English 3353: Reading & Responding to Literature

Instructor  Dr. Polette
Term  Fall 2022
Meeting  T/R, 3:00 - 4:20 p.m., Hudspeth Hall # 200
Credits  3 hours of undergraduate credit
Office Hours  4:30-5:45 T, 1:50-2:50 T/R
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Required Texts
Sudden Flash Youth – 65 Short Short Stories edited by Christine Perkins, et al (Persea Books)
How to Read Literature like a Professor for Kids by Thomas C. Foster (Harper)
Hatchet by Gary Paulsen (Simon & Schuster)
Inside Out & Back Again by Thanhha Lai (Harper)
Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds (Atheneum)

Quotations to Consider:
“...”
—Ray Bradbury

“...”
—Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre

“...”
—Sandra Cisneros

Purpose
This course is designed to help you become an independent and insightful reader, which means that one of the main foci of this course will be to enable you to discern and to articulate through writing multiple significations in fictional and poetic texts; this course will also enable you to gain a working knowledge of multiple significations are grounded in the elements of fiction for adolescent readers; this course will also enable you to discover ways to teach adolescent readers how to develop deeper comprehension skills, learn to understand and use the zone of proximal...
development, and learn to help adolescent readers respond critically and imaginatively to literary texts.

Reading
The more active you are as a reader, the more you will derive from the reading experience (often in surprising ways) — e.g., the expansion of cognitive abilities, the widening of schema, the retention of content, the experience of the pleasure of the text (as Roland Barthes says), the development of agency, the amplification of imaginative capacity, and the dilation of long-term memory. With these ideas in mind, and as you the read the texts for this class, I would like you to think about the following questions that focus on genre, on reader expectations, and on text connections.

1. What is the text’s genre? What can you expect from the text based on its genre?
2. What do you bring as a reader to the text?
3. What is your general reaction to the text?
4. What part of the text made the most sense to you? What part elicited questions from you?
5. Does the text connect with, either positively or negatively, other texts that you have read?

Procedures
Classes will generally consist of interactive literacy activities which are designed to demonstrate methods of effective pedagogy, ones that can be replicated, or altered, for the secondary English classroom. Since an essential part of learning is dependent on metacognitive reflection, time towards the end of each class will be provided so that you can reflect upon each class: what transpired, what you discovered, and how it opened your schema. Each subsequent class will begin with a sharing of your discoveries. To this end, please make careful and robust reflections.

• Turn off and put away cell phones and other electronic devices.
• If you have children and need a place for their care, please avail yourself of the UTEP childcare center; please do not bring your children to class.
• Attend to personal needs before or after class, not during class. Do not bring food to class; water is permissible.
• Because many discussions will take place during our class meetings, please be sure to listen (and please refrain from talking) when other people are discussing class-related issues.
• Do not work on assignments or activities for other classes during class.

Grading:
I will be using a variation of “Contract Grading” in this course. The idea here is to place the emphasis on your deliberate efforts as a reader and a writer rather than on an individual “assessment” of your writing. Which is to say, that I follow C. G. Jung in the notion that individuals make the greatest gains when they carefully and consciously follow the energies of the psyche to achieve ends that are personally meaningful and important. As such, I will not be employing methods of traditional writing assessment, so that you can assume a greater degree of
responsibility for your own learning, so that you can take some risks (Jung reminds us that we make the greatest gains through our “inferior function”), and so that you can open and expand your schema as Howard Gardner says. To develop fluency in any area of endeavor (or “expertise” as Malcolm Gladwell writes in The Tipping Point) requires practice, failure, experimentation, and a metacognitive level of reflection.

As such, this is not the kind of class that supports the notion that the least amount of effort results in the highest possible grade. Instead, this is the kind of class where you will find that your dedicated efforts will be rewarded with either the grade of A or B and with the articulated support of myself and your class colleagues — and not with the perception of the quality of your work, because quality, for all of us, necessarily fluctuates (both for the writer and the reader).

