



The Interpretation of Literature

Voice and the Storyteller Service Learning Section

Course Description and Texts

Course Description:

The “voice” is one of our favorite metaphors for power: to have a “voice” is to have political representation, to have a say in a decision, or to have one’s ideas recognized as important. So, what do portrayals of the voice in literature teach us about power and authority? How are certain voices censored, amplified, hushed, ignored, ridiculed, or imitated? In this course, we will attend to how literature portrays the voice and the oral storyteller as commentary on social inequity, political power, cultural authority, and notions of personhood.

This section is designated as a Service Learning section of General Education Literature. This will require students enrolled to engage, every Friday, in reading one-on-one with students at a local elementary school. The course provides the opportunity to participate in storytelling partnerships with young readers, enhancing their reading skills and yours.

Students should expect to bring curiosity and reflection to a shared conversation about their partnership at Grant Wood School and about a range of literary texts, including poetry, novels, nonfiction, podcasts, songs, and film. In addition to the required course texts listed below, we will read/watch/listen to selections from Leslie Silko’s *Storyteller*, Isaac Asimov’s *I, Robot*, Spike Jonze’s *Her*, and This American Life’s *Serial*. Students will work to develop skills in close reading, analysis, discussion, oral speaking, argumentation, and writing. **Course requirements include a weekly journal, a co-led discussion facilitation, reading quizzes, and three major essays, as well as a final reflection and portfolio. This course does not require a final exam.**

Because of transportation to and from Grant Wood School on Fridays, students in this section of GEL cannot enroll in another class on Fridays that immediately follows this one. We will leave campus promptly at 9:30 on Fridays and return to campus no later than 10:45.

Course Texts:

Course texts are available for purchase at the Iowa Hawk Shop. You may also purchase these texts online, but NOTE: You are required to purchase or borrow the editions specified below.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. (Penguin Classics, 2012)
ISBN-13: 978-0143106586

Shaw, Bernard. *Pygmalion*. (Penguin Classics, 2003)

ISBN: 0141439505 ISBN-13: 978-0141439501

Ward, Jesmyn. *Sing, Unburied, Sing*. (Scribner, 2017)
ISBN: 1501126067 ISBN-13: 978-1501126062

You are required to bring a **physical copy** of the assigned text(s), marked up with your own annotations and notes, to class.

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 your future courses and career. 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.

By the end of the course, you will have produced a journal about your storytelling partnership, a recitation and reflection project, and two analytical essays. At the end of the semester, you will assemble your journal entries and essays in a final portfolio prefaced by 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 on the following page.

Category	Description	Percentage
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Participation and Student-Led Class Discussion	<p>Your participation grade will be composed of three different grades: a midterm participation grade, a final participation grade, and your “student-led discussion day” grade.</p> <p>Your midterm and final participation grades will take into account verbal participation, active listening, quality of verbal and group participation, preparedness for class, attendance, and in-class activities. For your student-led discussion day, you will plan and facilitate a 25-minute discussion of one day’s readings with 1-2 other classmates.</p>	15%
Reading Quizzes	<p>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!</p>	15%
Reflective Journal and Informal Writing	<p>You can’t run a marathon without training, and you can’t write a 5-page essay without exercising your writing skills beforehand.</p> <p>Throughout this course, you will regularly contribute to a reflective journal, in which you will respond to a prompt related to course themes and/or your experience at Grant Wood. These entries will serve as an opportunity to practice writing through low-stakes assignments, as well as reflect on what you’ve learned and observed in your “storytelling partnership.”</p> <p>These journals will be graded twice during the semester: once at midterm and once at the semester’s close.</p>	20%
Essay #1:	<p>A dramatic reading/recitation and an accompanying 2-3 page analytical reflection essay. Specific details will be provided in class.</p>	15%
Essay #2:	<p>A 3-4 page essay that demonstrates advanced close reading and analysis skills. Specific details will be provided in class.</p>	15%
Essay #3:	<p>A 4-5 page essay that demonstrates advanced close reading and analysis skills and places a literary work in a specific historical or cultural context. Specific details will be provided in class.</p>	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.

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](#)).

Service Learning Partnership Policies and Expectations

The Iowa City Community School District bus will leave from **Madison St in front of the UI Main Library on Fridays**, starting February 4, at 9:30 on the dot! Please be on time; we can't wait for you.

If you must be absent on a Friday, be sure to inform me beforehand and as soon as possible. I will need to find a substitute partner.

The school system is kindly paying for the background checks required of all volunteers in the schools. Just so you know, this is a thing that happens when you work with children and other protected groups. You will apply for clearance the first day of class **and need, if you have them, your social security number and a driver's license number.**

With your partners, you will read books only in paper format. Do not expect to use your phone, laptop, tablet, or e reader in the meetings at Wood School.

