

Forms of Fiction - ENGL 7471 001

Topic for Spring 2018: The Evolution of Narrative Form: Works in Conversation

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ENGL 7471 - Forms Of Fiction

A study of how fiction works through analyzing the short story, the novella, and the novel with attention to historical developments. May be repeated up to 6 hours with change of topic/course content and approval of Program Coordinator.

3.000 Credit Hours

3.000 Lecture hours

Extended Course Description

The evolution of narrative form and technique will be explored through works in conversation, AKA literary fan fiction. The course will discuss sources of inspiration for contemporary authors, particularly those who use previous narratives and employ a kind of retelling of previous stories. We will also discuss how previous works can serve as inspiration for students' own writing and the rules and responsibilities that surround working from previous narratives. While the course will focus on the forms and techniques employed by authors from historical narratives to contemporary authors in attempting to connect with modern readers, other topics will include: the purpose/ goal of the retelling, the conversation between the texts, issues of copyright and copyright infringement, fan fiction within and beyond the canon, and multimodal adaptations of popular narratives.

Possible Works in Conversation to be Discussed:

Beowulf ->

Grendel By John Gardner

Publisher: Vintage (May 14, 1989)

ISBN-10: 0679723110

ISBN-13: 978-0679723110

Various European Fairy Tales

The Bloody Chamber by Angela Carter

Publisher: Penguin Books

ISBN-10: 014017821X

ISBN-13: 978-0140178210

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë ->

Publisher: Penguin Classics

ISBN-10: 0141441143

ISBN-13: 978-0141441146

Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company

ISBN-10: 0393352560

ISBN-13: 978-0393352566

The Tempest by William Shakespeare ->

Hag Seed by Margaret Atwood

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company

ISBN-10: 0393352560

ISBN-13: 978-0393352566

Note: Some works and excerpts will be given by PDF in ecourseware

Assignments/ Grading

Craft talk/ leading discussion	20%
Analytical Paper	20%
Story/ Chapter	20%
Response Journals	20%
Participation, including workshop requirements	20%

Craft talk/ leading discussion:

Each student will be assigned a literary pairing in which they will be in charge of leading discussion for the class. They will provide background information, critical reception, and a focus on the evolution of one technique in the two works. Then they will give the class 3-4 questions to discuss. Although these will be given orally, they must be accompanied by a short write up of the assignment to be posted to ecourseware before class on the due date.

Analytical Paper

Along with the three pairings we will discuss in the class, I will provide a list of several more works in conversation. Each student will choose one of these pairings and write a short analytical paper that focuses on the evolution of form and technique over these two works. Students may include a discussion of the critical reception, issues in copyright, multimodal adaptations and other topics raised in class, but the focus is to be on form and technique and should include the student's original thinking and insights into this.

Story/ Chapter

A portion of the class will focus on the students' original writing. Each student will draft an original short story or chapter/ excerpt from a novel (chapters and excerpts must pass as stand-alone pieces) that uses a previous narrative as inspiration in some way (character, modernized plot/ retelling, allusions, etc.). Students are required to turn in a full draft of the story/ chapter for workshop and then a revised version of the story for their final portfolio. The final revision must be accompanied by a process note that outlines their progression as a writer over the course of the term. Final pieces will be graded on the students ability to apply the concepts learned in the class to the story form, to use the discussions, exercises and techniques as inspiration for an original piece, to utilize feedback in workshop (not all will be useful, not all can be used, but the student should be able to apply and utilize feedback that helps and inspires him/ her revise to better achieve his / her vision) and the students' ability to present a professionally polished and proofread story as close to publication ready as possible.

Response Journals

For each of the literary pairings, students will write a short, informal response paper discussing techniques used and the evolution of these techniques across the texts. As these are informal, students are also encouraged to discuss their responses to the texts considering questions such as: how are they in conversation with one another? Or rather, how does the contemporary narrative attempt to address something the original did not or point out some lacking? How are they similar/ different? Etc.

Participation, including workshop requirements

Students are expected to be present, prepared, and actively engaged in each class meeting. Most will require students to have read and prepared a written response, either to published works or student drafts, to the readings and to refer to these in their discussion of the works.

*Please note: This course is still in development. Readings and assignments are subject to minor additions and changes.