Here are the requirements for an A, B, or C (which, to some small degree, are negotiable):

→ To receive the grade of A for this course, the following are necessary:
  • Miss no more than 2 classes.
  • Complete all 3 written Reflections (1000 – 1250 words each) on time.
  • Engage in all in-class activities.
  • Complete all minor writing activities (presented in class).
  • Complete the How to Read Literature like a Professor writing activity
  • Complete all 3 reading response activities.
  • Complete the Final Reflection Activity

→ To receive the grade of B for the course, the following are necessary:
  • Miss no more than 4 classes.
  • Complete 2 written Reflections (1000 – 1250 words each) on time.
  • Engage in all in-class activities.
  • Complete all minor writing activities (presented in class).
  • Complete the How to Read Literature like a Professor writing activity
  • Complete all 3 reading response activities.
  • Complete the Final Reflection Activity

→ To receive the grade of C for the course, the following are necessary:
  • Miss no more than 6 classes (missing more than 6 classes = an F for the course).
  • Complete 1 written Reflection (1000 – 1250 words) on time.
  • Engage in all in-class activities.
  • Complete all minor writing activities (presented in class).
  • Complete the How to Read Literature like a Professor writing activity
  • Complete 3 reading response activities.
  • Complete the Final Reflection Activity.

Note: missing 5 or 6 classes precludes the possibility of earning an A or B. Replacement assignments are an option, if there is a solid reason (e.g., not because an assignment was not completed).
NB: Even though your writing will not receive a traditional grade, it will be read and considered, and it will be given feedback. As such, please consider ways of developing self-assessment tools and criteria in addition to what feedback you receive from me and from your colleagues.

Special Circumstances
If you experience a significant problem during the semester, one that will affect your attendance, please let me know ASAP, and well before the end of the semester, so that you and I can take steps to address the problem, especially if the problem will have a potentially adverse effect on your grade. For these kinds of situations, an official verification (e.g., doctor’s note) will be required.

Communication
• I will communicate with you in person and via UTEP e-mail & BlackBoard Announcements. I will respond to e-mails M-F within 24 hours, if not sooner.
• I recommend that you download and install Outlook Express on your phone and/or computer.
• If you need to speak to me, we can meet during my office hours or by appointment in person or via Zoom.

Technology Requirements
• Some of the course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Be sure that your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.
• Download or update the following software: Zoom, Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.
• If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Microsoft Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP’s Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about Microsoft Office 365 and follow the instructions.

NB: If you encounter technical difficulties, please contact the UTEP Help Desk, as the personnel there are trained specifically in handling the technological needs of students.

Assignments & Due Dates:
• Assignments are posted on BlackBoard.
• You may work on the assignments and submit them before they are due.
• Upload all completed assignments to BlackBoard by the due dates & times.
Late Work
Late assignments will not be accepted.

Manuscript Form
All assignments must be in a *Microsoft Word Docx* and must have:
- 12 point font, *Only Times New Roman* or *Georgia* or *Century Schoolbook* (font)
- black ink
- double-spacing & 1-inch margins
- page numbers at the bottom
- provide word count at the end of the assignment

*Assignments that do not adhere to the criteria for “Manuscript Form” will be returned to you to reformat.*

NB: Before you post written work, take it to a qualified source for suggestions regarding revising and editing, such as the *Tutorial/Writing Center* in the UTEP Library:
https://www.utep.edu/uwc/.

Disability Support
If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, visit the CASS website at https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/. If you receive accommodations from CASS, contact me and let me know the nature of those accommodations.

COVID-19
If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please stay home (for face-to-face classes). If you are diagnosed with Covid-19, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work out appropriate accommodations, if necessary. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The *Student Health Center* is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing: *Union East, 915-747-5624, studenthealth@utep.edu*

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best ways that UTEP Miners can take care of Miners are to wear a mask indoors and to get the vaccine. If you need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org.
Personal Support
If you find that you are in need of personal support during the semester, contact UTEP Counseling & Psychological Services: 202 Union West, 915-747-5302 or https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/consel/ or call the 24 hour Emergency Crisis Hotline at 915-779-1800.

Plagiarism
If you obtain work from someone else and submit it as your own; if you use any material from another source in your work and do not give direct credit to your source; or if someone with whom you are working creates/writes any part of the work for you, you are plagiarizing. Acts of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are absolutely disallowed and will be dealt with swiftly according to UTEP’s established policy (which may result in receiving an F for the class).

Writing Skills
While all languages are incredibly valuable, each one possessing its own essential beauty, power, and grandeur, this is a graduate-level English class; as such, you should possess those writing skills that are necessary for you to express your thoughts in clear and effective language in English (academic prose), which is to say, you:

• should be able to develop your original and insightful thoughts in a written form that is clear and cohesive;
• should have a strong and clear “voice”;
• should be able to support general assertions with facts, examples, illustrations, and explanations;
• should be able to create a sense of logical coherence in your writing;
• should be able to construct clear and effective sentences;
• should be able to use language that is precise, specific, and concrete;
• should be able to connect your paragraphs and sentences by using transitional devices;
• and should be able to use standard punctuation, mechanical constructions, and spelling.

