

Principles of Literary Study

Mondays and Thursdays, 10:20–11:40 a.m., in Hardenbergh A5
Professor Andrew Goldstone (andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu)
Office hours: Thursdays, 11:45–12:45 in Murray 040A
<http://andrewgoldstone.com/pls26>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the discipline of English literary studies, focusing on ways to answer the fundamental questions academic readers ask about poems, short stories, and novels: How is it put together? What meanings does it convey? What effects does it achieve? How does it relate to the cultures and societies in which it is read? Learning to answer these questions about a variety of poems, short stories, and novels, students sharpen their skills as readers, writers, and thinkers.

The breadth of literature in English is represented by highly selective introductions to two broad genres, poetry and prose fiction, spanning works from the sixteenth century to the twenty-first, from North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Students develop a strong foundation in formal analysis, learning to identify and analyze the components of verse and narrative—rhyme, meter, stanza; plot, character, point of view—as well as significant aspects of literary language in general. But formal analysis matters only in connection with arguments about what texts mean; in discussion and in written assignments, students practice presenting literary interpretations systematically and convincingly.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. New York: Penguin, 1959. ISBN: 9780385474542.

Ali, Agha Shahid. *Call Me Ishmael Tonight: A Book of Ghazals*. New York: Norton, 2003. ISBN: 9780393326123.

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. Edited by Christina Lupton. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. ISBN: 9780198826736.

You must have these books, in printed form, for class. The course texts are available at Barnes & Noble. ISBNs are included to help students ordering books online (bookshop.org, Powell's, amazon). Buy them at the start of term or borrow them from the Rutgers libraries; if Rutgers has no copies available, use EZBorrow to have one sent from a partner institution: ezborrow.reshare.indexdata.com/. You will not be permitted to use electronic texts in class.

LEARNING GOALS

1. Master key concepts necessary to the analysis of literature in terms of form, genre, and style.
2. Develop proficiency in using detailed analysis of texts to support the interpretation of literature, especially short poems, short stories, and novels.
3. Become adept at effective, thoughtful participation in academic discussion.
4. Master the conventions of written scholarly argument in literary studies.
5. Make convincing written interpretive arguments about literary texts.

This course satisfies the following Core Curriculum goals:

1. Arts and Humanities (AHp): Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.
2. Writing and Communication (WCd): Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry; evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly; and analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

SCHEDULE

Readings are to be completed by the day they are listed under. Even for readings distributed digitally, read on the printed page as much as possible. You are required to print out the readings marked with a ¶. We will spend substantial time on each of these in class, though we will of course also discuss the other assigned poems. Each assigned poem should be read multiple times, on multiple days, in multiple ways: silently, aloud; with pencil in hand, with empty hands; deliberately, speedily; standing up, sitting down; dramatically, restrainedly.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22. INTRODUCTION: ARS POETICA.

- Emily Dickinson, "Tell all the truth but tell it slant" (1872).
- Anne Bradstreet, "The Author to Her Book" (1678).
- Lorine Niedecker, "Poet's Work" (1962).
- *OED*, 3rd ed., s.v. "literature," 2011.

MONDAY, JANUARY 26. WORDS AND MEANINGS.

- Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* 1, 55 (ca. 1581–83).
- John Donne, ¶ "A Valediction: forbidding Mourning" (ca. 1611?).
- William Wordsworth, "A slumber did my spirit seal" (1798).
- Ezra Pound, ¶ "In a station of the metro" (1913).
- H.D., "Sea Rose" (1916).
- Langston Hughes, "Harlem" (1951).
- Philip Larkin, "This Be The Verse" (1974).
- Rae Armantrout, ¶ "Will" (2013).

(WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28.)

- Exercise due: The meaning of a word.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29. LINES AND SENTENCES.

- William Shakespeare, Sonnets 18, 30, 116, ¶ 129 (1609).
- George Herbert, "Jordan" (1), ¶ "Prayer" (1) (1633).
- John Milton, "When I consider how my light is spent" (1652?).
- Walt Whitman, "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" (1865).

- Wallace Stevens, ¶ “The Snow Man” (1923), “Man Carrying Thing” (1947).
- Gwendolyn Brooks, “We Real Cool” (1959).
- Terrance Hayes, “The Golden Shovel” (2010).

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2. METER (1): FOUR BEATS.

