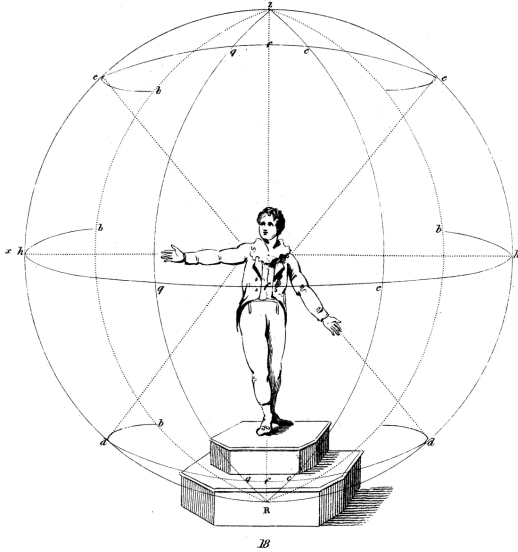


ENGL: 1200:0057

The Interpretation of Literature

Reading Bodies: Literature and the Senses



Course Description and Texts

Course Description:

We tend to assume that when we read, we read with our minds and our minds alone. When we run with our legs. We play guitar with our arms. We read with our brains. And yet, our bodies don't disappear when we pick up a book. Reading is a process that engages the senses. We may imagine the sound of a poem or picture its imagery in our "mind's eye." We can read *Hamlet* aloud to better hear Shakespeare's puns or perhaps find ourselves distracted by a leg cramp halfway through Alexander Pope's poem "Sound and Sense." Reading and interpreting literature are both embodied activities.

Our course title, "Reading Bodies," then, refers to two lines of inquiry prompted by this course's texts and assignments. First, this course concerns "reading bodies" as bodies that read—the sensory experiences accompanying the process of reading. Yet our course texts also invite us to read *about bodies*. We will examine poems, plays, and fiction that attempt to recreate sensory experience or use the senses as a central metaphor. Throughout this semester, we will be reading (and interpreting) bodies in literature, considering the diverse roles sensory language and images play in different genres and historical periods.

Class discussions, of course, will not be limited to the theme of "Literature and the Senses." Feel free to explore any questions and issues of interest to you in your comments during class, as well as your assignments and essays.

Course Texts:

Course texts are available for purchase at Prairie Lights Bookstore in downtown Iowa City. You can purchase the books elsewhere if you prefer, but please make sure they are the editions listed below.

Norton Introduction to Literature, Portable 11th Edition, Kelly J. Mays, Ed. (Norton, ISBN 978-0-393-92339-1)

Blindness by José Saramago (Harvest Book, ISBN 978-0-156-00775-7)

You are required to bring physical copy of the assigned text(s), marked up with your own annotations and notes, to class. Failing to do so will result in a zero for the day's participation grade.

Learning Objectives

- ❖ Demonstrate and refine skills of reading, speaking, and writing to respond critically and sensitively to literary texts from a variety of genres, authors, and time periods.
- ❖ Rediscover oneself as a reader by recognizing how individual differences (such as gender, race, class, ability, and geography and past experiences shape interpretive lenses.
- ❖ Articulate connections between individual texts and broader historical and cultural contexts
- ❖ Continue to develop critical thinking skills as a means to draw conclusions about texts and provide effective evidence to substantiate claims.
- ❖ Employ close reading strategies as a means to gain new insights into texts, as well as compare and contrast different texts' stylistic features.
- ❖ Become active participants in discussions about literature and the world by respectfully listening and substantially sharing with fellow colleagues.
- ❖ Make intentional formal and stylistic writing decisions and compose polished writing.