Please do not meet with your partners at any time and place during the semester except on Fridays at Grant Wood School. If you are invited to a public, school performance, please let me know. I will ask the principal if there is enough room in their audience for you. This may be an opportunity for them to introduce you to their parents and that's fine. Otherwise, do not have any contact with the parents. If they wish to speak to you, let me know.

If, in developing a trusting relationship with your partners, anyone shares with you worrying stories, such as stories about domestic abuse, tell me immediately. Do not act on your own or promise any support. Just listen respectfully. I will contact the principal and the school administration so that they can take the appropriate action.

Aracely Mondragon, another GEL instructor, and I will always be travelling with you to Wood School. You will never be entirely on your own. Nevertheless, if anything about the partnership concerns you, tell me as soon as possible.

General 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 in-class workshops, activities, and discussions. Actively listening to your classmates, responding incisively to others' comments in the room and reflecting and building classmates' ideas will lead 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.

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. 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.

Attendance is especially crucial in this service learning section of General Education Literature, both in the classroom where our work will need to move along briskly to accommodate the Fridays spent at Wood School and in the partnership with your two student partners at Grant Wood.

I take attendance daily. Any more than 3 unexcused absences (i.e., 4+) will lead to a failing grade in the course. Illness, university team responsibilities, and other excused absences are permitted, but should be kept to an absolute minimum; in the case of an excused absence, provide documentation of the absence and notify me, if at all possible, *before* the absence. You will not be able to make up a quiz or any other graded in-class activity if your absence is unexcused or if you fail to provide documentation.

All absences (excused or not) will lead to a 0 in your participation points for the day, seeing as it is impossible to for you to participate if you are not present. If, say, illness causes you to miss class for an extended period of time, I may request that you withdraw.

Time Management and Late Work

Unless other arrangements are made (this includes excused absences) **late work must be turned in within 3 days of the due date to receive any 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. If the assignment is still not turned in three days after the due date and time, the assignment will receive a 0.

General Education Literature is a 3 semester-hour course. 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 (regarding 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.

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.

Week 1: Jan 15-19 Monday, Jan 15 is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. No Classes. This week is Martin Luther King, Jr., Human Rights Week.	
Wednesday, January 17 th (205 EPB): In Class: Introductions, Volunteer Applications, Close Reading Activity Assign: Student-Led Discussions	Due Today: SSN and Driver's License for volunteer applications
Friday, January 19 th : Location: 304 EPB (Gerber Lounge) In Class: Defining service learning and learning objectives	Due: Service Learning Worksheet (ICON)
Week 2: Jan 22-26 Monday, Jan 22: Last day to add or drop courses without a \$12 charge. Tuesday, Jan 27: \$12 charge for each course added or dropped effective.	
Unit 1: Oral Storytellers in Printed Texts	
Monday, January 22 (205 EPB): In Class: On marginalia, how to have a discussion about literature, discuss "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"	Due: Adler, "How to Mark Up a Book" Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (ICON) Complete: Prepping for Class Discussions Worksheet (ICON)
Wednesday, January 24 th (205 EPB): In Class: Oral vs. Printed, discuss "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" Assign: Essay #1	Due: Excerpts from Ong's <i>Orality and Literacy</i> (ICON)
Friday, January 26 th : Location: 304 EPB (Gerber Lounge)	Due: IC School District Materials (ICON) Turn In: Journal Entry #1
Week 3: Jan 29-Feb2 Monday, Jan 29: Last day to add or drop courses without a W.	
Monday, January 29 th : In Class: Introduction to Conrad, discuss <i>Heart of Darkness</i>	Due: Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> , Chapter I
Wednesday, January 31 st : In Class: Student-Led Discussion Day (1)	Due: Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> , Chapter II

Friday, February 2 nd : Reading Partnerships Meet outside of the main library by 9:30 am!	Turn In: Journal Entry #2
Week 4: Feb 5-9	
Monday, February 5 th : In Class: Discuss and wrap up <i>Heart of Darkness</i> , recitation and reading aloud activities	Due: Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> , Chapter III
Wednesday, February 7 th : In Class: Introduction to Silko, discuss <i>The Storyteller</i> , storytelling and media	Due: Excerpts from Silko, <i>The Storyteller</i> (ICON)
Friday, February 9 th : Reading Partnerships Meet outside of the main library by 9:30 am!	Turn In: Journal Entry #3
Week 5: Feb 12-16	
Unit 2: Lyric Voices: Poetry and Song	
Monday, February 12 In Class: Poetry mini-lecture, discuss poems	Due: Selected poems from Silko, <i>The Storyteller</i>
Wednesday, February 14 th : In Class: Dramatic monologues, Student-Led Discussion Day (2)	Due: Robert Browning, "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool" The Lumineers, "Cleopatra"
Friday, February 16 th : Reading Partnerships Meet outside of the main library by 9:30 am!	Turn In: Journal Entry #4
Week 6: Feb 19-23	
Monday, February 19 th : In Class: Recitations	
Wednesday, February 21 st : In Class: Recitations	
Friday, February 23 rd : Reading Partnerships Meet outside of the library by 9:30 am!	Turn In: Essay #1