- Read aloud, attempting to tap or thump the beats:
 - “Humpty Dumpty,” “Baa baa, black sheep,” “Skip-a to my Lou” (dates unknown).
 - John Newton, ¶ “Amazing Grace” (1779).
 - ¶ “Sir Patrick Spens” (Child 58A) (before 1765).
 - William Blake, “The Lamb” (1789), “The Tyger” (1794).
 - William Wordsworth, “We are Seven” (1798).
 - Emily Dickinson, ¶ “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain” (1862), “I heard a Fly buzz - when I died” (1863).
 - Lewis Carroll, “Jabberwocky” (1871).
 - Muriel Rukeyser, “Ballad of Orange and Grape” (1973).
- Background (optional): Carper and Attridge, *Meter and Meaning*, chaps. 1–2]

(WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4.)

- Extra credit opportunity: attend Writers at Rutgers with Lisa Ko (student Q&A, 4 p.m., Murray Hall, Room 302; reading, 7:30 p.m., College Avenue Student Center).

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5. METER (2): PENTAMETER.

- Shakespeare, Sonnets ¶49, 130 (1609).
- Anna Letitia Barbauld, ¶ “Washing-Day” (1797).
- Wordsworth, “Tintern Abbey” (1798).
- Shelley, ¶ “England in 1819” (1819).
- Wallace Stevens, “The Idea of Order at Key West” (1935).
- Background (optional): Carper and Attridge, *Meter and Meaning*, chaps. 3, 6.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9. METER (3): THINKING ABOUT METER.

- Felicia Hemans, ¶ “Casabianca” (1826).
- ¶ Robson, “Standing on the Burning Deck.”

(WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11.)

- Exercise due: Meter practice.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12. RHYME: COUPLETS.

- Andrew Marvell, ¶“To His Coy Mistress” (1681).
- Jonathan Swift, “A Description of a City Shower” (1710).
- W.B. Yeats, ¶“Adam’s Curse” (1903).
- Wilfred Owen, “Strange Meeting” (1918).
- Agha Shahid Ali, “Tonight” (1996).
- Evie Shockley, ¶“where you are planted” (2011).

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16. FIXED FORM: SONNETS.

- Thomas Wyatt, “Whoso list to hunt” (1525?).
- Shakespeare, Sonnets 1, ¶20, 35, 73, ¶125, ¶138, and those previously assigned: 18, 30, 49, 116, 129, 130.
- Donne, Holy Sonnets 4, ¶10 (1609-?).
- Wordsworth, “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” (1802).
- Shelley, “England in 1819” (previously assigned).
- George Meredith, *Modern Love* 1, 2 (1862).
- W.B. Yeats, ¶“Leda and the Swan” (1923).
- Wallace Stevens, “Autumn Refrain” (1932).
- Gwendolyn Brooks, “the rites for Cousin Vit” (1949).
- Patrick Kavanagh, “Epic” (1951).
- Seamus Heaney, “Clearances” 3, 7, 8” (1987).
- ¶Vendler, *The Art of Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, 1–10, 487–93.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19. SOME STANZA SHAPES.

- John Donne, “The Canonization” (after 1603).
- George Herbert, “Easter Wings” (1633).
- John Keats, ¶“Ode on a Grecian Urn” (1819).
- Thomas Hardy, “The Convergence of the Twain” (1914), “The Voice” (1914).
- Marianne Moore, ¶“The Fish” (1924).
- W.H. Auden, “In Memory of W.B. Yeats” (1939).
- Wallace Stevens, “Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour” (1954).

- Elizabeth Bishop, "Sestina" (1965).

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23. SPEAKERS AND ADDRESSEES.

- Donne, "The Flea," "The Sun Rising" (after 1603), "A Valediction: forbidding Mourning" (previously assigned).
- Phyllis Wheatley, ¶ "On Being Brought from Africa to America" (1773).
- John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (previously assigned).
- Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess" (1842).
- Emily Dickinson, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" (1861), "Publication - is the Auction" (1863).
- Herman Melville, ¶ "Shiloh" (1862).
- T.S. Eliot, ¶ "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915).
- Langston Hughes, "Good Morning Revolution" (1932).
- ¶ Warner, "What Like a Bullet Can Undeceive?"

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26. OPEN FORMS.

- John Milton, "Lycidas" (1638).
- Marianne Moore, "An Octopus" (1924).
- A.R. Ammons, "Corsons Inlet" (1965).
- A.K. Ramanujan, ¶ "Elements of Composition" (1986).

MONDAY, MARCH 2. COUPLETS AGAIN.

