

## ENGLISH 201: READING TEXTS

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Sections 030 Tuesday and Thursday 1:30-2:45

032 Tuesday and Thursday 3:00-4:15

Instructor: Amy S. Marshall

*the best way to contact me:* Email: [amarsha3@gmu.edu](mailto:amarsha3@gmu.edu)

*where you can find handouts, links, and extra credit assignments:*

[www.gmu.edu/~amarsha3](http://www.gmu.edu/~amarsha3)

Office Hours: 4:30-5:15 p.m. Tuesdays and by appointment

Located in *Phoebe* office, room 254B Student Union Building I

Phone: 993-2915

Mailbox in Robinson A487

English department

Phone: 993-1160

### Required Text:

*Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama 7<sup>th</sup> ed.*

by Dana Gioia and X.J. Kennedy

### Required Materials:

some kind of writing handbook and a dictionary

an email account

a notebook or folder for the class with pockets

**Course Description:** This course introduces readers to the genres of poetry, fiction, and drama, emphasizing both reading and writing skills. Students practice the use of literary terminology and methods of analysis and interpretation through discussion, written response, quizzes, and exams. Class discussion will focus on the literary, social, political, and cultural aspects of readings that deal with a variety of issues and themes. Students are expected to energetically engage with authors, peers, and the instructor in developing insights and ideas that show both depth of thought and clarity of expression.

### Course Requirements:

You must bring your syllabus, book, folder, paper and pen to every class.

On the first day of discussion for each text, a 1-2 page typed response will be due. These responses should not supplement notes. These papers should reflect both personal reaction and intellectual engagement with the text. Two of these responses will take the form of reviews of one on campus reading and one play. In addition to this, pop quizzes will be given, some of which students will complete in small groups. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Four 3-4 page essays are required, including one written in class. The first paper will be graded after a revision; one subsequent paper may be revised for a possible one grade higher and must be accompanied by a memo explaining changes made. These will be graded on the application of terms and ideas introduced in class, the imagination and critical thinking used in analysis, and the presentation of ideas in an organized and coherent manner.

Essays: 60% (15% each)

Written Response: 15%

Quizzes: 10%

Final Exam: 15%

**Paper requirements:** All typed work must be double spaced in Times New Roman or

comparable font at 11 or 12 point with standard margins. All writings, papers, journals, and exercises should be clearly labeled with your name, class section number, and the date. All papers should be secured with a stapler, as I will not accept paper clipped or corner-folded essays. **These requirements, as well as the minimum page requirements set for each assignment, must be met or papers will not be graded. No late papers accepted.** Papers must be handed in at the beginning of class to be considered timely. If you do not turn in your paper and enough copies for the revision workshop, your final grade will be reduced by a full grade.

While you will not be graded on attendance, your presence in the class is crucial to your final grade. Along with this, I expect you to fully participate in class discussions, small groups, in class writings, and other class activities; this is a basic requirement of this course. If you feel you are having difficulty meeting the minimum requirements of the course, or need additional assistance with any aspect of the class, the instructor should be contacted immediately.

If you have a documented disability and would like appropriate accommodations, please notify me privately.

**No plagiarism allowed.** GMU's *Department of English Guidebook* states:

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles such as parenthetical citations, footnotes, or end notes; a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting.

Any instance of plagiarism will result in a final grade of No Credit and a report to the Honors Committee. If you are confused about what plagiarism means, please see me.

I encourage each and everyone of you to visit the **Writing Center** sometime this semester. Appointments to meet with a tutor may be scheduled by calling **993-1200**. The Center also offers free hand outs, a useful website, and on-line tutoring, so please take advantage of this free service.

**This schedule is subject to change. However, we will discuss all changes in class first. You are responsible for keeping up with any such changes.**

Schedule **bold is section 032**

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T: 25: Introduction: What is a Story?

Th: 27: "A Rose for Emily" Faulkner

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T: 2-1: (*last day to drop without tuition liability*) "Occurrence at Owl Creek" Bierce(CAN)

Th: 2-3: "Paul's Case" Cather & discussion of sample paper

(2-7: *last day to add without dean's permission*)

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T: 2-8: "Sweat" Hurston

Th: 2-10: PAPER #1 DUE (bring copies) "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" Oates  
8 pm-poet Marvin Bell reads at GMU bookstore

T: 2-15: PAPER #1 DUE Revision Workshop

*8 pm-author Audrey Schulman reads at GMU bookstore*

Th: 2-17: **Revision Workshop REVISION #1 DUE** “A Pair of Tickets” Tan

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T: 2-22: **REVISION #1 DUE** “The Gospel According to Mark” Borges

Th: 2-24: “The Yellow Wallpaper” Gilman

(2:25: *last day to drop without dean’s permission*)

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T: 2-29: “The Cathedral” Carver

Th: 3-2: Introduction to Drama :*Death of a Salesman* Miller

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*march 6<sup>th</sup>: 8 pm: poet Stanley Plumly reads in bookstore*

T: 3-7: *Death of a Salesman* Miller

*8 pm-author Percival Everett reads at bookstore*

Th: 3-9: IN-CLASS ESSAY (#2)

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**SPRING BREAK 3-13 :3-19**

T: 3-21: *Othello*

Th: 3-23: *Othello* *8 pm-poet Barbara Jordan reads at bookstore*

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T: 3-28: *Othello*

Th: 3-30: *Othello*

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T: 4-4: Introduction to Poetry: “The Road Less Traveled” Frost; “The Fish” Bishop; Gluck  
*wed April 5<sup>th</sup>: poet Louise Gluck reads at JC Cinema*