Grading

Our readings, essays, assignments, and discussions will both call upon and hone critical analysis skills you'll need for future courses and other important tasks once you earn your degree. I hope that our conversations will encourage you to enjoy (or continue enjoying) reading and writing for pleasure; I also hope that the class will highlight the relevance of interpretative thinking for every area of life. This course requires engaged, thoughtful participation and rigorous attendance. By the end of the course, you will have produced a number of writing exercises, a recitation and reflection project, and two longer essays. At the end of the semester, you will assemble your writing exercises and essays in a final portfolio along with a short reflection essay. Instead of a final exam, there will be 10 short reading quizzes scattered throughout the semester. This course has six categories that combine to your final course grade. See the category breakdown below.

Category	Description	Percentage
Engaged and Respectful Participation	This includes verbal participation, active listening, quality of verbal and group participation, preparedness for class, attendance, and in-class activities. For more, see “Defining Engaged and Respectful Participation.”	15%
Reading Quizzes	Throughout the semester, we will take 10 pop quizzes on the reading due that day and/or material recently covered in class. Each quiz will have approximately 5 simple questions that, if you’ve done the reading, you should be able to answer easily. No tricks or sneaky questions, I promise!	15%
Writing Exercises	You can’t run a marathon without training, and you can’t write a 5-page essay without exercising your writing skills beforehand. You will complete a number of informal assignments, “Writing Exercises,” over the course of the semester to warm up your writing muscles for our major essays (see below). Additionally, you will compile a final portfolio at the end of the semester and write a reflection on your progress as a writer.	20%
Essay #1: Sounding Shakespeare	A recitation activity and 2-3 page close reading and reflection essay. Specific details will be provided in class.	15%
Essay #2: Zoom In, Zoom Out	A 3-4 page essay that demonstrates advanced close reading and analysis skills. Specific details will be provided in class.	15%
Essay #3: Blind Spots	A 4-5 page essay that demonstrates advanced close reading and analysis skills. Specific details will be provided in class.	20%

You will receive a detailed criteria sheet for each major project explicitly outlining the expectations. These, and all assignment sheets, will also be available on ICON. I will be as clear as possible, but please don't hesitate to ask questions. I am ready to correspond and meet with you to help as you complete each project. You may access your grades on ICON at any time during the semester, and you are always welcome to schedule a meeting with me to discuss them in more detail.

Your final grade will be determined using the university's A-F grade scale, with plus/minus grading. A+ is only used in the case of rare and extraordinary academic achievement, as outlined by the CLAS.

Students sometimes assume that they start with 100% for an assignment, or for the course, and lose points for doing things wrong. On the contrary, you must work toward your grade. Aligning with the College of Liberal Arts and Science's expectations, I consider a grade of C to be competent work that meets all of the requirements of the assignment and the class. My grading policy is as follows:

A: To earn an A in this course, you must excel consistently, producing polished, well-crafted work that demonstrates mastery of new techniques and skills. Students earning an "A" demonstrate high-level critical thinking and original analysis, pursuing intellectual discoveries and original insights. You must also use the revision process strategically to shape your work for your audience and take an active thoughtful leadership role in the classroom.

B: To earn a B, you must exceed all of the requirements of a C by producing proficient work that shows good evidence of revision and attention to audience considerations. B work does not just fulfill the assignment requirements, but also shows evidence of an effort to make the project interesting, unique, and intentionally organized. You must be an active and constructive participant in the classroom and complete all activities thoroughly and with care.

C: Earning a C in this course signifies that you have competently completed all of the work assigned and attended class, participating regularly in activities and discussion. To receive a C, you must produce competent, college-level work, completing all projects satisfactorily and on time, contributing positively to the classroom environment, giving basic attention to revision, and showing improvement.

D or lower: Earning a D or lower indicates that you have not shown consistent effort, have not met the minimum class standards in some way, or have hurt your grade by plagiarizing, not turning in work, or failing to participate.

24/7 Policy for Discussing Graded Work: With regard to any assignment at any point in the semester, I am happy to speak with you about what you did well, how you could improve, and what you can work on for future assignments. In order to keep conversations relevant, constructive, and useful to you, please discuss graded assignments with me **no sooner than 24**

hours after the assignment is returned and **no later than 7 days** after return. I will gladly email with you to set aside office hour time or set up an appointment to talk in person.

