ENG 200

Foundations of Literary Study

CRN: 14927, Times: Mon, Wed & Fri 12:30–1:20 pm, Location: ARMSTRONG 407
Instructor: P. Brown, e-mail: piers.brown@mail.wvu.edu, Course Website: ecampus.wvu.edu
Office Hours: Mon & Wed: 1:30–3 pm, & by appointment, Office Location: COLSON HALL 131

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

Foundations of Literary Study is the introductory course for the English Major. It will provide you with the fundamental skills that you will need to read and write about poetry, prose and drama: practice at close reading and analytic writing; a basic familiarity with critical terminology and theory; the ability to identify and analyse genre conventions, complexity and ambiguity in texts; and an understanding of how to situate works in their social, economic, political and literary contexts. To this end, we will be reading a variety of texts, including several short stories, a long contemporary novel, a Shakespeare play and a selection of poetry. In addition, the course will focus on improving your critical writing skills via a series of weekly exercises, in order to build skills for the research paper that is the culmination of the course. These will be supplemented by peer review sessions to give you practical experience in editing and detailed feedback on your work.

REQUIRED READING:
The course text books are available at the campus book store:

Readings for the Friday poetry sessions will usually be provided in class, and any other additional readings will be available on the course website: ecampus.wvu.edu.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

Three one-hour classes per week. Mondays and Wednesdays we will follow the main sequence of the course, from short to longer prose, drama, and then practical work on the final essay. Fridays throughout the course are set aside for close reading poetry. Generally, the first half-hour of each class will be devoted to lecture and discussion, and the second will be used for the close reading of a poems or short prose passage from the day’s readings.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Short exercises (20%); take home test (15%); close reading paper (20%); final paper proposal (5%); final paper (30%); participation (10%).

Short exercises (250 words each): 20%
Throughout the semester, in weeks where you don’t have a longer assignment, there will be a short piece of writing—eight in all—on our readings or associated topic designed to provoke your thoughts. DUE: Mondays throughout the semester, unless specified otherwise.

Take home test (750 words): 15%
At the end of the first section of the course there will be a three day take-home test. I will provide you with a choice of questions about the short prose and poetry we have been reading on Friday, February 8th. DUE: Monday, February 11th

Close reading paper (1000 words): 20%

Research paper (1500 words): 5% & 30%
A formal research paper on The Winter’s Tale, which draws on 3-6 critical sources in order to shape and contextualize its argument. DUE: Proposals, Week 13. First draft, Monday, April 22nd. Final draft, Monday, April 29th. Completed essay, Friday, December 6th.

Essays are to be submitted in hard copy only. Good practice requires that you keep all notes and working papers, as well as a duplicate of the final version, at least until the end of the school year. Essays should be double-spaced, with 1.5” left and right margins to facilitate annotation, printed in minimum 12-point font. All essays should be accompanied by a list of works cited in MLA format. We will discuss this requirement in detail, but I should say here that being scrupulous about your process of citation is what allows to build on other authors’ ideas without plagiarizing.

Essays are due at the beginning of class on
the due date. Because we will be peer reviewing in class, there is no flexibility about these dates. Not having a complete draft of your essay prepared means it isn’t peer reviewed and, if you aren’t there, you can’t peer review your fellow students’ work. As a result, late work automatically receives an F (50%) and no mark if it is more than a week late.

If you need an extension for any reason, you should see me during my office hours prior to the due date of the assignment. In all cases, it is better to contact me and discuss any difficulties you may have beforehand, rather than afterwards. If something happens which that drastically effects your attendance or your ability to complete work on time (serious illness, family tragedy, etc.), I would strongly encourage you to contact Dr. Thomas Sloane, Sr. Associate Dean of Students, at 293-5611 or tom.sloane@mail.wvu.edu.

When you begin work on the first assignment, you should take advantage of the resources of the English Department’s Writing Center. There you will find essential advice on planning your work, using and documenting sources, avoiding plagiarism, style and editing, grammar and punctuation, and ESL questions.

Participation
As in any English class it is vital that you do two things: do the day’s reading and bring the text to class so that we can discuss it in detail. In cases where there is an electronic text, you should print it out and bring it with you. If you do not have the assigned text with you during class, I will ask you to go to the library and find yourself a copy before you can return to class.

