



ENGL 123: Introduction to Fiction

Course Overview and Objectives

Welcome to ENGL 123 online! You are about to engage in an exciting and remarkably independent study of literature. You have between twelve weeks and nine months to complete the course work and a final exam. As your instructor, I am here to guide you through an in-depth learning of this material. Please use me!

This is a self-paced course, but it shouldn't be self-taught. You can email me any time with technical or theoretical questions and issues. I welcome discussion with you about the course material and encourage you to share your ideas and questions with me through email or on the discussion board. I recommend that you set up a schedule for yourself at the start of this course, which you can choose to share with me or not (if that will give you a positive sense of obligation); either way, it will help you stay honest with the workload and ensure your success in the course.

One of the goals in this class is to help you understand and articulate more precisely why it is that you can be so moved, gratified, challenged, or frustrated by a particular writer. The task of covering the incredibly broad scope of "fiction" is a very difficult one, and you'll notice that the course focuses heavily on twentieth-century American authors. A slightly narrower focus allows us to see the trends and developments in style and substance through the course of a single century and, the truth is, it still can't do justice to the wide array of literary voices that have emerged over time. And yet, it will give us a good starting point.

The course itself will be divided into nine individual units as follows:

- Introductions and the Development of Voice (Lesson 1)
- Pioneers of the Short Story (Lesson 2)
- Modernism (Lesson 3)
- Black Male Experience and Feminism (Lesson 4)
- Postmodernism and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (Lesson 5)
- Minimalism and Raymond Carver (Lesson 6)
- Cross-cultural Experience (Lesson 7)
- Contemporary Literature (Lesson 8)
- Final Exam Preparation (Lesson 9)

Several of these authors, like Chekhov, Hemingway, and Carver, seem at first glance to tell rather simple stories, so you'll need to work very hard to read intensively and truly cull out the important images, themes, and styles that emerge only on closer inspection. Toni Morrison, on the other hand,

may seem nearly impenetrable at first. Just keep reading carefully and closely—once you grow accustomed to her beautiful language, you'll follow the narrative without any trouble. The lesson plans will prepare you for each work so you can know ahead of time what to expect.

Each lesson includes reading assignments, questions for you to consider for the discussion forum, and, with some, a writing assignment. At the end of the course you will arrange to take a final exam. Sections below describe these elements of the course in detail.

Required Texts

See the course description for an updated list of required materials.

Reading Assignments

Reading assignments include primary sources, introductory materials on the period covered, biographical introductions of the authors, and Internet resources. All of these assignments, plus my introductions and notes in each lesson, are required reading.

Discussion Forums

I provide you with a list of questions for the discussion forum for each author you encounter in the class. These questions will help you expand your original reading of the works. As part of your participation grade for this course, you will write at least 2 responses to one of these questions or another question you pose **for every short story author and you will write at least 5 responses for Carver, Minot, and Morrison**. You will post these responses to the Forums section of Sakai, which I will check frequently and in turn offer feedback to your ideas. At any time during the course, you may post ideas or questions that you have about the material, and I will promptly engage in your conversation.

To get full credit for a post, you must engage fully in the reading. Your responses, however, do not need to be formal or polished. Thoughtfulness is the key. If you are unsure about a question, demonstrate your thoughtfulness by walking me through your exploration. Your thoughtful reading of the works is the only requirement for these posts. I would much prefer that you talk through scrambled thoughts and ideas than consult a secondary source and repeat their ideas.

Writing Assignments

You will write four papers of varying lengths. Writing assignments are explained in each lesson.

1. Perspective: Rewriting narrative bias (two to three pages)
2. Modernism: Taking on narrative voice (3-4 paragraphs)
3. Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: Taking the role of movie director: what, how, and why to include a symbol (four pages)

4. Raymond Carver's *Where I'm Calling From*: Writing with Carver's minimalism (three pages)
 5. Susan Minot's *Monkeys*: Giving voice to a character (three pages)
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Grading and Final Exam

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

- Participation in the discussion forums: 20 percent
- Writing assignments: 60 percent (12 percent each)
- Final exam: 20 percent.

You will take a cumulative, closed-book final exam when you have completed the material for this course. E-mail me at least two weeks in advance to schedule a specific date and time to take your final exam. You will have two hours to complete the final exam from the time I email it to you. **You must pass the final exam in order to pass the course.**

For the final exam, you will be responsible for all assigned readings, including the biographical information of the authors, all introductory materials, all materials from assigned Web sites, and the discussion forums. The exam will consist of essay questions. More details, including criteria on how I will grade the exam, are provided in Lesson 9.

Academic Policies

By enrolling as a student in this course, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the acceptable use of online resources. Please consult the Acceptable Use Policy on topics such as copyright, net-etiquette, and privacy protection.

As part of this course, you may be asked to participate in online activities that may include personal information about you or other students in the course. Please be respectful of the rights and protection of other participants under the UNC-Chapel Hill Information Security Policies when participating in online classes.

When using online resources offered by organizations not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill, such as Google or YouTube, please note that the terms and conditions of these companies and not the University's Terms and Conditions apply. These third parties may offer different degrees of privacy protection and access rights to online content. You should be well aware of this when posting content to sites not managed by UNC-Chapel Hill.

When you are directed to links outside of the unc.edu domain, please be mindful that clicking on sites not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill may pose a risk for your computer due to the possible presence of malware on such sites.

Honor Code

Remember that as a student of UNC-Chapel Hill, you are bound by the University's Honor Code: "It

shall be the responsibility of every student at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University students or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.” An especially serious Honor Code violation is plagiarism. See the UNC-Chapel Hill Writing Center’s page on plagiarism—what it is and how to avoid it.

Course Outline

Lesson	Topic
Lesson 1	Introductions and the Development of Voice
Lesson 2	Pioneers of the Short Story
Lesson 3	Modernism
Lesson 4	Black Male Experience and Feminism
Lesson 5	Postmodernism and Toni Morrison's <i>Beloved</i>
Lesson 6	Minimalism and Raymond Carver
Lesson 7	Cross-cultural Experience
Lesson 8	Contemporary Literature
Lesson 9	Final Exam Preparation
Email me at least two weeks in advance to schedule your final exam.	

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Send comments and questions to fridaycenter@unc.edu.