but rather for days when you cannot come to class but your absence is not excused. Six or more absences, excused or otherwise, provide grounds for the student to be dropped from the course.

You are responsible for providing evidence and/or appropriate documentation to substantiate excused absences. Excused absences can include illness requiring a doctor’s visit, the serious illness of an immediate family member or illness of a dependent, the death of a relative, etc. Please direct any questions concerning what constitutes an excused absence to me. If you know in advance that you will miss a class due to an excused absence, you are responsible for informing me and making any necessary arrangements to make up class work. Keep in mind that trips out of town for weddings or family vacations and children’s school programs or ceremonies **are not** excused absences. Please also try to avoid scheduling routine medical check-ups, such as dental cleanings or yearly physicals, during class time—I will not excuse these absences.

It is important for all of us to respect one another’s time and arrive promptly for class. Students who arrive to class after half of the class period (calculated by the duration of the class period in minutes) or more has passed will be counted absent. Students who arrive to class after attendance has been taken are responsible for checking with me after class to make sure their attendance has been recorded. Chronic tardiness will be penalized by counting each third tardy as an unexcused absence. Students should also come to class planning to stay for the duration of the period. An early departure from class will be recorded as a tardy and is subject to the same penalties.

If you are absent on the day of an exam, you are responsible for contacting me **as soon as possible** to schedule the make-up exam. If your absence is excusable, you are responsible for providing documentation to substantiate this at the time of the make-up exam. Ten late points will be deducted from the exam grade if the absence is not excused (i.e., you overslept); I also reserve the right to refuse to allow a student with an unexcused absence to make up an exam. Five late points may also be deducted if your absence is excused but you do not contact me in a timely manner to schedule the make-up exam. Unless other arrangements have been made with me, any exam that is not made up within three weeks of the original exam date will receive a grade of zero (0).

Students who miss class are responsible for obtaining information regarding missed class notes, material, and assignments. It is my policy to email students information regarding missed class material **only** for excused absences and **only** when the student has sent a request via email specifying student name, course number and section, and class date(s) missed. I strongly recommend that students also talk with their classmates about what they have missed, as all I can offer students are any Power Point slides and/or handouts used during the class period.

Class preparedness. Students need to complete the assigned reading before class and bring assigned reading materials to class in order to better engage in discussion and class-work. **Failure to bring the appropriate assigned reading materials to class and/or failure to demonstrate completion of the assigned reading through class activities will result in an unexcused absence for that day’s class. Unexcused absences accrued in this way are subject to all the penalties and consequences outlined in the attendance policy.**

Classroom Behavior. Disruptive classroom behavior is defined as anything that would interfere with an instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program. When students come to class, they should plan to focus entirely on the activities of the class—this means that sleeping, eating, using cell phones or other technology inappropriately, and working on other coursework or other activities during class are unacceptable. Likewise, all individuals and the opinions they express in class are to be treated with respect during class discussions—this means that carrying on other conversations or in any other way showing disregard for the individual who has the floor is unacceptable***.*** **Students who behave rudely, inappropriately, or disruptively will be asked to leave class and will be counted absent (unexcused) for that day.**

Paper Format.Unless otherwise specified, ***all*** assignments, including homework, should be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font (black ink) with one-inch margins and double-spaced on white 8.5x11 paper, according to MLA guidelines, with a heading on the first page and a header (last name, page number) on every page. Documentation must be provided in MLA format. Papers must be **stapled** before they are turned in—I won’t accept or grade loose pages or paper-clipped papers.

Late Work. Assignments that are turned in late without an excused absence/absences are subject to a deduction of 5% of the assignment’s total grade per day that they are late. In-class assignments, including peer review workshops, are not accepted late or allowed to be made up except in the case of an excused absence.

Appropriate Attribution. Any assignment that fails to include clear and appropriate attribution of sources will receive a grade of zero (“0”). **Do not consult secondary sources for your work unless explicitly instructed to do so. Public-access internet sources such as SparkNotes, Wikipedia, and Answers.com are not appropriate to use in this course at any time.** Any assignments that reflect unauthorized aid will receive a grade of zero (“0”).

SafeAssign. We will be using SafeAssign for our papers (response papers, critical essays, and critical essay revision assignment) to help students better understand and prevent plagiarism. In addition to submitting hard copies of your assignments in class for me to grade, you will be required to upload digital copies of your work to Blackboard. Unless otherwise stipulated, digital copies are due by 11:59 p.m. on the day the assignment is due. **Your assignments will not be considered “turned in” and will not be graded above a zero until you have both handed in a hard copy AND uploaded a digital copy to Blackboard for SafeAssign.**

Bringing visitors to class. Students must receive permission from me in advance in order to bring any visitors to class. Unless otherwise specified, students are not allowed to bring children under the age of 12 with them to class. Please see me if you have any questions about this.