Course Policies and Expectations

Defining Engaged and Respectful Participation:

To be an engaged participant in our classroom requires you to be present, on time and engaged in the fullest sense. This may include listening actively and respectfully, asking questions and making helpful, substantive contributions to workshops, peer review in-class activities and discussions. You are evaluated on your ability to consistently contribute to the conversation in ways that *raise the level of discourse*. Thus, talking frequently is not the same thing as A-level participation. Rather, actively listening to your classmates, respond incisively to others' comments in the room and reflecting and building classmates' ideas leads to a strong participation grade.

There are no "off-limits" topics, words, or opinions in this class. This means that we all bear the responsibility of maintaining a congenial classroom environment where every student feels comfortable voicing his or her ideas, convictions, insights, and contributions. Respectful communication in the classroom, then, necessitates particular attention to language, tone, and attitude. Even more importantly, respectful communication entails practicing genuine and generous listening to all of your classmates. While respectful (and even impassioned) disagreement is welcome, inconsideration for and intolerance of others' positions is not.

Participation can take a number of forms. The most common form is verbal participation. However, I am aware that cultural and power differences may empower some students to speak more comfortably and more often than others. This is another reason why more participation is not necessarily better participation. I encourage you to help balance our classroom airtime by drawing out others, holding back if you are dominating the conversation and challenging yourself if you are reticent or reluctant to speak. In addition to verbal participation, I welcome written discussion questions (emailed to me before class) or written reflections (written after class that demonstrate active listening and record what you might add to the conversation). You might also consider verbally expanding on your written annotations, or bringing in a relevant article or video for discussion. Please contact me if there are other ways that I can help you become a successful and active participant in our classroom.

Attendance Policy

You need to be in class and on time every day. Absences cause you to miss out on instruction, learning time, and thinking opportunities. Assignments, directions, homework, and due dates will be updated in class and posted to ICON. It is your responsibility to know what these are, even if you miss a class. You are responsible for knowing the material and preparing any assigned work.

I take attendance daily. Your participation grade will suffer directly if you do not attend class; additionally, your other grades may also suffer due to missing discussions, explanations of assignments, etc. Please keep the following in mind

1. Students missing class due to another University obligation (game, competition, etc.), religious holiday, or because of illness must provide documentation in order to be allowed to make up a graded activity. You will not be able to make up a quiz or other graded in class activity if you fail to provide documentation.
2. Students are responsible for getting notes, handouts, etc. from a classmate when absent.
3. **If an assignment is due on the date of your absence, you are required to submit the assignment by the deadline.**
4. **In addition, if you have more than 2 total absences, your overall participation grade will be docked one letter grade increment for each absence over the initial two.** For example, on the third unexcused absence, a participation grade of B becomes a B-. If you miss fewer than two classes, no automatic penalty will be applied—but do keep in mind that you will not be able to make up quizzes, daily assignments and opportunities to participate. **Please note that missing class is not an excuse for failing to submit an assignment on time.** You are responsible for submitting assignments on time and in the correct format.

Time Management and Late Work

Unless other arrangements are made (this includes excused absences) **late work must be turned in within 24 hours of the due date to receive partial credit. When turned in after the due date and time but within 24 hours, the assignment will receive a grade reduced by a third of a letter grade.** Assignments turned in after 24 hours may not be accepted. Late work, including work turned in using the “24-hour rule,” is acceptable only by arrangement with me, and it may not be logistically possible for you to make up a public oral presentation even if an absence is excused.

General Education Literature is a 3 semester hour house. Therefore, students are expected to work at least 6 hours outside of class per week (two hours/semester hour) per University standards. Of course, there will be some weeks you work less and some weeks you work more than 6 hours, depending on our course schedule. However, if you find that you are spending significantly more than 6 hours/week on average on Gen Ed Lit homework, come and talk to me and we will discuss how to make the class more manageable.

