

ENGL 305.003**12:00 am - 1:15 am TR Robinson B 106**

Professor Michals
Robinson A 428
Office Hours: TR 2:00-3:00 and by appointment (Wednesdays are often good)
993-1160
tmichals@gmu.edu (preferred)

Course Overview:

This course introduces you to English as a profession by training you in the practice of literary analysis and interpretation. We will engage in close reading and exploration of several genres of literature, including forms of poetry, drama, and fiction, while paying particular attention to issues of form and language, especially figurative language. Later in the course, we will engage in intertextual study, comparing several texts that have strong connections. Finally, we will turn our attention to methods of literary criticism and research.

Course Objectives:

As a result of your work in ENGL 305, you will

- expand your understanding of the discipline of literary studies, its key terms, concepts, and practices
- develop professional habits of analytical reading
- learn to compose arguments appropriate to analytical essays in literary studies
- improve your ability to contribute to scholarly conversations both in the classroom and in your writing according to appropriate disciplinary conventions
- learn to articulate and to refine a scholarly question that is relevant to the discipline of English
- hone your ability to evaluate the key assumptions, arguments, and use of evidence in secondary source materials

Required Texts:

Ernest Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying*

J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan* (Penguin Random House, 4th edition. This edition includes additional material, so please do not rely on a different edition.)

The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms. Go to <http://library.gmu.edu/> and search under "Articles and Databases." It's under "Oxford Reference" (not the OED, nor "Oxford Dictionaries").

Other primary and critical works will be posted on Blackboard or available on-line through the GMU library databases.

COURSE POLICIES.

Missed quizzes or other in-class work cannot be made up, except in cases of personal tragedy. You are strongly advised to come to every class, on time, having read the assigned text more than once. Here (with thanks to Professor Richard Nanian) are excellent step-by-step instructions on how to read this semester:

Make marginal notes (called *glosses*) or keep a reading notebook (rather than merely underlining passages, which is better than nothing, but often weirdly enigmatic the morning after). Conduct a dialogue with the text. Here are some tips to make your reading more productive for specific genres:

When reading prose fiction and non-fiction: This is obviously going to be the most familiar to you, yet you should still read actively. For non-fiction, do not read passively; always engage the text. Read with a pen in your hand, make marginal notes or keep a notebook, ask questions, raise objections, consider ramifications.

When reading fiction, remember that authors have incredible freedom. Ask yourself why the author wrote the text you are reading in exactly this way, with this narrator, in this style, beginning it here and ending it there, putting in these particular scenes and details but leaving out others you might imagine. Remember that all of these components represent choices the author made, and in those choices lies the art. Of course, taking a little time to put faces to characters is helpful, and looking up words you don't know is a must.

When reading poetry: Take your time! Even though in most cases the poetry assignments will be shorter in terms of number of pages, you should spend the same amount of time on each poetry assignment as you would on an assignment in fiction or drama. Reading poetry requires a different approach than reading prose. Most poems require that you read them several times. They are usually densely packed with meaning and often rich in symbolism. Poetry typically emphasizes power of expression over logical clarity. Nevertheless, good poetry is not needlessly obscure. Most poetry obeys the basic rules of grammar: punctuation is there for a reason, pronouns refer to the nearest possible antecedent, and so on. Don't be misled by line breaks — the basic unit of meaning in most poems is still the sentence. Finally, because poems typically have far fewer words in them than works of prose, it is especially important to look up words you don't know.

You must — *must* — read poetry aloud to get the full effect. Find some place away from other people and get used to doing it. After you have read a poem silently and think you have figured it out, recite it. Again, pay attention to punctuation and respect enjambment (in other words, you should not pause at the end of a line unless the punctuation or syntax suggests it). Try to get a sense of the rhythmic pattern (cadence) of the lines. Some of the poetry we are reading this semester is in a formal meter. If it is, respect the meter but do not overemphasize it; avoid being too sing-song in your delivery. If the poem is not in a formal meter, you should still pay close attention to its rhythms. Also, poetry should not, except in rare instances, be read in a monotone. Allow your emotions free but realistic play. In other words, avoid reading like a robot without hamming it up.

When reading drama: Drama is more inherently visual and dynamic than other forms of literature. It lacks the narrative information on which you have learned to rely when following a plot. You can become confused if you do not pay close attention to who is saying what, and if you are not careful to keep the characters distinct in your mind. Take the time to construct a mental picture of each character at the beginning of the play, or when the character first appears. Give them faces, clothes, voices, whether of people you know or actors with whom you are familiar from movies or television. Always remember that characters in a play never simply speak — they are always moving, or standing, or sitting; they have physical presence.

