

Genre History, Criticism, and Theory

Under guidance of a professional writer or scholar in the writing field, the student will design a specific curriculum for achieving a working awareness of the history, range of criticism, and critical theory associated with the writing genre. Reading will certainly be a part of this, but papers or interviews, attendance at lectures, formal courses, or other modalities may also be a part of this course.

Student: N / A

Faculty Member: Ron Samul

Course Number: ENG539

Semester and Year:

Credit Hours: 4

Subtitle for Course: **Understanding the Novel and where it is going.**

Course Description: This course will offer reading and writing based on the understanding of the origin, history, and role of novels in the 20th Century. This understanding will come from writers discussing their process, elements of fiction writing, and how they affected the genre. Not only will the student understand the purpose, technique, and history of fiction and novels, but will also begin to explore his own (the student's) role in contributing to this genre.

Requirements: List specific requirements for completion of the course

- The student will read books from the reading list and compare (in his reading journal due every two weeks according to the schedule below) how writers explain the craft of fiction and how it compares to his own process and understanding of writing. Topics will range from history, criticism, technique, purpose, and the future of the genre.
- 2 *Essays* will be completed by the end of the course. One will define books, authors, and writing that are in direct relationship to his own style and philosophy in his writing. The second essay will be a forecast as to where fiction and novels might be heading, and where to look for those trends in the next ten to twenty years.

Evaluation:

Evaluated primarily on the strengths and quality of insight documented in their reading/research journal and two articles written about their particular genre. A midterm grade will be given to gauge the student's quality and pace in the course. Once the final work is complete, a final grade will also be posted to the student.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will be treated as such in this course. Penalties for plagiarism may include receiving a zero for the assignment or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Late Policy: Deadlines may be extended with prior approval. Work submitted late without prior approval will be penalized one full letter grade per day late.

Reading List:

Primary:

- Dillard, Annie. **Living by Fiction.**
- Forrester, E. M. **Aspect of the Novel.**
- King, Stephen. **On Writing.**
- McKeon, Michael. **Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach**
- Selgin, Peter. **By Cunning & Craft: Sound Advice and Practical Wisdom for Fiction Writers.**
- Turchi, Peter. & Barrett, Andrea. Ed. **The Story Behind the Story: 26 Stories by Contemporary Writers and How They Work**

Articles:

Tierney, Brian. *Time's Harrow: A Study in the Nature of Time and Fiction*

<http://www.awpwriter.org/magazine/writers/btierney01.htm>

Jauss, David. *From Long Shots to X-Rays: Distance & Point of View in Fiction Writing* - <http://www.awpwriter.org/magazine/writers/djauss01.htm>

Interview with Jonathan Foer in *Identitytheory.com*

<http://www.identitytheory.com/interviews/birnbaum108.php>

Interview with Louis Borges in *Artful Dodge*

<http://www.wooster.edu/artfuldodge/interviews/borges.htm>

Interactions:

Every two weeks the student will submit a new installment of the reading and research journal. Feedback will be given by the following Wednesday of that week. After midterm, two formal, professional articles will be created based on the reading journal, discussions, research, and the student's insight. The student will continue writing the reading journal along with his composition of the articles. It is the student's responsibility to meet the deadlines and make implicitly clear when he doesn't understand any aspect of the course.

Calendar:	January 19	: Syllabus Due
	Feb.2	: 1 st Reading Journal (<i>Aspect of the Novel</i> & Tierney Article)
	Feb. 16	: 2 nd Reading Journal (<i>By Cunning & Craft</i> & Jauss Article)
	March 1	: 3 rd Reading Journal (<i>On Writing</i> & Foer Interview)
	March 15	: 4 th Reading Journal – Mid Term Phone Call (<i>Living by Fiction</i> & Borges Interview)
	March 29	: 5 th Reading Journal (<i>Theory of the Novel</i> & Writing Articles)
	April 12	: 6 th Reading Journal (<i>The Story Behind the Story</i> & Article Due)
	April 26	: 7 th Reading Journal (<i>The Story Behind the Story</i> & Article Due)
	May 3	: Final - Final Phone Call

Contact information:

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