English 4511
Language and Literature
Fall 2015, Web

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Course Description

Is the language of literature different in kind from the language of everyday use? Although some linguists distinguish between "literary" language and "natural" language, others find that the lines are not so clear:

- Labov and Waletzky's "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience" shows that the "fundamental structures" of complex narratives are to be found in stories told by relatively uneducated speakers from working class families.

- Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* argues that figurative language is at the core of how we speak ("argument is war," "time is money," "good is up and bad is down").

- Mary Louise Pratt's *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* argues for a theory of literature "which allows us to describe literary utterances in the same terms used to describe other types of utterances."

In this course, we apply the tools of linguistics to analyze parallels between literary language and nonliterary language, writing and speech, genres and speech acts, text and discourse, eye dialect and dialect. We analyze how properties of words, sounds, sentences, meaning, discourse, and language variety contribute to the characters we create, whether in fiction or in life.

Course Objectives

Students completing Language and Literature will be able to discuss intelligently the following questions:
- What is the difference between "literary" language and "natural" language?
- What is the significance of the form (e.g., textual, electronic, oral) of a literary work?
- How are real events incorporated into fictional ones? Is there truth in fiction?
- From whose perspective is a story or poem told? Who is the intended audience?
- What contributes to irony in a literary work?
- What is the relation between story time and narrative time?
- How are the parts of the text arranged? What makes them stick together?
- Are the words of the text to be taken literally or figuratively?
- How are the words, phrases, and sentences structured?
- How do sounds of words reinforce their meaning or their relation to other words?
- How is dialect represented?
- What constitutes the fictional world of the story?
- How does cultural context affect the reading of a story?
- How is power represented through language?
- How might fiction aim at addressing inequities in society?

Course Requirements

- **Three Research Papers (75%)**
  Papers are to include references to appropriate journal articles, book chapters, and other resources (available online through U of M library and the Internet).

- **Discussions (25%)**
  Everyone is expected to respond to discussion sessions by announced deadlines. At least one contribution should be a substantial, well-thought-out, relevant essay of at least one page. Additional comments and responses are welcomed.

Required Texts

- Charters, Ann, ed. *The Story and Its Writer*. 9th ed. MacMillan. 2015
  ISBN: 978-1457664618

- Fowler, Roger. *Linguistic Criticism*. 2nd ed. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
  ISBN: 978-0192892614

- Toolan, Michael. *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction*. 2nd ed. Routledge, 2001.
  ISBN: 978-0415231756

Other Recommended Books

- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse*.
  Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Press, 1977.

- Traugott, Elizabeth Closs, and Mary Louise Pratt. *Linguistics for Students of Literature*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980.

- McQuillan, Martin, ed. *The Narrative Reader*. London and New York: London, 2000.

- Goring, Paul, Jeremy Hawthorn, and Domhnall Mitchell. *Studying Literature: The Essential Companion.* 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, 2010. (Note: the 2nd edition, 2000, is available as an e-book through the U of M library.)

- Chandler, Daniel. *Semiotics for Beginners*. Web Version. July 2, 2009.
  Available online at http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem0a.html.

Web Considerations

- Have continuing access to a computer and eCourseware. All work will be submitted online, so you must have a reliable Internet connection.

- Be self-motivated and self-disciplined. It's difficult to pace yourself in an online class: it always takes more time than you think! Keep in mind that the time you spend on this class should include time that you would otherwise have spent in the classroom.

- Do all work without inappropriate external assistance. In doing online research, it's easy to collect the thoughts of others. In reporting your research, identify the source of any words or ideas that did not originate with you.

Course Topics
    Text and Context
    Medium, Message, and Sign
    Background and Foreground
    Conversation and Dialogue
    Point of View and Irony
    Tense, Time, and Narrative Structure
    Meaning and Structure of Words
    Phrases, Sentences, Punctuation
    Sounds of Literature
    Representing Language Variation
    Context
    Power
    Conclusions and Applications

Grades

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

97-100 = A+	83-86 = B	70-72 = C-
93-96 = A	80-82 = B-	67-69 = D+
90-92 = A-	77-79 = C+	60-66 = D
87-89 = B+	73-76 = C	0-59 = F

Any student who may need accommodations based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to contact me privately regarding your specific needs. Students with disabilities should also contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at 110 Wilder Tower, 678-2880. SDS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.