English 104: Introduction to Literature (3 undergraduate credits)

The distinctive characteristics of poetry, plays, short stories and the novel, intended to help students understand, appreciate and enjoy literature ranging from the classic to the contemporary.

This Introduction to Literature course will concentrate on developing the skills necessary to read closely and analyze insightfully college-level literature. Most of the content of the course is designed to provide the student with practice reading and writing about literature in a manner that will facilitate success in future college classes.

The literature in this course will be drawn from a wide range of literary genres and historical periods and will be representative of a number of cultures. Students will read a comprehensive range of short fiction, poetry, plays, and novels. In this course, we will discuss and evaluate literature within the larger contexts of culture and history in order to develop an appreciation of literature as an important social discourse. In addition to the readings listed in the syllabus below, students will be required to read a novel of their choosing (from a list provided) and produce an analytical review of the text.

In this course, students will be required to write a good deal. The demanding composition schedule in this course will allow students to experience college-level assignments and to refine their composition skills and their own writing style in order to allow for future successes. Writing activities will include a variety of in-class essays, creative writing assignments, responses to reading assignments, and both formal and informal compositions, including researched literary analyses. The kinds of writings in this course are varied, but include writing to understand, writing to explain, and writing to evaluate. As you complete various writing assignments, you will be asked to review my comments and feedback and to reflect on your own writing style: your diction and word choice, your use of varied and effective sentence structures, your ability to use coherent and logical organization, your ability to balance generalizations with specific and informative examples, and your ability to effectively communicate your ideas. Several times during the course, you will be asked to revise various essays based on my comments and suggestions, your own evaluation of your work, and peer reviews generated via writers’ workshop exercises. The expectation is that you will consistently evaluate your work and that you will improve as a reader and writer throughout the course of the semester.

The course will also include a number of reading quizzes, including multiple choice exams, written essay exams, in-class discussions, maintenance of a comprehensive reading journal, and other activities both in and out of class.

English Programmatic Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate an awareness of and appreciation for our literary heritage by discussing important works of English, American, and world literature.
2. Students will interpret, research, and evaluate works of literature or related media by placing them in historical, philosophical, psychological, intertextual, and other contexts appropriate to the discipline.
3. Students will develop the ability to express their views about literature or related media persuasively in writing, orally, and/or in other media.
4. Students will use literary texts or related media as an opportunity to deepen their insight into their own experiences and as vehicles for personal intellectual and imaginative growth.

UWGB Grade Scale

A
AB
B
BC
C
CD
D
F
Required Texts
*The Bedford Introduction to Literature, Eighth Edition (BR)*

**Unit 1—Elements of Fiction**
Unit Objectives:
- Students will learn about elements of fiction including plot, setting, and character
- Students will begin to familiarize themselves with other literary terms (i.e. symbolism, imagery, motifs) in order to develop a vocabulary necessary for analyzing, discussing, and writing about literature
- Students will begin reading *Obasan*

Texts and Other Materials:
- *Plot* (BR 67)
- “A Rose for Emily” William Faulkner (BR 95)
- *Character* (BR 123)
- “Saving Sourdi” Chai (BR 130)
- *Setting* (BR 182)
- “IND AFF, or Out of Love in Sarajevo” Weldon (BR 201)
- “Barn Burning” William Faulkner (BR 495)
- *Obasan*

**Unit 2—Point of View and Symbolism**
Unit Objectives:
- Students will learn about point of view and symbolism
- Students will continue reading and discussing *Obasan*

Texts and Other Materials:
- *Point of View* (BR 218), *Symbolism* (BR 270)
- “Clothes” Divakaruni (BR 273)
- “The Birthmark” Hawthorne (BR 416)
- “Hills Like White Elephants” Hemingway
- Reading(s) on “The Birthmark” (BR 428-435)
- “Battle Royal” (BR 285)
- Sample Close Reading & Sample Student Response (BR297, 299)
- *Obasan*

**Unit 3—Theme, Style, Tone, Irony**
Unit Objectives:
- Students will learn about theme, style, tone, and irony
- Students will finish *Obasan*
- Students will write a formal literary analysis essay about the use of symbolism in *Obasan*

Texts and Other Materials:
- *Theme* (BR 304)
- “Love in L.A.” Gilb (BR 321) or “I Am the Grass” Walker (BR 325)
- *Style, Tone, and Irony* (BR 339)
- “Popular Mechanics” Carver (BR 344)
- “On Minimalist Fiction” (BR 346)
- “Carnal Knowledge” Boyle (BR 565)
- *Obasan*
Unit 4—The Best of Times, the Worst of Times

Unit Objectives:
- Students will develop an understanding of the intricacies of word choice, word order, tone, imagery, and figurative language
- Students will work to apply their understanding of literary terms and devices to a selection of poems in order to analyze and enjoy these poems more fully
- Students will begin to read and discuss Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities*

Texts and Other Materials:
- *Imagery* (BR 872)
- Selected Poetry from BR
- *A Tale of Two Cities*

Unit 5—The Sounds of Poetry

Unit Objectives:
- Students will increase their understanding of poetic devices and terminology by focusing on symbols, allegory, irony, and sounds
- Students will closely examine a selection of poems in order to understand more fully the utilization of these poetic devices
- Students will continue to read and discuss *AToTC*
- Students will compose a literary analysis essay based on a provided writing prompt

Texts and Other Materials:
- *Symbol, Allegory, and Irony* (BR 922)
- *Sounds* (BR 949)
- *Patterns of Rhythm* (BR 980)
- *Poetic Forms* (BR 1004)
- Selected Poetry from BR
- *AToTC*

Unit 6—The World Needs a Hero

Unit Objectives:
- Students will be able to identify the traits of an anti-hero
- Students will begin reading Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms* (or *The Sun Also Rises*)

Texts and Other Materials:
- *A Farewell to Arms* (or *The Sun Also Rises*)
- Selected Short Stories from BR

Unit 7—Classical Tragedy and Contemporary Drama

Unit Objectives:
- Students will learn about classical drama and the tragic form as outlined in Aristotle’s *Poetics*
- Students will read and analyze Shakespeare's *Hamlet*
- Students will work to identify and understand the elements of the play that lend to its complexity and meaning
- Students will follow thematic and character developments throughout the play
- Students will read plays representative of modern drama from a number of classical and contemporary playwrights
- Students will examine the evolution of drama from the Renaissance to the contemporary stage

Texts and Other Materials:
- *Theatrical Conventions of Greek Drama* (BR 1418)
“On Tragic Character”—Aristotle (BR 1506)
Supplement: introduction to The Renaissance and The Renaissance Theater
Hamlet
Readings on Shakespeare & Hamlet from the BR (1687-1700)
Contemporary plays chosen from: A Doll House—Ibsen (BR 1768), Equus, M. Butterfly, A Streetcar Named Desire
Trying to Find Chinatown—Hwang (BR 1901)

Unit 8—Contemporary Fiction
Unit Objectives:
- Students will read Annie Proulx’s The Shipping News and Toni Morrison’s Song of Solomon and analyze and discuss the ways in which the books characterize modern life

Texts and Other Materials:
- The Shipping News
- Song of Solomon
- Critical Essays on Song of Solomon