

# Foundations of Literary Study

## English 200

Professor Farina  
TuTh 11:30-12:45, Clark 200

English 200 aims to sharpen your understanding of *how* literary language works. The goal here is not to read a substantial number of works or to understand literary history in a great diversity of social contexts (those are the objectives of “survey” courses), but to read carefully, thoroughly, and imaginatively. This “close reading” of texts takes note of linguistic qualities like rhythm and meter, tone, diction, imagery, metaphoric or symbolic figuration, rhetorical positioning, and the like. Recognizing the particular ways in which texts make use of these formal elements further allows us to think about “types” of literature, identifiable structures and genres that carry forward their own expectations about language.

Because we will be thinking about the importance of form for giving shape to literature, it makes sense to consider what writers have to say about the relation of form, identity, and innovation. For that reason, our readings, though widely varied, will follow the theme of *metamorphosis*. Shape-shifting and transformation, both physical and psychological, is a subject that has long provided authors with an opportunity to reflect on the role of form in determining what something is, be it a poem or a person.

### Required Coursework:

class participation: 20%  
quizzes: 30%  
four 2-3 page response papers: 12.5% each

### Required Texts:

Since we will be working closely with our texts in class discussion and in small group work, you must have these books (or the required PDFs) with you during class on the days that we are scheduled to discuss them. Failure to do so will result in a reduction of your class participation grade.

Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms  
Kafka, *The Sons*  
Shelley, *Frankenstein*  
Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*  
Stoppard, *Arcadia*

To cut costs, I will also be sending you PDFs and directing you to online texts. It is essential that your MIX email be working in order to receive these. I expect you to print out these materials and bring them to class.

## Course Policies:

Attendance: This is a participatory class. You may miss two classes without penalty. Missing more will diminish your class participation grade. If you miss six classes, you will receive an F for the course. Lateness is rude and disrupts discussion and small group work. If you are more than 10 minutes late, your lateness will count as half of an absence (so, two lateness = one absence). In general, I do not care why you are absent or late; the only “notes” I need to see are for University-sponsored activities (e.g. class field trips, sports teams, etc.).

Late Coursework: There are no make-up opportunities for missed quizzes. I will, however, allow you to drop your lowest quiz grade from your total grade for the quizzes. Response papers are due at the beginning of class on the scheduled day. If you do not hand your paper in then, it will be penalized a full grade and an additional full grade for each day late thereafter.

Plagiarism: WVU’s policy regarding plagiarized work can be found online at: <http://studentlife.wvu.edu/studentconductcode.html> (see Section B of Article III). We will discuss plagiarism in class before the first response is due, but it is the student’s responsibility to be familiar with the WVU policy. Do note, especially, that plagiarism is regarded as such *whether it is intentional or not*. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. Plagiarized work in this course may result in an “Unforgivable F” for the course.

Conduct: I expect all members of the class to be respectful of each other and me, regardless of religious, social, or political differences. I will not condone discriminatory remarks regarding race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, health, economic status, etc. Disruptive behavior may impact your class participation grade and, if egregious enough, result in your expulsion from the class. Be mindful that the best way to participate in class is to *both talk and listen* to what others have to say. I don’t expect class members to agree, but I do expect that you will acknowledge other points of view.

Announcements: If there are changes to our schedule or assignments, I will announce these over MIX as well as in class.

Contact Info: My drop-in office hours are Wednesday, 1:00-3:00, in my office 335 Colson Hall (3<sup>rd</sup> floor). I am also readily available for meeting with you at other times; just drop me an email to make an appointment. You can reach me at [Lara.Farina@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Lara.Farina@mail.wvu.edu).

## Schedule:

You need to have read the assigned texts *before* we are scheduled to discuss them in class.

8/21	Introduction
8/23	Choices, Choices, Choices: 3 <i>Metamorphoses</i> (PDF)

### Poetry:

- 8/28 Sound and Meter (PDF/online)  
8/30 Imagery, Figurative Language, Mood (PDF/online)
- 9/4 Diction, Tone, Character, Personae (PDF/online)  
9/6 Specific Forms—Sonnets, Sestinas, and the like (PDF/online)
- 9/11 Response #1 Due, excerpt from Jakobson, “What is Poetry?”

### Short Fiction:

- 9/13 Narration v. Description: Faber, “Fish”; Yourcenar, “Wang-Fo” (PDFs)
- 9/18 Characters, Narrators: Merimee, “Venus d’Ille”; Poe “Tell-Tale Heart”  
9/20 No Class
- 9/25 Prose Style: Carter, “The Tiger’s Bride” (PDF)  
9/27 Structure, Temporality: Hoffman, “The Sandman”
- 10/2 excerpts from Freud, “On the Uncanny” (PDF)  
10/4 Response #2 Due
- 10/9 Kafka, “The Metamorphosis” (in *The Sons*)  
10/11 Kafka, excerpts from “Letter to His Father” (in *The Sons*)

### The Novel:

- 10/16 Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Book I  
10/18 Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Book II
- 10/23 Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Book II  
10/25 excerpts from Milton, *Paradise Lost*
- 10/30 Response #3 Due, adaptations of *Frankenstein*

### Metafiction:

- 11/1 Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, chapters 1-3, glossary
- 11/6 Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, chapters 4-8  
11/8 Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, chapters 9-12
- 11/13 Rushdie, “Heraclitus” (PDF)  
11/15 Radiolab, “Crossroads” (online podcast)

Thanksgiving Break

11/27 Stoppard, *Arcadia*, Act I  
11/29 Stoppard, *Arcadia*, Act II  
  
12/4 Class Discussion/Review  
12/6 Response #4 Due