E-mail, phone, and fax. I will not discuss grades via e-mail or over the phone and, unless otherwise specified, I will not accept assignments attached to e-mail messages. I am happy to answer via email any student questions—including questions about assignments—that will take me less than 8 minutes to answer. Any questions that require a longer and more involved answer will be deferred to a face-to-face meeting. All emails should be respectfully worded and include a salutation as well a signature of the student’s name. The English department will not accept papers or excuses for absences faxed to me.

Feedback on student work. I want all students to meet their full potential in this course this semester. I encourage students to ask for clarification if they are confused about an assignment and to feel free to come to me for help on their work. However, I will not pre-grade, edit, or proofread students’ work for them; I will offer feedback, but only when students formulate and articulate specific questions about their work that they want me to address. I do this because I want all students to function as active thinkers and learners throughout the semester; this is not happening if I am doing the work of cataloging every aspect of a paper that a student needs to change or improve. Likewise, students should understand that getting feedback on their work does not guarantee that they will earn a certain grade on the assignment.

Electronic devices. In a perfect world, we could all have our cell phones, laptops, and tablets out during class without being distracted by them or distracting others. This is not a perfect world. The use of electronic devices in class is thus generally not allowed unless otherwise specified. Students who use electronic devices in an inappropriate way during class will be asked to leave and will be counted absent for the day. **Cell phones must remain off (not simply on vibrate) and out of sight in one’s pocket or bag, not in one’s lap, for the duration of class.**

Evaluations. Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the thirteenth week of instruction through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

Scholastic Dishonesty Academic Integrity and Scholastic Dishonesty. The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

Title IX disclosure. If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved.  Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation.  Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances.  The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator.  For further information, please visit:  <https://uca.edu/titleix>.  *\*Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*

Other University Policies. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the policies outlined in the UCA Student Handbook.

**Students needing support service**

The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3613.

**Building Emergency Plan**

An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**The University Writing Center**

The UCA Writing Center, located in Thompson 109, offers students one-on-one tutoring and online assistance with their writing. For more information, see the web site: www.uca.edu/writingcenter.

**Course Requirements and Grade Determination:**

Class participation, class-work, quizzes 10%

Response papers (5) 20%

Critical essays (2) 20%

Peer review workshops (2) 10%

Critical essay revision assignment 15%

Exam 1 10%

Exam 2 15%

In addition to completing our required reading and classroom activities, throughout the semester, you will complete two critical essays, one group presentation project, and eight response papers. You will also take two exams. ***All assignments must be typed and submitted as a hard copy unless I instruct you otherwise.*** See the instructions on paper format in the “Policies” section of the syllabus. Students must **complete** **all assignments** in order to earn a passing grade in the course.

* **Class participation etc.**:The thoughtful and active engagement of all students is vital to the success and productivity of our class—what you get out of the course depends a great deal on what you put into it. In order to earn a good participation grade in the course, you must come to class, be prepared for each period with reading assignments in hand, and behave appropriately (see discussions on attendance, class preparedness, and classroom behavior in the “Policies” section of the syllabus). To earn a good participation grade, you must also participate actively in class-work and class discussions. One of the purposes of the course is to *think together* about the material in order to develop richer insights and produce greater knowledge. If you want to succeed in the course, you can’t sit back during class and expect everyone else to do all the thinking for you. I know that speaking in front of others is not the easiest thing for everyone to do, but it’s an important life skill to hone. Regarding reading quizzes: I don’t like them, but I’ll give them if I have to. Do your assigned reading and participate actively in class, and we shouldn’t have to worry about quizzes.
* **Response papers**: Throughout the semester, you will write five response papers, each 400-500 words in length (1 ½-2 pages minimum). Each response paper is worth 20 points for a total of 100 points. Response papers should follow the paper format guidelines given in the “Policies” section of the syllabus. They should also obey the rules correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling; use the appropriate language, tone, and style for an academic audience; and follow the general conventions of essay writing and demonstrate good organization. Response papers will be graded on the quality of your writing and how thoroughly, thoughtfully, clearly, and effectively you address the assigned questions. Details for each response paper topic (including assigned questions and various stipulations for each paper) will be posted on Blackboard.
* **Critical essays**: Over the course of the semester, you will write two critical essays, each 1000-1500 words in length (3 ½ -5 pages minimum). Each critical essay is worth 50 points for a total of 100 points. For each essay, you will choose one of the topics given and write a paper that addresses that topic, providing a thesis statement and developing a well-organized literary analysis that supports your thesis. More details on each critical essay, including essay topics, will be provided in assignments sheets and rubrics.
* **Peer review workshops**: Before each critical essay is due, we will hold an in-class peer review workshop, during which students will break into small groups to read, discuss, and offer constructive feedback on one another’s papers. Worksheets to guide the peer review process will be provided. Students will be graded on preparedness for and active and thoughtful participation in each workshop. More information on the workshops will be given in class.
* **Critical essay revision assignment**: For the final writing assignment of the semester, you will choose one of your two critical essays and engage in a revision and expansion of the essay. This assignment will require you to complete a number of steps in the revision process, culminating in a final draft of your revised essay, which will be submitted at the end of the semester along with various supporting materials. More details on the assignment will be provided in an assignment sheet and a rubric.
* **Exams**: The exams will be objective, covering the material that we have discussed in class. They will include multiple choice, passage identification/explication, and paragraph-answer questions. The exams will not be cumulative/comprehensive.