Help:

I like talking to students about work in progress. Please come to my office hours or make an appointment to see me with a draft of a project (best case scenario), or (worst case scenario) to share your despair over being unable to start writing anything you like. **Everyone is required to come see me about their writing at least once before Columbus Day.** If you're having trouble getting started with an assignment, I advise you to get help from the Writing Center or from me rather than clicking through a random and quite possibly overwhelming selection of electronic or print sources. If you do choose to start browsing, you must cite all the articles, books, or electronic sources that your own final work quotes or draws on, however indirectly, using a standard citation format, including a bibliography. The Writing Center is in Robinson A116: call 993-1200 to make an appointment in advance.

PLEASE NOTE:

Never skip class to try to finish an essay! Late submission may be possible if you discuss it with me ahead of time and I've seen work in progress. Except in cases of personal tragedy, unless I have approved a late submission, I will deduct one grade increment for each class period that the assignment is late: for example, and A- essay would become a B+ if it is late one class. After two classes, it would be a B. This semester I am experimenting with submitting essays on Blackboard. If that doesn't work well, I'll abandon the experiment and go back to hard-copy. Always keep a copy of the work you hand in.

Comment [GG1]: Syllabus indicates writing resources that will be available to students.

Plagiarism: It Can Happen Without Evil Intent:

Taking words, phrases, ideas, or any other elements from another person's work and using them as if they were yours is plagiarism. Be sure to fully document any source you use, including introductions to editions of the text or study aids such as Spark Notes, following a standard citation format. We will discuss plagiarism in class. If you are ever unsure about this issue please discuss the work in question with me immediately, before you hand it in, because if someone else's words or ideas end up in your writing without being cited you have committed plagiarism, whether or not you intended to deceive.

Blackboard Responses:

You must post ten responses in all – the first five before break, then five more before the last class, no more than one response for each class meeting. Pace your responses prudently – do them early so you won't be swamped by busy times and malfunctioning technology. Please post on the reading for the upcoming class, although you are more than welcome to refer to earlier readings and classmates' comments. In fact, I will be delighted when you do. If you synthesize as you go along, then the exams will make sense. These responses will help you to begin to analyze the readings so that you can more profitably participate when we talk about them in class; they also let me see what you're thinking, so the earlier you post them, the more grateful I will be. Express yourself as clearly as possible. You can address the response prompt listed on the syllabus, or take another direction entirely: ask a question about the text and explain why you think it matters, disagree with something in the text, relate some element of its form to its content, or take a classmate's response to the reading one step farther: **Do not merely summarize the text!** If your response does not rise beyond summary, you won't get credit for it. Each response must be at least 200 words. I will not accept late responses.

Grading Breakdown:

- Process Paper: 10%
- Close Reading Essay (1,500 words): 10%
- Intertextuality Essay (1,500 words): 10 %
- Annotated Bibliography (8 sources): 10%
- Engaging with a Critic Essay (1,500-2,000 words): 15%
- Performance analysis of *Peter Pan: The Boy Who Hated Mothers*: 5%
- 10 Blackboard postings. Half of your postings must be completed before the Columbus Day break, the second half must be completed by our last class, and each one must be at least 200 words: 10%
- Quizzes and other in-class work: 10%
- Midterm exam: 10%
- Final exam: 10%

Comment [GG2]: Syllabus describes grading criteria for all major writing assignments.

A Note on Grading Standards for Essays:

An "F" paper does not satisfy the purposes of the assignment. A "D" paper makes a visible effort to satisfy the purposes of the assignment, but still reads like a draft because of difficulty with writing clear sentences, developing and organizing an argument, and / or using textual support. A "C" paper shows fairly consistent mastery of the mechanics of organization and grammar, and uses some textual evidence to support a thesis. A "B" paper shows very consistent mastery of mechanics, and a more thoughtful use of textual support. An "A" paper makes me smile as I read it: in many subtle ways, it announces that someone has both developed a compelling voice as a writer, and has something to say.

Writing Intensive Statement: This course fulfills the Writing Intensive requirement in the BA English and BFA Creative Writing programs. It does so through three formal writing assignments: the 1,500-word close reading essay, which builds on the earlier writing process paper, the 1,500-word intertextuality essay, and the 1,500-2,000 word final project. Feedback on your writing will take the form of marginal and final comments on your essays, in-class workshops, and individual and group conferences.

Comment [GG3]: Syllabus contains WI statement.

Comment [GG4]: Students are required to write at least 3,500 words and at least 2 assignments.

Comment [GG5]: Syllabus describes that the instructor will provide feedback on writing.

MASON E-MAIL ACCOUNTS:

I will contact you only through your official GMU e-mail account.

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES:

If you are a student with a disability and you would like to take advantage of appropriate accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu> Please get your paperwork in order in good time! I cannot offer any accommodations outside of the ODS process.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS):

CAPS <http://caps.gmu.edu/> offers a variety of services free of charge, a great resource for stressful times.