Th: 4-6: **PAPER #3 DUE** “Sailing to Byzantium” and “The Second Coming” Yeats

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T: 4-11: PAPER #3 DUE; “Do Not Go Gentle” Thomas “One Art” Bishop

Th: 4-13: “The City Limits” Ammons; “The Colonel” Forche; “Buffalo Bill’s” cummings

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T: 4-18: “When I Have Fears” Keats; “Lady Lazarus” Plath

Th: 4-20: “To His Coy Mistress” Marvell; “Traveling in the Dark” Stafford

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T:4-25: “Oh No” Creeley; “We Real Cool” Brooks; “Resume” Parker

Th: 4-27: “Musee Des Beaux Arts” Auden; “Cinderella” Sexton

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T:5-2: PAPER #4 DUE \* Revision workshop

Th: 5-4: REVISION #2 DUE \* Review for Exam \*\*

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Section 030 Exam: Thursday, 5-11, 1:30- 4:15

Section 032 Exam: Tuesday, 5-16 1:30-4:15

\*\*note concerning reading responses: your two review-responses are due by the last class, May 4<sup>th</sup>. On campus performances are free to students.

Grading Criteria      *here is a sample of the grade sheets with which I will score your essays*

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/5 **Title:** interesting and appropriate:

/10 **Thesis:** clear, identifiable, arguable, specific, well-constructed:

/15 **Analysis:** presents a reasoned interpretation; fulfills the assignment; understands the text; uses literary terms correctly:

/15 **Coherence/Organization:** Paragraphs and sentences within the essay arranged in a logical order; transitions used between ideas; introduction and conclusion effective:

/15 **Development:** paper fully supports the thesis using text as appropriate; shows how the evidence supports the thesis:

/10 **Style:** the author's views are expressed as clearly and as simply as possible. Appropriate tone with awareness of audience:

/20 **Mechanics:** the essay is well prepared, uses standard written English with correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation; shows evidence of editing and revision:

/10 **Creativity:** imagination and critical thinking have been employed in the composition process:

**Total: /100=**

**Assignment: Paper #1: Character: Due:**

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*All Papers:* please see Syllabus for style guidelines

- need a title page with a relevant title
- must have a strong thesis (a debatable claim)
- must argue the thesis with evidence from the text
- should be written as though the reader has read the text; this means you may avoid long bouts of summary, but does not allow for lack of clarity; you are arguing interpretations, not facts
- need to address the assignment

In this paper you are to analyze one main character from one story listed below. You are to identify and explain the relevance of three main traits of this character, showing how these traits are manifested in the text through elements (discussed in class) such as dialogue, description, action, direct statement, and imagery.

Your introduction must include a recognizable thesis listing the traits your paper will address, and should provide a clue as to their significance to the story as a whole. Be careful to concentrate, in thinking about your thesis, not just on the character alone, but on how the character affects the entire piece. In other words, I am asking you to focus on the story using the element of character as a lens, as one specific way to seeing the whole. Your thinking, then, as expressed in your essay, should not be limited to insights pertaining to the character, but should lead readers to an understanding of your particular view about the main concerns of the story.

The main body of your paper should argue your thesis by presenting each trait in turn, using a variety of evidence from the text to illustrate both the existence and the importance of the trait. I expect a minimum of three quotes per trait, but will grade use of quotes based on how thoroughly you demonstrate the presence of a trait throughout the text, not on how many you use (too many quotes poorly presented do not make for a higher grade).

Please include an outline of your paper. Using an outline will help you organize your ideas, information, and examples from the text. Here are your story choices:

**Walker, “Everyday Use”**

**Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”**

**Porter, “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall”**

*one way to think about organizing the paper: with a table or outline  
please note: while I am looking for an organized essay, this does not preclude a need for  
creativity!*

Trait #1	Trait #2	Trait #3
Imagery, Dialogue	Direct Statements, Action	Description, Imagery
quote 1, 2, 3, 4	quote 5, 6, 7	quote 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

\*Bring in the appropriate number of copies for your group workshop, including one for the instructor. The first draft of this paper will not be graded. Please note, however, that any paper that does not meet the minimum requirements in the first draft may be subject to a reduced grade on the revision.

**Paper #2: Theme:** Choose a story or play from the list below. In your essay you should state the theme of the work and show how it is developed through at least three elements, including (but not limited to) character, setting, point of view, conflict, symbolism, or tone.

Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart"

Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"

Boyle, "Greasy Lake"

Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown"

McNally, *Andre's Mother*

Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*

**Paper #3: Symbolism/Imagery:** Analyze the use of imagery and symbols in either *Othello* or in one of the poems listed below. Your thesis should address both how and why the author employed imagery, and your paper should develop the thesis both in terms of individual lines and of the whole piece.

Plath, "Daddy"

Simic "Butcher Shop"

Burns, "My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose"

Frost, "The Silken Tent"

Herrick, "To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time"

Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"

Pound, "The River Merchant's Wife"

**Paper #4: Comparative Essay:** Pick any two texts we have read this semester as a class that seem similar to you in some way and use this paper to explore their similarities and differences through comparison of textual elements. For instance, you might see two characters sharing similar personality traits or circumstances, but who, because of setting, act differently, so that the plots of the two works differ. Or, you might find two poems using similar imagery in vastly different ways. Your thesis should propose a reason for the differences between the two works you're analyzing, and your paper should provide evidence to this effect.

**Final Exam:** This exam will include both comprehensive testing of terms and facts from the semester and essay questions to be discussed in more detail toward the end of the term.

other possible:

have stage a production

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