Introduction to the Graduate Study of Literature
English 5013.001 (Spring 2010)

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Office Hours: TR 12:15-1:15; R 4:15-5:15pm (and by appointment)

Course Description: This course is intended to introduce students to “the premises, concepts, and methods of literary study, including literary history, terminology, bibliography, and various critical and theoretical approaches to literature” (Graduate Catalog), and to provide them opportunity to begin cultivating the critical skills required for successful completion of the M.A. degree, including the comprehensive exams. As stated in the department guidelines, examinees should aim at demonstrating:

• Close familiarity with the texts
• Ability to identify a major theme in a text and show how structural and/or narrative elements convey it
• Ability to show how salient features of the text do/do not reflect cultural and philosophical assumptions of the period or development of the genre
• Ability to understand and apply literary terms, especially basic terms such as narrator, persona, diction, epic, imagery, comedy, tragedy, etc.
• Ability to integrate specific textual evidence into a coherent thesis
• Ability to relate multiple texts one to another and to situate these texts within broad critical and theoretical frameworks

This course is also intended to help students familiarize themselves with the various opportunities, expectations and responsibilities relevant to their pursuing a graduate degree at UTSA.

Required Texts:
Recommended Texts and Materials:


EndNote (bibliographical software)

Course Policies:

Disability Services: Support services, including registration assistance and equipment, are available to students with documented disabilities through the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS), MS 2.03.19. Students are encouraged to contact that office at 458-4157 prior to starting classes to make arrangements, though they can contact the office at any time. If you need accommodation related to a disability, please make an appointment with me to discuss your needs as soon as possible.

Scholastic Honesty: The University of Texas at San Antonio defines “scholastic dishonesty” as including but not limited to “cheating on a test or other class work, plagiarism (the appropriation of another’s work in one's own written work offered for credit), and collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing course work offered for credit).” University policy further dictates that “Should a student be accused of scholastic dishonesty, the faculty member may initiate disciplinary proceedings.” We shall be discussing the section on plagiarism in *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed., which provides a detailed discussion of “Forms of Plagiarism” and “Other Issues,” including the impropriety of submitting the same paper to more than one instructor or in more than one class by the same instructor. If at any time you are at all uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, please make an appointment to meet with me. Should any student intentionally plagiarize or otherwise cheat in my class, I will lobby for their expulsion from the graduate program and from the university.

Classroom Conduct: Many of us will undoubtedly have divergent interests, approaches, ideologies, politics, academic experience, personal backgrounds, and more. The success of this class requires we engage these differences from intellectually open and informed perspectives. Your first responsibility as a participant in this class to show your classmates due respect and consideration. As explained in the Provost’s statement on “Civility in the Classroom”: “As members of the University community, students share in the obligation to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Accordingly, students are prohibited from engaging in any behavior that obstructs, disrupts, or interferes with any class. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom may result, at a minimum, in a request to leave class. Such behavior also violates the Student Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action. The Code may be accessed at: www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html” This policy is equally applicable in the virtual classroom—i.e., any on-line class discussions that may take place vis-à-vis Blackboard (aka WebCT).

Attendance & Late Assignments: Graduate students are expected to attend each and every class, to come to class prepared, and to turn in assignments on time. A student’s final grade shall be docked no less than one full letter grade should they miss more than one class or turn in any assignment late without providing a valid reason. The professor shall be the final arbiter of what constitutes a valid reason, but documented medical reasons, authorized university activities, and days of special concern (religious holidays, established days of cultural importance, etc.) will certainly be excused if properly documented. Students should inform the professor before missing a class or as soon thereafter as possible. You are responsible for making up any work missed and must make up assignments within a reasonable time after your absence. Habitual tardiness and/or coming to class unprepared will be treated in the same manner as unexcused absences.

Grade

10% Class Participation: This will include any in-class writing assignments, the student’s overall
Distribution: A student’s contribution to class discussions (including assigned WebCT discussions), and also her/his contributions as “discussion-leader” and “review presenter” as assigned.

15% Weekly Writing Assignments: These will consist primarily of 2pp responses to assigned readings. Students will be expected to post these assignments to WebCT at least 24 hours before we are scheduled to discuss the reading in class.

20% Case Study: This assignment will take as its subject a text from the M.A. exam list that we have not covered in class, but which you plan to include on your individual list. Students will be expected to analyze a minimum of six articles representing a range of distinct critical perspectives. At least one of the articles should not be available in electronic format, and at least one should not be available here at UTSA (and so should require use of interlibrary loan). Students will be expected to provide photocopies of the articles they analyze, a one- to two-page summary of each article, a two- to three-page assessment of the critical debates that these sources as a group address, and finally a one- to two-page review of useful on-line resources.

25% Conference Paper: This 8-10pp paper should situate one of the texts from this course in terms of the theoretical schools/approaches addressed in class. You must provide a list of Works Cited at the end of your paper.

20% Abstract and Presentation: Sometime around mid-term students will be asked to formulate an abstract specifying the area of inquiry they propose to pursue for their Conference-length paper (and an actual conference where the paper could potentially be presented). They will submit this abstract following standard professional dictates concerning conference proposals and they will then present their findings to the class in a formal, 15 minute presentation (with 5 additional minutes for Q&A) of the sort one might give at an academic conference, after which they will field questions from the audience. Please be aware that outside guests will be invited to attend these presentations.

10% Final Exam: This exam will mimic the style of questions one might expect to see on the M.A. exam.

For the purposes of determining grades on individual assignments and for overall course grades, I shall use the following scale: 90-100 A; 80-89 B; 70-79 C; 60-69 D; ≤59 F.

Disclaimer: As professor, I reserve the right to alter this syllabus at any time and in way I determine will serve the course goals. If you have concerns about the course, the professor, or other students, you are invited to express them in a proactive manner to me. I am always open to suggestions as to how participants’ needs and interests might best be served.