Academic Writing Considerations
• Assignments that are hastily written and/or that are written at the last minute are generally ineffective because they do not communicate what the writer generally intends or desires.
• Writing rendered in one draft is never as effective as it could be.
• Writing that is “stream of consciousness,” that is, writing that “just comes out of the writer’s head” without thought about structure, coherence, or organization is generally ineffective because it is not configured to communicate what the writer intended — or what the writer had not yet realized.
• Writing that is clearly organized and coherent is effective because it provides the reader with a text that communicates clearly — writing that is, for example, organized into paragraphs where each paragraph has a clear topic sentence that presents one idea to be developed. Each paragraph develops the idea in the topic sentence with facts, examples,
illustrations, and clear explanations. Each sentence in the paragraph is connected to the one that precedes and the one that follows it.

- Because effective academic writing is generally very different from the way we normally think and talk, it requires time, thought (a deliberate attempt to reorganize and order random thoughts), and focused revision(s).

Support for Writing

1. If you do not possess the requisite writing skills to be able to construct effective academic prose, or if you are not sure how to construct academic prose, I strongly advise you to secure assistance from a qualified source and to put together an immediate, proactive plan that will help you become a more effective writer.

2. I will be glad to help you by appointment. I will also be glad to talk with you about an assignment before it is due. If you wish to talk with me about an assignment before it is due, arrange to meet with me in person or via Zoom; bring a draft of your assignment and have specific questions about your draft, that is, have questions that will let me know what concerns you have about your work and what, specifically, you wish to discuss.

3. You can receive help online from the Tutorial/Writing Center in the UTEP Library: https://www.utep.edu/uwc/

Questions or Concerns

- If you have any questions or concerns about anything in the syllabus or anything in the course at any time, please share them with me in person or via e-mail asap.
- If you do not share questions or concerns, then I have no way of knowing what is on your mind or how to be of assistance to you.

Netiquette

When e-mailing me, please begin with an appropriate greeting (e.g., Dear Dr. Polette, or Hello Dr. Polette, or Good Morning Dr. Polette, etc.), and also provide your name and what class you are in (e.g., This is _______ ______, and I am in your class, Engl _________ ), since I teach more than one class.

Course Drop Policy

According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.” If you find that you are unable to complete this course successfully, then contact the Registrar’s Office to initiate the drop process.
How to Succeed in This Class
1. Come to every class and actively participate in all class activities.
2. Be proactive in class: ask questions, volunteer ideas, answer questions.
3. Do not miss more than 6 classes (for a grade of C or better).
4. Complete all the readings and be prepared to discuss them.
5. Complete written assignments on time (see BlackBoard).
6. Seek regular assistance from the UTEP Writing Center and/or me before assignments are due.
7. Contact me throughout the semester if you any questions, comments, or concerns.

Agreement
If you elect to remain in this class, then you agree to adhere to all of the polices that are stated in this document.

Syllabus

NB: This syllabus is subject to change at my discretion to meet instructional needs and/or to accommodate time constraints; changes may re-organizing due dates and including additional assignments.

August

23 Introduction
25 Reading Comprehension
30 Reading Comprehension

September

1 Allsburg
6 99 Ways . . .
8 Microfiction
13 Flash Fiction
15 Flash Fiction  * 1st Reflection due  by 3:00 p.m. (see BlackBoard)
20 Literacy & Comprehension
22 Literacy & Comprehension
27  
   Literacy & Comprehension

29  
   Sudden Fiction

October

4  
   Sudden Fiction

6  
   Sudden Fiction

11  
   Sudden Fiction - Character Analysis due

13  
   Sudden Fiction

18  
   * 2nd Reflection due by 3:00 p.m. (see BlackBoard)

20  
   How to Read Literature like a Professor for Kids

25  
   How to Read Literature like a Professor for Kids - * Response to Reading due (see BlackBoard)

27  
   Hatchet

November

1  
   Hatchet – * Paulsen/Foster assignment due.

3  
   Hatchet

8  
   Inside Out & Back Again

10  
   Inside Out & Back Again – Vocabulary Reading Response due

15  
   Inside Out & Back Again

17  
   Long Way Down

22  
   Long Way Down - * 3rd Reflection due by 3:00 p.m. (see BlackBoard)

24  
   Thanksgiving

29  
   Long Way Down – Reynolds/Paulsen assignment due
December

1  Wrap Up, Discussion

8  * Final Reflection Due