Week 7: Feb 26- Mar 1	
Monday, February 26 th : In Class: Punctuation, typography, and poetic voice Assign: Essay #2	Gerard Manley Hopkins, "The Windhover" Emily Dickinson, "She dealt her words like pretty blades"
Wednesday, February 28 th : In Class: Political voice and poetic voice, Student-Led Discussion Day (3)	Pat Mora, "La Migra" Langston Hughes, "Po'boy Blues," "Madam and the Phone Bill"
Thursday, March 5 th : Reading Partnerships Meet outside of the main library by 9:30 am!	Turn In: Journal Entry #5
Week 8: Mar 5-9 Wednesday, March 7 Midterm	
Monday, March 5 th : In Class: Writing Workshop: How to Write a Literary Analysis Essay	Pre-Writing Exercise for Essay #2
Wednesday, March 7 th : In Class: BYOS discussion and analysis, wrap up poetry unit	BYOS (Bring Your Own Song) and analyses
Friday, March 9 th : Reading Partnerships Meet outside of the main library by 9:30 am!	Turn In: Journal Entry #6
Week 9: Mar 12-16 Spring Break	
Week 10: Mar 19-23 Classes Resume	
Unit 3: Voice Acting: Orality and Performance	
Monday, March 19 th : In Class: Intro to Shaw, phonetics and elocution, discuss <i>Pygmalion</i>	Shaw, <i>Pygmalion</i> , "Preface," "Note for Technicians," Act I Summary of Pygmalion and Galatea myth (ICON)
Wednesday, March 21 st : In Class: Student-Led Discussion Day (4), discuss <i>Pygmalion</i>	Shaw, <i>Pygmalion</i> , Acts II-IV
Friday, March 23 rd : Reading Partnerships Meet outside of the main library by 9:30 am!	Turn In: Essay #2
Week 11: Mar 26-30	
Monday, March 26 th :	<i>Pygmalion</i> , Act V, "Afterward"

In Class: <i>Pygmalion</i> and <i>My Fair Lady</i> Discussion	Screen <i>My Fair Lady</i> clips
Wednesday, March 28 th : In Class: Intro to Beckett, Student-Led Discussion Day (5)	Read and watch Beckett, "Not I"
Friday, March 30 th : Reading Partnerships Meet outside of the main library by 9:30 am!	Turn In: Journal #7
Week 12: April 2-6	
Unit 4: Ghost Stories and Spirit Songs	
Monday, April 2 nd : In Class: Introduction to Ward, discuss <i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i> Assign: Essay #3	Ward, <i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i> , Chapters 1 and 2
Wednesday, April 4 th : In Class: Student-Led Discussion Day (6)	<i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i> , Chapters 3 and 4
Friday, April 6 th : Reading Partnerships Meet outside of the main library by 9:30 am!	Turn In: Journal #8
Week 13: April 9-13 Summer and Fall Early Registration	
Monday, April 9 th : In Class: Discuss <i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i> , Essay #3 pre-writing workshop	<i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i> , Chapters 5, 6, and 7
Tuesday, April 11 th : In Class: Student-Led Discussion Day (7)	<i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i> , Chapters 8, 9, and 10
Thursday, April 13 th Reading Partnerships Meet outside of the main library by 9:30 am!	Turn In: Journal #9
Week 14: Apr 16-20 Monday, April 20: Last day to withdraw entire registration.	
Technological Voices and Cyber Storytellers	
Monday, April 16 th : Film Screening	Work on Essay #3
Wednesday, April 18 th :	Work on Essay #3

Film Screening	
Friday, April 20 th : Reading Partnerships Meet outside of the main library by 9:30 am!	Turn In: Journal #10 (Audio Recording)
Week 15: Apr 23-27	
Monday, April 23 rd : In Class: Discuss film	Complete "Film Screening Guided Notes and Questions" (ICON)
Tuesday, April 25 th : In Class: Student-Led Discussion Day (8)	Asimov, <i>I, Robot</i> selected story (ICON)
Thursday, April 27 th : Reading Partnerships Meet outside of the main library by 9:30 am!	Turn In: Essay #3
Week 16: Ap 30-May 4 Close of classes on Friday, May 4	
Monday, April 30 th : In Class: Discuss episodes, charting the story activity	Listen to selections from "The Moth" storytelling podcast
Wednesday, May 2 nd : In Class: Class wrap-up, reflection, thank you notes and course evaluations	Bring: Computers
Friday, May 4 th : Last Day of Reading Partnerships! Meet outside of the main library by 9:30 am!	