Date	Reading Assignment Due	Writing Assignment Due
T. Sept. 1:	Welcome!	
R. Sept. 3:	<p>Figurative Language: Metaphor, (Vehicle, Tenor) and Simile. Also, Lyric, Formalism, New Criticism: Craig Raine, "A Martian Sends a Postcard Home"; Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"; A.E. Housman, "Stars, I Have Seen Them Fall"; Walt Whitman, "A Noiseless Patient Spider." Excerpt from Ciardi, "How Does a Poem Mean?"</p> <p>BB: Pick the poem that interests you most. Who is speaking? What words must you look up? Which words have the strongest auditory, visual, or emotional power? How would you paraphrase the poem's most challenging sentence? What's the poem's topic (lyric poems are not about plots, so do not create a scenario)? Is your favorite image in this poem a metaphor or a simile or something else? Or, what do you think of Ciardi's advice to a hypothetical young would-be poet?</p>	
T. Sept. 8:	<p>Tone, Diction, Syntax: Hayden, "Those Winter Sundays"; Larkin, "This Be the Verse"; Robert Fink, "The Ex-Grunt Writes His Last Letter to His Former Professor"</p> <p>In-Class workshop on Form: Limericks (can you write one that doesn't sound as if it's trying to be funny?)</p> <p>Last Day to Drop Classes With No Tuition Penalty</p> <p>BB: Tone is the attitude of a work towards its subject. Which of these poems is the angriest? Who or what is the anger's</p>	

target?

R.Sept.10: **Allegory, Symbol:** Robert Southwell, "The Burning Babe"; Emily Dickinson, "Because I Could Not Stop for Death," Miller Williams, "Listen"; Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar"; Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro"; W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"

Start thinking about which poem you want to focus your Process Paper on.

Sound, Scansion, Sonnet: John Milton, "When I Consider"; John Keats, "When I Have Fears"; William Wordsworth, "Nuns Fret Not"; John Donne "Holy Sonnet 14"; William Shakespeare, Sonnets 18, 55, 73

BB: Pick the poem that interests you most. Is your favorite image in this poem a symbol, or not? How do you know? Or, compare and contrast allegory and symbol as forms. Why do you think allegory has become a relatively uncommon form today? Or, how does the form of one of these sonnets contribute to its meaning?

T.Sept.15: **Ballad, Ballad Stanza, The Lyric, Lyrical Ballads:**
Lyrical Ballads (1798)
"Advertisement," "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," "Lines Written at a Small Distance. . .," "Simon Lee," "We are Seven," "Lines Written in Early Spring" "The Thorn," "The Last of the Flock," "The Idiot Boy," "Expostulation and Reply," "Old Man Travelling," and "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey"

BB: How does Wordsworth see social class and literature? OR, unlike lyric poems, ballads have plots - what's the plot of one of these ballads? Does this ballad evoke an oral tradition? How?

R.Sept.17: **Lyrical Ballads Con't:**
"There Was a Boy," "Strange Fits of Passion," "Song," "A slumber did my spirit seal," "Lucy Gray," "Poor Susan," "Nutting," "Three years she grew in sun and shower"; and, just because we have to, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"

Bring whatever you use to write on: we'll work on an Extremely Rough Draft of Process Paper in class today.

BB: What's new in 1800? Compare one these later poems from those in the 1798 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*.

Comment [GG6]: Syllabus indicates multiple class sessions that address different writing strategies.

T.Sept.22: *Lesson Before Dying*
Draft of Process Paper Due in class.
BB: What do you think of the opening scene? What do you think of Grant? OR, which detail do you think best conveys Gaines's sense of the specific Black community he's trying to describe? OR, which moment do you think best conveys Gaines's sense of the relationships between Black and white people at this time and place?

R.Sept.24: *Lesson Before Dying*
BB: What do you think of Vivian Baptiste?
Process Paper Due on Blackboard by Midnight.

The Fall for the Book Festival runs September 27 – October 3! See the full schedule of visiting authors and events <http://fallforthebook.org/schedule/>

Required: Ernest J. Gaines @ EagleBank Arena, GMU
Monday, Sep 28 @ 7:30 pm – 8:45 pm
Alternative event for those with an insurmountable conflict:
Civil Rights Panel Discussion @ Sandy Spring Bank Tent,
Johnson Center Plaza Friday, Oct 2 @ 1:30 pm – 2:45 pm

T.Sept.29: *Lesson Before Dying*
BB: What do you think of the conclusion? OR, what do you think of Jefferson's journal?
Start work on Close Reading Essay.

