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American Public University System
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LITR350

Course Summary

Course : LITR350

Title : America's Genre: The Art and Genius of the Short Story

Length of Course : 8 weeks

Credit Hours : 3

Description

Course Description:

American writers are credited with the creation of the short story and have defined the genre for the world. From Nathaniel Hawthorne's first published collection in 1837, America's short stories have explored topics such as witches and demon worship, mysterious murders and insanity, tall tales from the Wild West, love and loss, and the ethics that reflect the cultural identity of Americans. Through a variety of short stories, students will learn how to conduct a close reading of a literary text, examining the components that embody this original and compressed art form while uncovering the ingenuity behind this precise and difficult genre of fiction.

Objectives

After this course, students will be able to:

CO1 Identify the characteristics of the American short story

CO2 Demonstrate the ability to interpret texts for meaning and analyze the elements of literature.

CO3 Compare and contrast a variety of primary texts

CO4 Produce academic writing that uses textual analysis to evaluate American short stories in properly documented (MLA) literary essays.

CO5 Evaluate American short stories in terms of its literary and thematic importance

Week 1: Defining the Short Story

Learning Objectives:

- Student will define what makes a short story unique from other forms of fiction
- Students will understand the difference between primary and secondary texts
- Students will define a close reading of a literary text

Reading(s)

- “The Philosophy of the Short Story” by Brandeu Matthews
- “Poe’s Invention of the Short Story” by Charles Baldwin; pages 15-23
- “Review of Twice-Told Tales” by Edgar Allan Poe

Assignment(s)

Week 1 Discussion

Week 2: Annotating literature and characterization

Learning Objectives:

- Students will learn how to annotate a literary text.
- Students will learn the six types of characters.
- Students will understand how authors develop characters.

Reading(s)

- Annotating a Work of Fiction
- “Hands” by Sherwood Anderson
- “A Pair of Silk Stockings” by Kate Chopin
- “Editha” by William Dean Howells

Assignment(s):

Week 2 Discussion

Week 3: Setting

Learning Objectives:

- Students will understand the role of setting in a text.
- Students will practice annotating a short story.
- Students will demonstrate finding textual evidence by completing an annotation assignment and short analysis.

Reading(s):

- “Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner
- “The Open Boat” by Stephen Crane
- “The Veldt” by Ray Bradbury
- Video: “The Importance of Setting in Storytelling” by Diane Callahan

Assignment(s):

Week 3 Discussion

Assignment 1: Annotating Character or Setting

Week 4: Plot and Conflict

Learning Objectives:

- Students will learn the components of plot and understand the story arch.
- Students will learn the five types of conflict and locate textual evidence to determine the type used by an author.
- Students will note how the interaction between plot and conflict move the story through the plot stages.

Reading(s):

- “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson
- “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” by Ambrose Bierce
- “Vampires in the Lemon Grove” from *Vampires in the Lemon Grove* by Karen Russel
- “The Great Silence” from *Exhalation* by Ted Chiang
- Video: “Plot in Short Stories”

Assignment(s):

Week 4 Discussion

Week 5: Style

Learning Objectives:

- Students will learn the various
- types of figurative language
- Students will locate and identify figurative language in a text.
- Students will note how an author's word choice creates tone and mood.

Reading(s):

- Video: Figurative Language
- "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" by Mark Twain
- "The Black Cat" by Edgar Allan Poe
- "Exhalation" by Ted Chiang
- "The Conversion of the Jews" by Philip Roth

Assignment(s):

Week 6 Discussion

Assignment 2: Annotating Plot, Conflict, and Style

Week 6: Theme

Learning Objectives:

- Students will discover how all the elements of a short story work together to create the theme.

Reading(s):

The following readings are for the final project due during week 8. You will only need to do a complete analysis on ONE of the stories, so choose it carefully! These will not be discussed this week but are listed here to get you started on your final project.

- "Reeling for the Empire" from *Vampires in the Lemon Grove* by Karen Russel
- "Proving Up" from *Vampires in the Lemon Grove* by Karen Russel
- "The New Veterans" from *Vampires in the Lemon Grove* by Karen Russel
- "The Truth of Fact, the Truth of Feeling" from *Exhalation* by Ted Chiang
- "The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate" from *Exhalation* by Ted Chiang
- "Omphalos" from *Exhalation* by Ted Chiang

Assignment(s)

Week 6 Discussion

Week 7: Evaluating a Short Story

Learning Objectives:

- Students will synthesize the elements of a short story to determine the theme.
- Students will create an outline for their final project.

Reading(s):

The following readings are for the final project due during week 8. You will only need to do a complete analysis on ONE of the stories, so choose it carefully!

- “Reeling for the Empire” from *Vampires in the Lemon Grove* by Karen Russel
- “Proving Up” from *Vampires in the Lemon Grove* by Karen Russel
- “The New Veterans” from *Vampires in the Lemon Grove* by Karen Russel
- “The Truth of Fact, the Truth of Feeling” from *Exhalation* by Ted Chiang
- “The Merchant and the Alchemist’s Gate” from *Exhalation* by Ted Chiang
- “Omphalos” from *Exhalation* by Ted Chiang

Assignment(s):

Week 7 Discussion

Week 8: Course Conclusion

Learning Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate understandings of the major elements of a short story.
- Students will reflect on the course content

Readings:

No new readings

Assignment(s):

Week 8 Discussion

Final Project

Evaluation

7 Discussions	30%
2 Assignments	30%
Final Project	40%

Materials

Specific Course Materials related to your course are located in the Learning Material Section of the Content for each week.

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holders, you may not sell, share or otherwise distribute these documents for personal or other use without the likelihood of violating Copyright Law.

eReserve

Various resources from the APUS Library & the Open Web are used. Required resources for your course are provided in a course eReserve.

Course Guidelines

Writing Expectations

All activities completed in this course are to follow the stated instructions (inside the classroom). Always check the grading rubrics to see what your instructor will be on the lookout for when grading your work. Also, be sure you have ***read the APUS Plagiarism Policy (the entire Academic Dishonesty section) before submitting work in this or in any other course.***

Citation and Reference Style

The course uses the Modern Language Association (MLA) style.

Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact your instructor before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution. Ten percent will be deducted from the final score per day, up to fifty percent.

Also, completing all Assignments (under the “Assignments” tab) is paramount to your success in this course.

Netiquette

Online universities promote the advancement of knowledge through positive and constructive debate, both inside and outside the classroom. Forums on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and “flaming.” Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting. Basic academic rules of good behavior and proper “Netiquette” must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the rewards and excitement of learning, which does not include descent to personal attacks or student attempts to stifle the learning of others.

- **Technology Limitations:** While you should feel free to explore the full range of creative composition in your formal papers, keep e-mail layouts simple. The Sakai classroom may not fully support MIME or HTML encoded messages, which means that bold face, italics, underlining, and a variety of color-coding or other visual effects will not translate in your e-mail messages.
- **Humor Note:** Despite the best of intentions, jokes and especially satire can easily get lost or taken seriously. If you feel the need for humor, you may wish to add “emoicons” to help alert your readers: ;-), :) .