

# Principles of Literary Study

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<http://pls21.blogs.rutgers.edu>

Mondays and Thursdays, 12:00–1:20 p.m.

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Office hours: Mondays, 2 p.m.

## 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, overtly or surreptitiously? What effects does it achieve? How does it relate to the concerns of the cultures and societies in which it is read?

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 the techniques of presenting literary interpretations systematically and convincingly. Students also consider some of the central issues in contemporary literary study, including the relation between literature and history, the cognitive foundations of fiction, the status of genre, and the significance of English as a global literary language.

## 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.

## REQUIREMENTS

### PARTICIPATION (1/7)

Attendance and active, thoughtful participation in discussion are required. Discussion requires every student to take the intellectual risk of offering observations, ideas, and arguments in class in response to one another and to the instructor. You aren't supposed to know all the answers in advance, but you are required to come to class prepared 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.

*Remote learning.* The pandemic forces us to hold our meetings via videoconference. We will use the Zoom platform and take full advantage of its capacity for both small-group and large-group interaction. To learn effectively over Zoom, students must make every effort to be present in discussion. Every student is expected to be fully visible for the full class period, and to do whatever they need to do to limit distractions, especially distractions on the computer itself. I will make sure to introduce variety, and breaks, into every class session. If any issues—technical or otherwise—are preventing your full participation, please get in touch with me as soon as possible.

If you miss three classes without excuse, the *maximum* participation mark you can receive is 3.0; if you miss four, 2.0. Missing more than four meetings without an excuse will normally result in a failing grade for the course. If you sign in to a virtual class session but are neither visible nor audible for the entire time, I will mark you absent.

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.

### SHORT EXERCISES (1/7)

Short written assignments to practice key ideas and skills.

### PAPER 1 (2/7)

1500–1800 words on a single poem.

### PAPER 2 (3/7)

2000–2500 words on a single novel.

#### GRADING STANDARDS

Grades will be 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 taken as the *maxima* of intervals open on the left and closed on the right. Thus A corresponds to scores strictly greater than 3.5 and less than or equal to 4.0, B+ to scores greater than 3.0 and less than or equal to 3.5, B to scores greater than 2.5 and less than or equal to 3.0, and so on. There are no “minus” grades. The general standards for grades are as follows:

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

B range (2.5, 3.5]: Good work, demonstrating serious engagement with all aspects of the course but incomplete mastery of course materials and skills.

C range (1.5, 2.5]: Satisfactory work, meeting requirements but indicating significant problems mastering the course materials and skills.

D (0.5, 1.5]: Poor or minimally passing work, meeting the basic course requirements, but frequently unsatisfactory in several major areas.

F [0, 0.5]: Failure due to unmet course requirements or consistently unsatisfactory work.

The final grade will be based on a numerical score but is subject to my discretion. 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 the final.

#### 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 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](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu).

#### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All reasonable accommodation will be given to students with disabilities. Students who may require accommodation should contact the Office of Disability Services ([ods.rutgers.edu](http://ods.rutgers.edu); 848-445-6800) and speak with at the start of the semester.

## SCHEDULE

Readings are to be completed by the day they are listed under. The schedule may change as term goes on; the most up-to-date syllabus will always be available at [pls21.blogs.rutgers.edu/syllabus](https://pls21.blogs.rutgers.edu/syllabus).

All poetry readings, except Hayes's *American Sonnets*, will be distributed electronically, on Sakai except where otherwise noted. As much as possible, read on the printed page, not the screen. **You are required to print out the poems listed in boldface.** 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.

I expect you to have all the fiction readings in print form, in the versions I have assigned for the course. The remaining readings—scholarly essays and other supplemental material—will be distributed electronically and need not be printed for class. I am happy to discuss any issues relating to obtaining and using the course texts one-on-one.

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 21. INTRODUCTION: ARS POETICA.

- Emily Dickinson, "Tell all the truth but tell it slant" (1872).
- Anne Bradstreet, "The Author to Her Book" (1678).
- Marianne Moore, "Poetry" (1919 and 1981).
- Elizabeth Bishop, "One Art" (1976).
- *OED*, 3rd ed., s.v. "[literature](#)."

## MONDAY, JANUARY 25. 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).

*Exercise due Jan. 25.* The meaning of a word.

(TUESDAY, JANUARY 26.)

- Last day to drop the course without a "W."

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 28. 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), “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d” (1865).
- **Wallace Stevens**, “The Snow Man” (1923), “Man Carrying Thing” (1947).
- Gwendolyn Brooks, “We Real Cool” (1959).
- Bonus: Terrance Hayes, “The Golden Shovel” (2010).
- Stauder, *INTRA*, §2. Optional: §3.