Final grade values:

A 90-100 B 80-89

C 70-79 D 60-69

F 59 and below

**Schedule of Reading, Assignments, and Paper Due Dates**

*This schedule is subject to change at the professor’s discretion.* The readings and assignments listed under each date are those that you will be expected to have completed ***by that date***.

*Week One*

**Thursday, January 8:** Introduction to course.

*Week Two: What Can Stories Be and Do?*

**Tuesday, January 13:** “*Los* Boxers”, “Girl”, and “Popular Mechanics”—posted as a file on Blackboard. **Syllabus quiz.**

**Thursday, January 15:** “Greasy Lake”—posted as a file on Blackboard. **Response paper 1 due (on Blackboard and in hard copy).**

*Week Three: “Once Upon a Time”*

**Tuesday, January 20:** “Bluebeard”—posed as a file on Blackboard.

**Thursday, January 22:** “Hansel and Gretel”—posted as a file on Blackboard.

*Week Four: Little Red Riding Hood*

**Tuesday, January 27:** “The Story of Grandmother” and “Little Red Cap”—posted as a file on Blackboard. **Response paper 2 due (on Blackboard and in hard copy).**

**Thursday, January 29:** “Wolf” and “The Werewolf”—posted as a file on Blackboard.

*Week Five: Graphic Fiction*

**Tuesday, February 3:** Introduction to graphic novels and sequential art—read file posted on Blackboard.

**Thursday, February 5:** “An Introduction,” “Our Neighbor’s House,” and “A Lady’s Hands Are Cold” from *Through the Woods*.

*Week Six: Graphic Fiction, Continued*

**Tuesday, February 10:** “His Face All Red” and “My Friend Janna” from *Through the Woods*. **Response paper 3 due (on Blackboard and in hard copy in class).**

**Thursday, February 12:** “The Nesting Place” and “In Conclusion” from *Through the Woods*.

*Week Seven: Graphic Fiction, Concluded*

**Tuesday, February 17: Peer review workshop 1**: bring **two** typed copies of a **complete** rough draft of your Critical Essay 1.

**Thursday, February 19:** *Through the Woods*, discussion continued. **Critical Essay 1 due (on Blackboard and in hard copy in class).**

*Week Eight: Holden Caulfield*

**Tuesday, February 24: Exam 1.**

**Thursday, February 26:** *The Catcher in the Rye*, chs. 1-7.

*Week Nine: Holden Caulfield, Continued*

**Tuesday, March 3:** *The Catcher in the Rye*, chs. 8-14.

**Thursday, March 5:** *The Catcher in the Rye*, chs.15-20. **Response paper 4 due (on Blackboard and in hard copy in class).**

*Week Ten: Holden and Charlie*

**Tuesday, March 10:** *The Catcher in the Rye*, chs. 21-end of novel.

**Thursday, March 12:** *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*—view film in class.

*Week Eleven: Charlie, Continued*

**Tuesday, March 17:** *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*—continue film in class and begin discussion.

**Thursday, March 19:** *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, discussion continued. **Response paper 5 due (on Blackboard and in hard copy in class).**

*Week Twelve: Break!!*

**Tuesday, March 24:** Spring break, no class. Have fun and be safe!

**Thursday, March 26:** Spring break, no class. Have fun and be safe!

*Week Thirteen: Different Perspectives*

**Tuesday, March 31:** “Brownies”—posted as a file on Blackboard.

**Thursday, April 2:** **Peer review workshop 2**: bring **two** typed copies of a **complete** rough draft of your Critical Essay 2.

*Week Fourteen: Different Perspectives, Continued*

**Tuesday, April 7:** “Désirée’s Baby”—posted as a file on Blackboard. **Critical Essay 2 due (on Blackboard and in hard copy in class).**

**Thursday, April 9:** “Woman Hollering Creek”—posted as a file on Blackboard.

*Week Fifteen: Different Perspectives, Concluded*

**Tuesday, April 14:** “Bloodchild”—posted as a file on Blackboard.

**Thursday, April 16:** No class: meet instead with Dr. Fritz for your scheduled student conference.

*Week Sixteen: Endings*

**Tuesday, April 21:** “Happy Endings”—posted as a file on Blackboard.

**Thursday, April 23:** “Do Not Go Gentle”—posted as a file on Blackboard.

*Finals Week*

**Monday, April 27:** Not a class or exam day. **Critical essay revision assignment due (on Blackboard and in hard copy)** to my office or department mail box by 4 p.m.

**Thursday, April 30, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.: Exam 2**.