R.Oct.1: Anton Chekhov, "At a Country House"
<http://www.eldritchpress.org/ac/jr/175.htm>
"Betrothed" <http://www.eldritchpress.org/ac/jr/201.htm>

BB: Compare Gaines's sense of race, class, and social mobility (or its lack) to Chekhov's. OR, compare Chekhov's account of a talented woman leaving her people to Gaines's ideas about a talented man leaving his people. OR, compare the way a Chekhov sentence sounds to a Gaines sentence. OR, compare the kind of specific information Gaines and Chekhov both give us (or don't give us) about their characters.

T.Oct.6: James Joyce, "Ivy Day in the Committee Room"; two excerpts from *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
BB: Compare Gaines's account of what a hero means to an oppressed people to Joyce's account. OR, compare Gaines's account of what it means for a talented man to leave his people to Joyce's. OR, what about mothers and mother-figures in Gaines and Joyce? OR, compare the way a Joyce sentence sounds to a Gaines sentence. OR, compare the kind of specific information Gaines and Joyce both give us (or

Comment [GG7]: Syllabus indicates required draft deadline and revision deadline, with sufficient time for thoughtful faculty feedback and for student revision.

	don't give us) about their characters.	
R.Oct.8:	Zora Neale Hurston, "The Eatonville Anthology" (Blackboard)	Close Reading Essay Due on Blackboard by midnight.
	BB: Compare Gaines's treatment of rural Southern Black speech and culture to Hurston's.	
M.Oct.12 /T.Oct.13:	Columbus Day recess: Monday classes/labs meet Tuesday. Tuesday classes do not meet this week; also known as "University Monday."	
R. Oct.15	Review for mid-term; start work on your Intertextuality Essay in class today. BB: Out of what we have read so far, which three texts would you like to write about together, and why?	Bring whatever you use to write on.
T.Oct.20:	Mid-Term Exam	
R.Oct.22:	Workshop on Intertextuality Essay	Rough Draft of Intertextuality Essay Due.
T.Oct.27	<i>Mary Rose</i> , Acts 1 and 2	
	BB: What do you think of Barrie's stage directions? OR, compare a line of this dialogue to one in Gaines, Chekhov, or Joyce. OR, why do we like ghost stories?	
R.Oct.29	<i>Mary Rose</i> , Act 3.	Intertextuality Essay Due by midnight on Blackboard.
	BB: What do you think of the play's conclusion?	
T.Nov.3:	Workshop on finding sources and starting Annotated Bibliography.	Please bring a laptop if you can.
R.Nov.5:	<i>The White Bird</i>	
	BB: What strikes you as the single strangest thing about this piece of writing?	
T.Nov.10:	Walt Disney and Peter Pan; stage history.	Very Rough Draft of Annotated Bibliography Due in Class.
R.Nov.12:	<i>Peter and Wendy</i> (chapters I – VIII) BB Prompt: Compare Barrie's treatment of gender, death, parents, children, or reading to anyone else we have read, or	

to *Mary Rose*. OR, do you like or loathe Barrie's narrator?

- T.Nov.17: *Peter and Wendy* (finish it)
BB Prompt: How does Barrie see growing up? Or, according to Barrie, who suffers more in growing up: boys or girls? Or, what do you make of Wendy and Peter's final encounter?
- R.Nov.19: Workshop on Annotated Bibliography
This Week Only! Live Performance of *Peter Pan: The Boy Who Hated Mothers*
Thursday, November 19 – Saturday, November 21 at 8:00 pm
Saturday, November 21 and Sunday, November 22 at 2:00 pm
<http://cfa.gmu.edu/calendar/?search=peter+pan&x=13&y=19>
- T.Nov. 24: If you attended the two required live events, no class today.
- R. Nov.26: **Thanksgiving Break**
- T.Dec. 1: Discuss *Peter Pan: The Boy Who Hated Mothers*; start work on Engaging with a Critic Essay.
- R.Dec. 3: Critical reading on Barrie: Jacqueline Rose
BB: What is Rose's thesis? What moment do you like in this piece? What do you dislike?
- T.Dec. 8: Critical reading on Barrie: Responding to Jacqueline Rose and afterward.
BB: How has Rose changed the critical conversation? How has she been refuted?
- R.Dec. 10: Conclusion. **Final Exam: Thursday Dec. 17, 10:30-1:15**
BB: Which three texts would you like to write about together, and why? One must come from the first half of the semester.

Rough Draft of Annotated Bibliography Due in Class.

Annotated Bibliography Due on Blackboard by midnight.

Performance analysis of *Peter Pan: The Boy Who Hated Mothers* Due on Blackboard before class.

Very Rough Draft of Engaging with a Critic Essay Due in Class.

Rough Draft of Engaging with a Critic Essay Due in Class.

Engaging With a Critic Essay Due on Blackboard.