- Ali, *Call Me Ishmael Tonight*. Read the whole book, once, then reread at least three poems that intrigued or baffled you.
- Some annotations: andrewgoldstone.com/blog/shahid.

(WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4.)

- Exercise due: The principled essay introduction.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5.

- Essay introduction workshop.

MONDAY, MARCH 9. THE SEQUENCE.

- Ali, *Call Me Ishmael Tonight*. Reread.

(TUESDAY, MARCH 10.)

- Paper 1 due.

(WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11.)

- Extra credit opportunity: attend Writers at Rutgers with Mat Johnson (student Q&A, 4 p.m., Murray Hall, Room 302; reading, 7:30 p.m., College Avenue Student Center).

THURSDAY, MARCH 12.

- Midterm exam in class.

(MONDAY, MARCH 16. SPRING RECESS).

MONDAY, MARCH 23. PLOT.

- ¶ Conan Doyle, "A Scandal in Bohemia."

THURSDAY, MARCH 26. NARRATION.

- ¶ Ko, *The Contractors*.

MONDAY, MARCH 30. IRONY.

- Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 3–100 (pt. 1).

THURSDAY, APRIL 2. IRONY, CONTINUED.

- Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, through 146 (pt. 2, chap. 11).

MONDAY, APRIL 6. STYLE.

- Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, through 238 (pt. 3, chap. 9).
- Exercise due at 10 p.m.: Austen's irony.

(WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8.)

- Extra credit opportunity: attend Writers at Rutgers with Melissa Febos and Donika Kelly (student Q&A, 4 p.m., Murray Hall, Room 302; reading, 7:30 p.m., College Avenue Student Center).

THURSDAY, APRIL 9. CLOSURE.

- Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, complete.

MONDAY, APRIL 13. CRITIQUE.

- Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, continued.
- ¶Johnson, *Jane Austen*, chap. 4.
- Woloch, *The One vs. the Many*, 56–58, 62–82. The rest of chap. 1 is highly recommended but optional.

THURSDAY, APRIL 16. NARRATION (AGAIN).

- Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), chaps. 1–8.
- Ndibe, “Nigeria.”

MONDAY, APRIL 20. ORAL AND LITERARY.

- Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, chaps. 1–12.

THURSDAY, APRIL 23. IRONY, CONTINUED, CONTINUED.

- Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, chaps. 1–19.

MONDAY, APRIL 27. REALISM.

- Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, complete.
- ¶Quayson, “Realism, Criticism, and the Disguises of Both.”

THURSDAY, APRIL 30. NOT REALISM.

- ¶Okri, *Prayer for the Living*, selections: “Boko Haram (1),” “Prayer for the Living,” “The Overtaker.”

MONDAY, MAY 4. GENRE.

- Okorafor, "Mother of Invention."
- Frow, *Genre*, chap. 1.
- Paper 2 due at 10 p.m.

MONDAY, MAY 11, 9–11 A.M.

- Final exam (in person). Two hours only.

REQUIREMENTS

The final grade will be based on a score calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{grade} = & 0.10(\text{participation}) + 0.15(\text{midterm}) + 0.10(\text{exercises}) \\ & + 0.20(\text{paper 1}) + 0.25(\text{paper 2}) + 0.20(\text{final}) \end{aligned}$$

Each grade is given on the four-point scale as specified in the Undergraduate Catalog. In converting the final numerical score to a letter, the equivalents in the Catalog are used as follows:

$3.5 < \text{grade} \leq 4.0$	A
$3.0 < \text{grade} \leq 3.5$	B+
$2.5 < \text{grade} \leq 3.0$	B
$2.0 < \text{grade} \leq 2.5$	C+
$1.0 < \text{grade} \leq 2.0$	C
$0.5 < \text{grade} \leq 1.0$	D
$\text{grade} \leq 0.5$	F

Unsatisfactory work in all areas of the course will result in an F even if the numerical score corresponds to a passing grade. It is not possible to pass the course without turning in both papers and taking the final exam.

Participation. Attendance and active, thoughtful participation in discussion are required. Participation means coming to class prepared, with the reading in hand (not on a device), and joining in constructively. You aren't supposed to know all the answers in advance, but you are required to join in a communal effort to figure things out. Lateness, lack of preparation, and disruptive behavior will affect the participation mark. To receive full credit for participation, you should speak thoughtfully in every class.

Using laptops, tablets, or phones for readings available in printed form will not be permitted, except for disability accommodations.