Communication with Me

As the instructor of this course, I look forward to fostering and participating in an environment of respectful and thoughtful idea exchange. I also hope to be a resource for each of you as you develop your critical writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills, both in class and during one-on-one appointments during my office hours (or a pre-arranged meeting outside of my office hours, if necessary).

I strongly encourage students to make an appointment or stop by my office hours to ask for clarification on assignments, raise concerns or discomforts, request help on papers and speeches, or discuss any issue relevant (or irrelevant!) to this class. Attending my office hours shows commitment to this course and demonstrates accountability for your learning.

If, for any reason, you find it necessary to email me (in regards to absences, time-sensitive questions, etc.), I will do my best to respond to your email within 24 hours during the weekdays and 48 hours during the weekends. If I do not respond within these parameters, resend the email.

Technology in the Classroom

I expect that you will turn off/silence and put away all of your electronic devices (cell phones, iPads, iPods, etc.) before class begins. This includes laptops and e-readers unless otherwise specified. Inappropriate use of electronics during class time will negatively affect your participation grade. If, for any reason, you have a particular need for iPads, cell phones, or laptops during class time, please come talk to me during office hours.

There will be class periods, activities, and peer review sessions for which I allow and often encourage technology use. I will notify you of these moments as necessary.

Additional Instruction:

To help your transition to university-level scholarship, the University of Iowa provides free, individualized instruction and assistance with both writing and public speaking.

The Writing Center (110 EPB; phone: 319-335-0188) offers suggestions and feedback on all sorts of writing, including course papers, articles intended for publication, theses and dissertations, creative writing, and multimedia projects. (<http://writingcenter.uiowa.edu>)

The Speaking Center (412 EPB; phone: 319-335-0205) offers one-on-one and small group tutoring and consultation to students and instructors on campus who would like to work on any aspect of oral communication. (<http://clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/speaking-center>)

Both Centers provide instruction and assistance to all University of Iowa students, staff and faculty to improve and practice these important academic and career skills.

Course Calendar

This is a tentative calendar and is subject to change. Updates will be posted to ICON and/or shared in class. Students are responsible for tracking course activities, readings, and assignments.

The **readings in bold** are due on the day listed.

✪ **Due dates for assignments are starred and in bold. Assignments are often due on Fridays at 5:30 pm✪**

Week 1: August 22-24

M: Course Introduction

Introductions, Course and Syllabus Information, Looking at and Listening to Literature Activity

W: Syllabus; Adler, “How to Mark Up a Book” (ICON); “Introduction” (Norton 1-10)

Reading Quiz, Annotation Activity

Assign: Writing Exercise: Autobiography of a Reader

Dramatic Bodies: Hamlet and Performing Literature

Week 2: August 29-31

M: “Elements of Drama” (Norton 772-783); *Hamlet* Act I (Norton 1081-1106)

Intro to Drama, Intro to Hamlet and Shakespeare

W: *Hamlet* Act II (Norton 1106-1126)

Close Reading

✪ **F: Autobiography of a Reader, due to ICON Dropbox at 5:30 pm ✪**

Week 3: September 5-7

M: Labor Day: NO CLASS

W: *Hamlet* Act III (Norton 1126-1151)

Thesis Statements

Assign: Writing Exercise: Close Reading Mini Essay

Week 4: September 12-14

M: *Hamlet* Act IV (Norton 1151-1171)

Paragraph Structure

W: *Hamlet* Act V (Norton 1171-1190)

Hamlet in Performance

Assign: Sounding Shakespeare Project

✪ **F: Close Reading Mini Essay, due to ICON Dropbox at 5:30 pm** ✪

Week 5: September 19-21

M: Recitation Workshop: Sounding Shakespeare Project

W: *Hamlet* screenings

Palpable Poetry: Sense and/in Verse

Week 6: September 26-28

M: “Responding to Poetry” (Norton 466-475); Aphra Behn, “On Her Loving Two Equally” (Norton 467)

Reading and Responding to Poetry

Rough Draft Workshop: Sounding Shakespeare Project

W: “The Sounds of Poetry” (Norton 586-589); Helen Chasin, “The Word Plum” (589); Kenneth Fearing, “Dirge” (590); Alexander Pope, “Sound and Sense” (591)

Hearing Poetry I: Rhyme, Alliteration, and Assonance

Week 7: October 1-3

M: “Poetic Meter” (Norton 594-601) including Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Metrical Feet”; “There was a young girl from St. Paul,” Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “The Charge of the Light Brigade”; Sir Jon Suckling, “Song”; John Dryden, “To the Memory of Mr. Oldham”

Hearing Poetry II: Meter Mania!

