

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 analyze 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:

Mark Danielewski. *House of Leaves*. New York: Pantheon, 2000.

Janet Gardner. *Writing about Literature*. Boston and New York: Bedford / St. Martins, 2011.

William Shakespeare. *The Winter's Tale*. Ed. Frank Kermode. New York: Signet, 1998.

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](http://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 poem 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%*

A close reading of a single chapter of *House of Leaves*. **DUE: Monday, March 11th.**

*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 affects 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](mailto: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 also able to contribute.

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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  
 READING: Gardner, Chapter Five, "Writing about Poems," *Writing about Literature*.  
 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  
 READING: Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths."  
 FRI, FEBRUARY 1ST  
 TOPIC: Stanzas

**Week 4: Short Prose 2**

MON, FEBRUARY 4TH  
 READING: Dillard, "Seeing."  
**EXERCISE 2: Point of View**  
 WED, FEBRUARY 6TH  
 READING: Gardner, Chapters 2 & 3, "The Writing Process" & "Common Assignments."  
**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  
 READING: *House of Leaves* (347-417). Gardner, *Writing about Literature*, Chapter 8, "Literary Criticism and Theory."

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  
 READING: Gardner, "Writing about Plays,"  
 Chapter Six, *Writing about Literature*.

 **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  
 READING: Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*,  
 Act 2

 **EXERCISE 6: Thinking about performance**

WED, MARCH 20TH  
 READING: Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*,  
 Act 3


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  
 READING: Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*,  
 Act 5

FRI, APRIL 5TH  
**INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS, CLASS  
 CANCELLED**

 **Week 12: Writing and Research 1**

MON, APRIL 8TH  
 READING: Gardner, Chapter 7, "Writing a Lit-  
 erary Research Paper."

**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 Influe-  
 nce."

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**