From time to time, participation will be assessed with in-class writing (collected and graded pass-fail).

If you miss three classes without excuse, the maximum participation mark you can receive is 3.0; if you miss four or five, 2.0. Missing more than five meetings without an excuse will normally result in a failing grade for the course.

If you fall ill or miss class for a family emergency, please contact me as soon as possible; you can make up for an excused absence.

Midterm and final exams. These will be in-class, closed book exams assessing your knowledge of the reading and the core concepts and skills taught in class.

Two papers. The first paper is an analytic paper on a single poem (1500–1800 words). The second paper is an analytic paper on a single novel (2000–2500 words).

Extra credit: Writers at Rutgers. You may receive credit equivalent to one short exercise for attending an event in the Writers at Rutgers series and writing a short note about it (around 100 words) to share with the whole class. In this series, major contemporary writers give public readings at the College Avenue Student Center; they also participate in a more informal discussion exclusively for students. Though you are encouraged to go to as much of the series as you can, you can only get extra credit once.

Extra credit: Recite a poem. You may also receive credit equivalent to one short exercise for memorizing one of the assigned poems and reciting it to the class without error. I must approve your choice of poem in advance (no credit for poems shorter than a sonnet).

GRADING STANDARDS

The general standards for grades in this course are as follows:

A range (3.5, 4.0]: Outstanding; thorough mastery of course materials and skills.

B range (2.5, 3.5]: Good; serious engagement but incomplete mastery of course materials and skills.

C range (1.0, 2.5]: Meets basic requirements; significant problems mastering the course materials and skills.

D (0.5, 1.0]: Minimally passing; frequently unsatisfactory in several major areas.

F [0, 0.5]: Failure; consistently unsatisfactory work.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students and instructors have a duty to each other and to our community to abide by norms of academic honesty and responsibility. To present something as your own original writing when it is not is plagiarism. Plagiarism, fabricating evidence, and other forms of cheating are serious violations of trust. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will have severe consequences, in accordance with the University Policy on Academic Integrity and the Code of Student Conduct. For the University's academic integrity policies, please see academicintegrity.rutgers.edu.

AI is prohibited. You may not use “generative artificial intelligence” software (ChatGPT and similar large language models) for any part of the work of this course. “AI” tools are damaging to your learning, your integrity as a thinker, and everyone’s ability to distinguish serious attempts at expression from words generated to take up space. Submitting “AI”-generated work is an act of disrespect towards me, towards yourself, and towards higher learning itself. Do not rob yourself of the chance to really develop as a reader, writer, and thinker. If you use “AI” in the context of this course, I will consider it academic dishonesty.

I promise in turn not to use generative AI in any of *my* work on the course. My lessons and course materials are my own work, and where I rely on the writing of other people, I will attribute it appropriately.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Reasonable accommodation will be given to students with disabilities. Students who may require accommodation should contact the Office of Disability Services (ods.rutgers.edu; 848-445-6800). You may also speak with me at the start of the semester.

OTHER READINGS

- Carper, Thomas, and Derek Attridge. *Meter and Meaning: An Introduction to Rhythm in Poetry*. New York: Routledge, 2003. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003060307>.
- Conan Doyle, Arthur. "A Scandal in Bohemia." In *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Harper, 1892. HathiTrust, 2024. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044074319898>.
- Frow, John. *Genre*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315777351>.
- Johnson, Claudia L. *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Ko, Lisa. *The Contractors*. Seattle: Amazon Original Stories, 2020.
- Ndibe, Okey. "Nigeria." In *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, 2nd ed., edited by Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, 4:234–40. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Okorafor, Nnedi. "Mother of Invention." In *A Year Without a Winter*, edited by Dehli Han-nah. New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2018.
- Okri, Ben. *Prayer for the Living: Stories*. New York: Akashic Books, 2020.
- Quayson, Ato. "Realism, Criticism, and the Dis-guises of Both: A Reading of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* with an Evaluation of the Criticism Relating to It." *Research in African Literatures* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 117–36. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3819871>.
- Robson, Catherine. "Standing on the Burn-ing Deck: Poetry, Performance, History." *PMLA* 120, no. 1 (January 2005): 148–62. <https://doi.org/10.1632/003081205X36912>.
- Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Son-nets*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Warner, Michael. "What Like a Bullet Can Un-deceive?" *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (January 2003): 41–54. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-15-1-41>.
- Woloch, Alex. *The One vs. the Many: Minor Char-acters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7srp4>.

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