Although this is a course about reading and writing, it is also more generally about communication. Your participation mark is based on your active engagement with the material in the course. You can participate by asking questions in class or during office hours, by demonstrating your understanding of the assigned readings, and by helping to foster an atmosphere in which all the other students in class are able to contribute.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction
MON, JANUARY 14TH: Why Read Literature?
WED, JANUARY 16TH
READING: Gardner, Chapter One, “The Role of Good Reading,” Writing about Literature.
FRI, JANUARY 18TH
TOPIC: Poetry and Poetics

Week 2: Poetry
MON, JANUARY 21ST
MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY: NO CLASS
WED, JANUARY 23RD
FRI, JANUARY 25TH
TOPIC: Sonnets

Week 3: Short Prose 1
MON, JANUARY 28TH
READING: Gardner, Chapter Four, “Writing about Stories,” Writing about Literature.
EXERCISE 1: Imagery
WED, JANUARY 30TH
FRI, FEBRUARY 1ST
TOPIC: Stanzas

Week 4: Short Prose 2
MON, FEBRUARY 4TH
READING: Dillard, “Seeing.”
EXERCISE 2: Point of View
WED, FEBRUARY 6TH
ASSIGNMENT: Take home test handed out
FRI, FEBRUARY 8TH
TOPIC: Figures

Week 5: House of Leaves 1
MON, FEBRUARY 11TH
READING: House of Leaves (i-xxiii, 1-23)
ASSIGNMENT: Take home test due
WED, FEBRUARY 13TH
READING: House of Leaves (23-106).
FRI, FEBRUARY 15TH:
TOPIC: Concrete Poetry

Week 6: House of Leaves 2
MON, FEBRUARY 18TH
READING: House of Leaves (106-152)
EXERCISE 3: 1-page map of the House
WED, FEBRUARY 20TH
READING: House of Leaves (152-245)
FRI, FEBRUARY 22ND
CLASS CANCELLED

Week 7: House of Leaves 3
MON, FEBRUARY 25TH
READING: House of Leaves (246-346)
EXERCISE 4: Annotated Page
WED, FEBRUARY 27TH
FRI, MARCH 1ST

TOPIC: Free Verse

Week 8: House of Leaves 4
MON, MARCH 4TH
READING: *House of Leaves* (417-528)

EXERCISE 5: A secondary source

WED, MARCH 6TH
READING: *House of Leaves* (529-709)

FRI, MARCH 8TH
TOPIC: Allusion

Week 9: Drama 1
MON, MARCH 11TH

ASSIGNMENT: Close Reading due

WED, MARCH 13TH
READING: Shakespeare, *The Winter’s Tale*, Act 1

FRI, MARCH 15TH
TOPIC: Dramatic Verse

Week 10: Drama 2
MON, MARCH 18TH

EXERCISE 6: Thinking about performance

WED, MARCH 20TH

FRI, MARCH 22ND
TOPIC: Speakers, Listeners, Readers

LAST DAY TO DROP CLASSES

Spring Break
NO CLASSES

Week 11 Drama 3
MON, APRIL 1ST
READING: Shakespeare, *The Winter’s Tale*, Act 4

EXERCISE 7: Stage directions

WED, APRIL 3RD

FRI, APRIL 5TH
INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS, CLASS CANCELLED

Week 12: Writing and Research 1
MON, APRIL 8TH

EXERCISE 8: Annotated bibliography

WED, APRIL 10TH
READING: Cormack, “Shakespeare’s Other Sovereignty.”
FRI, APRIL 12TH
TOPIC: Critical Writing about Poetry

Week 13: Writing and Research 2
MON, APRIL 15TH
PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS

WED, APRIL 17TH
PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS

FRI, APRIL 18TH
PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS

Week 14: Writing and Research 3
MON, APRIL 22ND
INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS, CLASS CANCELLED

ASSIGNMENT: Complete First Draft due

WED, APRIL 24TH
READING: Lethem, “The Ecstasy of Influence.”

FRI, APRIL 26TH
TOPIC: Endings

Week 15: Wrapping up
MON, APRIL 29TH
PEER REVIEW

ASSIGNMENT: Final Draft due

WED, MAY 1ST
TOPIC: Course Evaluation & Wrap Up

FRI, MAY 3RD
TOPIC: The Structure of the English Major

ASSIGNMENT: Completed Essay Due