

# English 125 – Literature and Culture

## SAMPLE OUTLINE

**Semester:** Fall 2009

**Time:** W 6:30-9:30

**Place:** Bldg.345 Rm. 102

**Instr.:**

**Office:** Bldg.355 Rm.324

**Office Hours:** TBA

**e-mail:**

### **Course Description:**

This course will introduce students to three genres of literature (short story, novel, and poetry) and will also focus on writing skills, including the development of a research paper. We will approach literature in terms of form, content, and context. Students will become familiar with literary critical terms such as motif, point of view, plot, closure, metaphor, etc) as well as discussing what the literature is “about”. Since literature is created in a social, cultural, and intellectual context, we will also consider the importance of those contexts for the fiction that is made in it. For example, it is difficult to appreciate William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" without some awareness about the decline of the cultural dominance of the gentry in the American South after the American Civil War. In order to give thematic coherence to the course, we will study works that are in some way related to the idea of madness or psychological experience beyond the ordinary. It will become clear that madness, like literature itself, can only be understood as arising within particular social, intellectual, and cultural contexts.

Most of all, we will be interested-- with respect to both our study of literature and our writing of essays about it-- in carefully examining how good writing makes meaning. We will explore ideas through a combination of lecture and class discussion. As student participation in class discussion is an important aspect of this course, the relatively high grade for participation (15%) will reflect that importance.

### **Required Texts** (in order of study):

English 120 Custom Courseware Package (available at the Bookstore)

Atwood, Margaret, *Surfacing*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972.

Haddon, Mark. *the curious incident of the dog in the night-time*. England: Vintage, 2003.  
Canada: Anchor, 2004.

## Course Schedule

**Note:** As class discussions are an important part of this course, it is imperative that students have completed reading assignments BEFORE coming to the classes in which the readings are discussed. All short stories and poems referred to are from the Custom Courseware package.

**Sep. 9:** Introduction to course; discussion of what literature is; writing skills: discussion of thesis, paragraph coherence, comma splices, dangling modifiers, and sentence fragments; diagnostic paragraph and grammar test (in class)

**Sep. 16:** Edgar Allan Poe: "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839); William Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" (1798); Romanticism, Black and White; writing skills: unclear referents, parallelism

**Sep. 23:** Charlotte Perkins Gilman: "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), Kate Chopin: "The Story of an Hour" (1894); Victorian Womanhood; writing skills: commas, semi-colons, colons, and the apostrophe; **ESSAY ONE DUE**

**Sep.30:** William Faulkner: "A Rose For Emily" (1930); class in the American South; grammar review

**Oct. 6: MID-TERM GRAMMAR TEST;** Robert Graves, "The Cool Web" (1927); Gwendolyn MacEwen, "Dark Pines under Water" (1969); ideas about language, art, madness, and consciousness

**Oct. 13:** Discussion of Grammar Test; Alice Munro, "The Moon in the Orange Street Skating Rink" (1985); small-town Ontario circa 1940s; happiness and madness

**Oct. 20: ESSAY TWO (In-Class Essay: 2 hours);** Greg Hollingshead's "The Side of the Elements" (1995); Freud's theories about thanatos vs. eros

**Oct. 27: READING BREAK**

**Nov 5:** Discussion of and exercises on integrating quotations; documenting research; avoiding bullshit in research papers

**Nov 12:** Discussion of Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972); discussion of Atwood's *Survival* theory of Canadian literature

**Nov 19:** Discussion of Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*

**Nov 26:** Discussion of Mark Haddon's *the curious incident of the dog in the night-time* (2003); discussion of history of ideas about autism

**Dec 2:** Discussion of Mark Haddon's *the curious incident of the dog in the night-time* (2003); discussion of and exercises on transitions; editing essays

**Dec 9:** Exam review; **ASSIGNMENT THREE DUE (RESEARCH PAPER)**

**Assignments and Evaluation:**

Diagnostic Paragraph and Grammar Test	0%
Essay One (Due Sep.23)	15%
Mid-term Grammar Test (Oct.6)	15%
Essay Two (In class, Octuary 20)	15%
Research Paper (Due: April 9)	20%
Final Exam (T.B.A.)	20%
Participation	15%

**Description of Grades:** A good description of what letter grades mean as they are applied to English essays can be found at the English Department's website, under the category "Standards."

**A Note on Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Please review the description of and penalties for plagiarism in the Malaspina University-College Calendar.