W: “External Form” (Norton 632-635); Dylan Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” (636); E.E. Cummings, “[l(a)” (641); Franklin P. Adams, “Composed in the Composing Room” (641); George Herbert, “Easter Wings” (643)

Seeing Poetry I: The Way a Poem Looks

Assign: Writing Exercise: Written in the Manner of...

✪ **F: Sounding Shakespeare Project, due to the ICON Dropbox by 5:30 pm** ✪

Week 8: October 3-5

M: John Keats, "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles" (650); Emily Dickinson, "She dealt her pretty words like blades" (672); Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Pied Beauty" (558); Langston Hughes, "Harlem" (689); William Carlos Williams, "This Is Just to Say" (558)

Sensuous Imagery: Evocations of the Senses in Poetry

W: Browning, "My Last Duchess" (667); Gwendolyn Brooks "We Real Cool" (497); "Syntax"

Speakers and Auditors: Evoking Voice and Tone

Assign: *Zoom In, Zoom Out Paper*

✪ **F:** Writing Exercise: Written in the Manner of... due to the ICON Dropbox at 5:30 pm ✪

Feeling Fiction: Representations of Diverse Embodiments

Week 9: October 10-12

M: "Paraphrase, Summary, Description" (1229); "The Elements of the Essay" (1233); "Quotation, Citation, and Documentation" (1276); "Sample Writing: Multiplying by Dividing in Aphra Behn's 'On Her Loving Two Equally'" (479)

Writing About Literature: The Essay

Thesis and Organization Workshop: Zoom In, Zoom Out Paper

W: Jhumpa Lahiri, "Interpreter of Maladies" (335-353)

Making Sense of the Body: Interpretation and/of the Body in Western Medicine

Week 10: October 17-19

M: Laura Anh Williams, "Foodways and Subjectivity in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*"

Anatomy of an Argument: Chewing on the Critical Article

W: José Saramago, *Blindness* pp. 1-15; Rough Draft of Essay #2: Zoom In, Zoom Out

Rough Draft Workshop

Week 11: October 24-26

M: *Blindness* pp. 15-76

W: *Blindness* pp. 77-113

✪ F: Zoom In, Zoom Out Paper, due at 5:30 pm to the ICON Dropbox ✪

Week 12: November 3-5

M: *Blindness* pp. 114-185

Assign: Blind Spots Essay

W: *Blindness* pp. 186-216

Week 13: November 10-12

M: *Blindness* pp. 217-269

W: *Blindness* pp. 270-326

Thesis and Organization Workshop

Week 14: November 17-19

M: Rod Michalko, “Blindness Enters the Classroom” from *Disability & Society* 16.3 (ICON)

W: Raymond Carver, “Cathedral” (Norton 34-46); Rough Draft of Essay #3: Blind Spots

Rough Draft Workshop

Week 15: November 21-23

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 16: November 28-30

M: Marjane Satrapi, “The Shabbat” (Norton 20-30)

Assign: Writing Exercise: Comparing Genres and Forms

W: Guillermo Gómez-Peña, DOC/UNDOC Website (ICON); Polished Draft of Essay #3: Blind Spots

Polished Draft Workshop

✪ F: Essay #3: Blind Spots Essay Due at 5:30 pm to the ICON Dropbox ✪

Week 17: December 5-7

M: Writing Exercise: Comparing Genres and Forms Due

Assign: Final Portfolio

W: Class Wrap Up; Workshop Final Portfolios