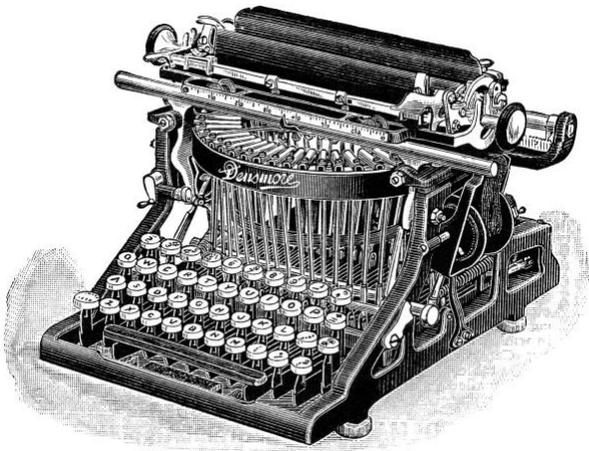


The Interpretation of Literature
Tech Knowledge: Literature,
Media, and Information

[SAMPLE SYLLABUS]



Course Description and Texts

Course Description:

This course's theme relates not to knowledge *about* technology, as much as technology that stores, transmits, and retrieves "knowledge."

The book is one of the oldest of the these "information technologies," as we call them, but we have seen many others come, go, and stay in the past several centuries: newspapers, the gramophone, tapes, DVDs, computer hardware, the Cloud, the typewriter, telephone and radio.

So, how does literature—itsself a means of storing and transmitting information—incorporate, reflect, and respond to these technologies? What can depictions and literary explorations of these media tell us about a specific culture or historical moment? About gender, race, class, and religion? About the human condition?

Through our course readings, assignments, and discussions, we will consider these questions and more as we consider the relations between date, technology, literature, and life.

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.

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. (Penguin Classics, 2003)
ISBN 10: 014143984X ISBN 13: 9780141439846

Shteyngart, Gary. *Super Sad True Love Story: A Novel* (Random House, 2011)
ISBN-10: 0812977866 ISBN 13: 978-0812977868

Churchill, Caryl. *Love and Information* (Theatre Communications Group, 2013)
ISBN 10: 1559364408 ISBN 13: 978-1559364409

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
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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.	10%
Essay #1:	A 2-3 page close reading and reflection essay. Specific details will be provided in class.	15%
Essay #2:	A 3-4 page essay that demonstrates advanced close reading and analysis skills. Specific details will be provided in class.	20%
Essay #3:	A 4-5 page essay that demonstrates advanced close reading and analysis skills. Specific details will be provided in class.	25%

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.

Academic Honesty

All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's [Code of Academic Honesty](#): "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the [IOWA Challenge](#). I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of

Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled ([CLAS Academic Policies Handbook](#)).

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:

Time Management and Late Work

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.

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.** The assignment will grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional day it is late until turned in.

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.

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.

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences ([Operations Manual, III.15.2](#), k.11).

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.

Week One

W 1/18 **Welcome to Gen Ed Lit!**

Week Two

- M 1/23 **Adler, “How to Mark Up a Book” (ICON)**
Carver, “Cathedral” (ICON)
 Quiz on syllabus
 Assign WE1: Autobiography of a Reader
- W 1/25 **McLuhan, “The Medium is the Message” (ICON)**
 Media theory and *Dracula* introduction

Week Three

- M 1/30 **Chapters 1-5: Stoker, *Dracula***
- W 2/1 **Chapters 6-11: Stoker, *Dracula***
 Assign Essay #1
- F 2/3 **Autobiography of a Reader Due 10:00 pm on ICON**

Week Four

- M 2/6 **Chapters 12-18: Stoker, *Dracula***
- W 2/8 **Chapters 19-22: Stoker, *Dracula***

Week Five

- M 2/13 **Chapters 23-26: Stoker, *Dracula***
- W 2/15 **Chapters 27-End: Stoker, *Dracula***
 Thesis Statements Workshop

Week Six

- M 2/20 **Writing about literature handouts (ICON)**
 Body Paragraph Workshop
 Assign WE2: My Curiosity
- W 2/22 **Emily Dickinson, “You cannot put a fire out,” “If you were coming in the fall”**
 Poetry and/as Storage
 Mini-Lecture: Intro to Poetry
- F 2/24 **Essay # 1 Due 10:00 pm on ICON**

Week Seven:

- M 2/27 **William Wordsworth, “Tintern Abbey”**
Seamus Heaney, “Digging”

Preserving Memories
Mini-Lecture: Literary Devices

W 3/1 **Paul Lawrence Dunbar, “We Wear the Mask”**
Gwendolyn Brooks, “We Real Cool”
Robert Browning, “My Last Duchess”
Poetry as Voice Recording
Mini-Lecture: Poetic Meter
Assign Essay #2

F 3/3 **My Curiosity Due 10:00 pm on ICON**

Week Eight:

M 3/6 **Dudley Randall, “Ballad of Birmingham”**
Edna St. Vincent Millay, “[I will put Chaos into fourteen lines]”
Dylan Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night”
The Form is the Message: Types of Poetry

W 3/8 **Pat Mora, “La Migra”**
W.H. Auden, “Funeral Blues”
Technology and/in Poetry
Thesis and Organization Workshop

Week Nine:

SPRING BREAK

Week Ten:

M 3/20 **Pp. 3-75, Shteyngart, *Super Sad True Love Story***

W 3/22 **Pp. 76-118, Shteyngart, *SSTLS***

Week Eleven:

M 3/27 **Pp. 119-168, Shteyngart, *SSTLS***
Rough Draft Workshop

W 3/29 **Pp. 169-203, Shteyngart, *SSTLS***

Week Twelve

M 4/3 **Pp. 204-243, Shteyngart, *SSTLS***
Essay #2 Due 10:00 pm on ICON

W 4/5 **Pp. 244-End, Shteyngart, *SSTLS***

Assign Essay #3

Week Thirteen

- M 4/10 **Beckett, *Krapp's Last Tape***
Intro to Drama
Assign WE #3: Annotated Bibliography Entry
- W 4/12 Research Work Day

Week Fourteen

- M 4/17 **Beckett, *Krapp's Last Tape***
WE # 3 Due In Class
Thesis and Organization Workshop
- W 4/19 **"Note on the Text" and Parts 1-3, Churchill, *Love and Information* and articles (ICON)**

Week Fifteen

- M 4/24 **Parts 4-7 and "Random," Churchill, *Love and Information***
Essay #3 Rough Draft Workshop
- W 4/26 ***Love and Information* Videos and Visuals**
Assign Final Portfolio

Week Sixteen

- M 5/1 **Peruse Dead Media Online Archive**
Dead Media Day
- Essay #3 Due at 10:00 pm on ICON**
- W 5/3 Class Wrap-Up, In-Class Reflections and Evaluations
Work Time: Final Portfolios

Final Portfolios Due on Wednesday, May 10 at 5 pm