###### **Introduction to Fiction**

###### **ENGL 2370**

#### **Spring 2014**

#### **TTH 10:50-12:05 Hughes Residential College**

## **Brian James**

**Office: Hughes Hours: T/TH 9-10:45**

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**Course Description:**

“Fiction reveals truth that reality obscures.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

“The unread story is not a story; it is little black marks on wood pulp. The reader, reading it, makes it live: a live thing, a story.” Ursula LeGuin

“Literature was not born the day when a boy crying "wolf, wolf" came running out of the Neanderthal valley with a big gray wolf at his heels; literature was born on the day when a boy came crying "wolf, wolf" and there was no wolf behind him.”- Vladimir Nabokov

In this course we will read some of the greatest works of literature ever written! Through a close reading of the text, we will attempt to understand what makes each work “great” and what the author is trying to communicate to us, the reader. We will pay attention not only to the text itself, but the stylistic and structural elements of the work and how they contribute to the overall meaning of the work. Through the careful study of literature you will not only have loads of fun, but you will hone critical thinking skills which will serve you well for the rest of your life.

**Course Objectives:**

To read carefully in order to understand the different levels of meaning in a text.

To be able to articulate your ideas with clarity through both writing and class discussion.

To make connections between similarities and differences in the texts that we read.

To explore what relevance these works have in our lives today.

### ****Course Texts:****

*In Our Time*- Ernest Hemingway

*A Good Man is Hard to Find*- Flannery O’Connor

*Interpreter of Maladies*- Jhumpa Lahiri

*Stoning the Devil*- Garry Craig Powell

Selected Stories by Edgar Allan Poe

**Course Requirements:**

Class point breakdown: **Quizzes 25%**

**Exams 45%**

**Creative Group Project 15%**

**Essay 15%**

**Total: 100%**

**Quizzes**: Throughout the semester we will have a variety of quizzes and in-class writing assignments. Some of the quizzes will be unannounced quizzes, which will be given at the beginning of the class period. There will be some take-home quizzes as well, for which you may use your book. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest score. Therefore, regardless of the reason, I do not allow quizzes to be made up.

**Exams**: There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. The exams will consist of an ID section and an essay/short answer section. Any student who misses an exam will not be allowed to make it up except under extraordinary circumstances, and unless arrangements have been made in advance.

**Lit Essays**: You will write one essay that is about four pages in length. You may choose which stories you write about. NO research will be allowed on this essay; it will be entirely your personal reflections. Ten points will be deducted for each class period the essay is late. I will give you more information about the essay several weeks in advance. Essay should be formatted according to MLA guidelines.

**Creative Project:** This project will be a group project. You and your group will make a 2-3 minute movie trailer for one of the works that we studied together in class. At the end of the semester, each group will show their trailer to the class and do a brief presentation in which you discuss your work with the class. You will receive a handout in advance of this project with detailed instructions and specifics on what to do.

**Field Trip**: At some point this semester we will visit the Hemingway/Pfieffer museum in Piggot, Arkansas. This is a home where Ernest Hemingway lived for a few years and wrote some of his best known works. It will be awesome.

\*I do not discuss grades via email.

**What do I expect of you?**

READ!! Seriously! If you don’t do all of the required reading, you will not only be unable to participate in class discussions, but you will miss out on a wealth of wisdom and insight. (And your grades will be less than satisfactory.)

Treat your classmates and your teacher with respect. Much of this course is structured around sharing personal ideas and opinions, so be respectful of those that you may disagree with.

Participation. Discussing these texts together as a class is a crucial component of the course. Let your voice be heard! I believe that each one of you has important contributions to make in this class. Ask questions and make observations. I **strongly** encourage you to feel free to **disagree** with each other and with me (in a constructive way, of course). It’s a good idea to use textual support as the basis for your argument, and to be respectful of other peoples’ ideas that may be different from your own. Bullying and scoffing will not be tolerated.

Come to class. According to the UCA Handbook, “students are expected to attend all class meetings,” therefore regular attendance is essential. *Attendance* in this class is defined as being present, engaged, and alert the entire **75 minutes of class**. If you are late, it is *your* job to make sure that I change your absence to a tardy. Three tardy days equals one absence. If you miss more than **four** classes, you may be dropped from the course with a “WF”. If you arrive more than ten minutes late, you will be counted absent. In addition, you will be counted absent if you sleep in class or cause disruptions in class. Seriously disruptive behavior (including, but not limited to, disrespect for another classmate, the instructor, or a substitute instructor) may result in expulsion from the course.

Please silence any gadgets that may potentially make noise and disrupt class. Cell phones going off in class really annoy me, and so does texting in class. Laptops will not be permitted unless requested with a letter from the Office of Disability Services.

**Communicating with me**

Please do not hesitate to come see me if you have questions or concerns about the class. I know some of these texts can be tough, and I am here to help you.

**University Policies**

The university’s two academic bulletins – the University of Central Arkansas *Undergraduate Bulletin* and *Graduate Bulletin* – are the official publications for all academic programs and policies. Students are urged to study these bulletins. In addition, students should familiarize themselves with the various policies in the *Student Handbook*, some of which are outlined below. The Handbook may be accessed online at <http://www.uca.edu/student/dean/documents/Student_Handbook_2010-2011_FINAL.pdf>

**Academic Misconduct/Plagiarism**. (*Student Handbook* 36-41) According to the Handbook, “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” (37).

**Sexual Harassment**. (*Student Handbook* 102-105) Sexual harassment by any faculty member, staff member, or student is a violation of both law and university policy and will not be tolerated at the University of Central Arkansas. Sexual harassment of employees is prohibited under Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and sexual harassment of students may constitute discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

**Americans with Disabilities Act**. 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.

**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.

##### Tentative Schedule

T 1/14- Introduction to the Course

Th 1/16- “The Black Cat” Edgar Allan Poe (handout)