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

- “Humpty Dumpty,” “Baa baa, black sheep,” “Skip-a to my Lou” (dates unknown).
- **John Newton**, “Amazing Grace” (1779).
- “**Sir Patrick Spens**” (before 1765).
- William Blake, “The Lamb” (1789), “The Tyger” (1794).
- William Wordsworth, “We are Seven” (1798).
- Felicia Hemans, “Casabianca” (1826).
- **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).
- Bonus: Bob Dylan, “Boots of Spanish Leather” (1963).
- Recommended: Robson, “Standing on the Burning Deck.”

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4. METER (2): PENTAMETER.

- Stauder, *INTRA*, §4.1, 4.3.1–4.3.5 (all subsections of 4.3, on the Attridge system). This technical material will be fully reviewed in class.
- Shakespeare, Sonnets 49, 130 (1609).
- Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1.1–26 (1674).
- 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).

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8. RHYME: COUPLETS.

- **Andrew Marvell**, “To His Coy Mistress” (1681).
- Jonathan Swift, “The City Shower” (1710).
- **W.B. Yeats**, “Adam’s Curse” (1903).
- **Wilfred Owen**, “Strange Meeting” (1918).
- Agha Shahid Ali, “Tonight” (1996).

*Exercise due Feb. 10.* Meter practice.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11. 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.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15. 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).

(THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18.)

- Class cancelled due to snow storm.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22. 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).

- Derek Walcott, "The Sea Is History" (1979).
- Warner, "What Like a Bullet Can Undeceive?"

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25. SOME OPEN FORMS.

- John Milton, "Lycidas" (1638).
- Walt Whitman, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" (previously assigned).
- Marianne Moore, "An Octopus" (1924).
- A.R. Ammons, "Corsons Inlet" (1965).
- Adrienne Rich, "Diving into the Wreck" (1972).
- A.K. Ramanujan, "Elements of Composition" (1986).
- (Optional: Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose*; see Sakai handout.)

MONDAY, MARCH 1. SONNETS AGAIN.

- Hayes, *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin*. Read the whole volume, then choose a single sonnet to prepare for discussion.
- Rowell, "The Poet in the Enchanted Shoe Factory." Note the date of the interview.

*Exercise due March 3.* The principled essay introduction. Note Wednesday due date.

THURSDAY, MARCH 4.

- Hayes, *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin*, cont.
- Claude McKay, "America" (1921), "If We Must Die" (1922).
- Stevens, "A High-Toned Old Christian Woman" (1923); "The Emperor of Ice-Cream" (1923).
- Wanda Coleman, "American Sonnet 91" (2001), "American Sonnet 95" (2001).
- Hayes, "Sonnet" (2002), "Snow for Wallace Stevens" (2010).

MONDAY, MARCH 8. PLOT.

- From Doyle, *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*:
  - "A Scandal in Bohemia" (1891).
  - "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (1892).

THURSDAY, MARCH 11. GENRE.

- Hammett, "Arson Plus" (1923).
- Chandler, "I'll Be Waiting" (1939).
- Frow, *Genre*, 6-19, 134-41.

(FRIDAY, MARCH 12.)

- Paper 1 due.

(SATURDAY, MARCH 13. SPRING BREAK.)

MONDAY, MARCH 22. FRAMES.

- Shelley, *Frankenstein*, vol. 1.
- (Last day to withdraw with a “W.”)

THURSDAY, MARCH 25. INTERTEXTUALITY.

- Shelley, *Frankenstein*, vols. 1–2.
- Percy Bysshe Shelley, “[Mont Blanc](#)” (1817).

MONDAY, MARCH 29.

- Shelley, *Frankenstein*, complete.

THURSDAY, APRIL 1. TEXTUALITY.

- Shelley, *Frankenstein*, continued. Read the preface (5–6).
  - Read the appendix B introduction, 178–79; skim the pages of variants.
  - Recommended: the Oxford editor’s note on the texts (li–lv).
- Mary W. Shelley, *Frankenstein*, rev. ed. (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1831; [HathiTrust](#)): introduction and chaps. 1–3 (Sakai).
- *Shelley-Godwin Archive*, M.S. Abinger c. 57, 94r (the last page of the first extant draft).
  - Optional: browse [shelleygodwinarchive.org/contents/frankenstein](http://shelleygodwinarchive.org/contents/frankenstein).
- Mellor, “Choosing a Text of *Frankenstein* to Teach.”
- Poovey, “My Hideous Progeny.”

MONDAY, APRIL 5. POINT OF VIEW.

- James, *In the Cage*, chaps. 1–11. We are not reading *The Turn of the Screw*.
- Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*, 6–12, 16–36.

*Exercise due March 7.* The effect of embedding.

THURSDAY, APRIL 8.

- James, *In the Cage*, through chap. 19.

MONDAY, APRIL 12.

- James, *In the Cage*, complete.

THURSDAY, APRIL 15.

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

MONDAY, APRIL 19.

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

*Exercise due April 21.* A matter of perspective.

THURSDAY, APRIL 22. EARTH DAY. FICTION AND HISTORY.

- Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, complete.
- Gikandi, “African Literature and the Colonial Factor.”

MONDAY, APRIL 26.

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

*Exercise due April 28.* Paper pre-writing, with a response to a scholar.

THURSDAY, APRIL 29.

- Coetzee, “The Novel in Africa” (2003).
- Coetzee, “The Dog” (2017).

MONDAY, MAY 3.

- Bulawayo, “Hitting Budapest” (2010).
- Bulawayo, “Happy Birthday Africa President” (2014).
- Course conclusion.

(SUNDAY, MAY 9.)

- Paper 2 due.

## REQUIRED BOOKS

ISBNs are included to help students ordering books online. The course texts are available via Barnes & Noble.

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

Hayes, Terrance. *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin*. New York: Penguin, 2018. ISBN: 9780143133186.

James, Henry. *In the Cage*. In *The Turn of the Screw and In the Cage*. Modern Library, 2001. ISBN: 9780375757402. I will use this inexpensive edition in class, but for James aficionados I recommend the Library of America volume of the *Complete Stories, 1892–1898*.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus: The 1818 Text*. Edited by Nick Groom. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. ISBN: 9780198840824. This novel exists in multiple versions from Shelley's lifetime. Please acquire this edition of the 1818 version.

## OTHER READINGS

- Bal, Mieke. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. 4th ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. Excerpts on Sakai.
- Bulawayo, NoViolet. "Happy Birthday Africa President." *Munyori Literary Journal*, February 2014. <http://munyori.org/fiction/happy-birthday-president-of-africa-by-noviolet-bulawayo/>.
- . "Hitting Budapest." *Boston Review*, November 1, 2010. <http://bostonreview.net/bulawayo-hitting-budapest>.
- Chandler, Raymond. "I'll Be Waiting." In *Stories & Early Novels*, 569–85. New York: Library of America, 1995. [https://www.loa.org/images/pdf/Chandler\\_Be%20Waiting.pdf](https://www.loa.org/images/pdf/Chandler_Be%20Waiting.pdf). Available on Sakai.
- Coetzee, J. M. "The Dog." *New Yorker*, December 4, 2017, 60–61. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/12/04/the-dog>. Available on Sakai.
- . "The Novel in Africa." Chap. 2 in *Elizabeth Costello*. New York: Viking, 2003. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015060026674?urlappend=%3Bseq=45>. Available on Sakai.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. "A Scandal in Bohemia." Chap. 1 in *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Assigned excerpts available on Sakai.
- . *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Harper, 1892. HathiTrust, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044074319898>. Assigned excerpts available on Sakai.
- . "The Adventure of the Speckled Band." Chap. 8 in *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Assigned excerpts available on Sakai.
- Eliot, T. S. *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose*. Edited by Lawrence Rainey. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3419857>.
- Frow, John. *Genre*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2015. Excerpt on Sakai.
- Gikandi, Simon. "African Literature and the Colonial Factor." Chap. 20 in *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*, edited by F. Abiola Irele and Simon Gikandi, 379–97. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. <https://doi-org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/10.1017/CHOL9780521832755.021>.
- Hammett, Dashiell. "Arson Plus." In *Crime Stories & Other Writings*, 3–21. New York: Library of America, 2001. [https://www.loa.org/images/pdf/Hammett\\_Arson\\_Plus.pdf](https://www.loa.org/images/pdf/Hammett_Arson_Plus.pdf). Available on Sakai.
- Mellor, Anne K. "Choosing a Text of *Frankenstein* to Teach." In *Approaches to Teaching Shelley's Frankenstein*, edited by Stephen C. Behrendt, 31–37. New York: Modern Language Association, 1990. Online on Sakai.
- 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. Available on Sakai.
- Poovey, Mary. "My Hideous Progeny: Mary Shelley and the Feminization of Romanticism." *PMLA* 95, no. 3 (May 1980): 332–47. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/stable/461877>. Online via the libraries.

- Quayson, Ato. "Realism, Criticism, and the Disguises 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. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/stable/3819871>.
- Robson, Catherine. "Standing on the Burning Deck: Poetry, Performance, History." *PMLA* 120, no. 1 (January 2005): 148–62. <https://doi-org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/10.1632/003081205X36912>.
- Rowell, Charles H. "The Poet in the Enchanted Shoe Factory: An Interview with Terrance Hayes." *Callaloo* 27, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 1068–81. <https://doi-org.proxy.rutgers.edu/10.1353/cal.2004.0174>.
- Stauder, Ellen. *INTRA: Interactive Tutorial on Rhythm Analysis*. Reed College, 2000. <https://www.reed.edu/english/intra/>.
- Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997. Excerpt available on Sakai.
- Warner, Michael. "What Like a Bullet Can Undeceive?" *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (January 2003): 41–54. <https://doi-org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/10.1215/08992363-15-1-41>.
- Zunshine, Lisa. *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/28189>.

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