

LIT 221, Readings in Short Fiction
Delta College
Spring 2011
Time: 9:00-12:10 p.m.
Days: M/W
Room: S055

Instructor: Mr. Vande Zande
Office: S16
Office Hours:
Office Phone: (989) 686-9538
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Required Texts:

The Story and Its Writer, compact 7th edition, Ann Charters, Ed
The Road, Cormac McCarthy
Fahrenheit 451, Raymond Bradbury

Other Required Supplies:

one notebook

Course Description:

This course is designed to improve your ability to think about literature – shorter fiction specifically. We will begin by studying the elements of fiction to give you the vocabulary you'll need for discussion. Then we will use what we have learned to read and discuss short stories and short novels. Unlike much popular reading available which tends to help us escape life (which is necessary to do sometimes), literature brings readers back to life, helping them think about what it is to be a human being. Though literature can be quite entertaining, it also tends to exhibit an understanding of the struggles of humanity.

While examining the texts, we will discuss the surface of the stories and the themes beneath the surface. We will discuss issues the stories raise, and most likely we will discover the complexity involved in being an ordinary person. To add to our discussion, I will introduce you to elements of existential and zen philosophy. Our objective will be to become better readers of literature and better thinkers. As our skills improve, we will apply them to two shorter novels.

Though you will be accountable for specific information that we will be reading in the stories and novels, the goal of this course is not for you to leave with an acquired body of knowledge. Instead, think of this as a skills course – a course in which you will become a stronger, and perhaps life-long, reader of literature. To become a stronger thinker, you must be willing to let your thoughts stretch where they will. Share your thoughts with us – even if they seem a little out there. Sometimes it's the "out there" thoughts that really help us find the Truth behind the stories. One thing we will learn, however, is that arguments you make about a story must be supported by the text. We will discuss this idea further, but it's good to get it on the table early on. Also, to help us think metaphorically, we will be studying some Zen philosophy.

Grading:

Your grade will be determined by your performance on the following:

Objective Reading Quizzes --	Points to be determined
One Paper (3 to 5 pages) --	100 points
Midterm Exam --	100 points
Participation --	25 points
Final Exam--	20 points

Your grades will be determined by the percentage of the points you earn.

- A- to A which is 90% to 94% and above
- B- to B+ which is 80% to 89%
- C- to C+ which is 70% to 79%
- D to D+ which is 63% to 69%
- E which is 62% or below.

ALL ESSAYS WILL BE TYPED, DOUBLE SPACED

Attendance:

As this is a discussion-based course, attendance will be very important. We need and value your thoughts about what we read. If you miss this course more than two times you will fail. In addition, missing any class will most likely result in your missing reading quizzes (which can't be made up). The points for the reading quizzes really add up over the semester. As far as tardiness goes, I don't like the class to be interrupted once we've started. Please be on time. If you're late for the quizzes, you miss them. Excessive tardiness will count as an absence.

Other Student Responsibilities:

All cell phones must be shut off before class begins. (If you are on call for emergency reasons, let me know and we'll work something out). I have very low tolerance for disruptive behavior (side conversations not related to the course, sleeping, speaking out when others are trying to speak, etc). If you're disruptive, I'll simply ask you to leave. When I ask you to leave, don't try to debate or bargain with me; simply pack up your things and leave. I hate for this to ever happen, but don't test me on this policy either.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism (turning in someone else's work as your own or misrepresenting the work of others) is a serious offense and will result in an "E" or zero points for the paper, which will most likely result in an "E" for the course. Refer to page 90 in the 2000-2001 Delta College Catalog.

Tentative Schedule of Assignments and Activities

(I reserve the right to change this syllabus to meet any needs that may come up for this specific class.)

May 9- Introduction to the course, existentialism and the first paper

May 11- Existentialism/paper follow up, "The Yellow Wallpaper," "Clean, Well-Lighted Place"

May 16- "The Lottery," "A&P"

May 18- "The Metamorphosis," "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love"

May 23- "Sonny's Blues," "The Man Who was Almost a Man," "The Lesson"

May 25- "Where are You Going, Where have You Been?" "A Good Man is Hard to Find" (sample paper)

May 30 ... Memorial Day (no class)

June 1- "The Swimmer," "The Things They Carried"

June 6- "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings," "Yellow Woman"

June 8- **Midterm Exam**

June 13- Fahrenheit 451 (first half)

June 15- Fahrenheit 451 (to the end)

June 20- The Road (first half)

June 22 - The Road (to the end)

June 27- Movie: The Road, turn in final paper, Brief informal exam