

# ENGL 680: Introduction to Literary Research

Winter 2013

Tuesdays, 4-6:50pm / G06 Colson Hall D

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2-4pm  
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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to offer new graduate students a foundation in the methods, tools, and products of literary research. Students will learn to evaluate resources for their future studies to be found in research and rare book libraries, archives, granting agencies, and literary/academic journals. Short assignments will include exercises in grant/fellowship applications, textual annotation and commentary, writing abstracts, evaluating book reviews, and locating publishing venues for students' future scholarship. Seminar discussions will revolve around (amongst other things) questions of literature's place in liberal humanism, qualitative vs. quantitative research methodologies, authorial intentions, and the proper ways to salute "General Reader". Besides works in the history of literary research, theory, and criticism, students will be required to read at least one book of 20<sup>th</sup> century academic fiction, as well as stories by George Saunders, Jorge Luis Borges, and Max Beerbohm. The course will conclude with a student conference of micro-papers designed to simulate, stimulate, undermine, overthrow, explicate, illuminate, deluminate, or generally ridicule anything we've learned.

**Image credits (left to right):** Fredson Bowers (standing) supervises Matthew Bruccoli's use of a Hinman Optical Collator (from the University of Virginia Special Collections); the McLeod Portable Collator, as modeled by its inventor (from <http://www.english.utoronto.ca/facultystaff/emeritiretired/mcleod.htm>); Anonymous Flemish artist, Satirical Diptych, early 16th century, oil on panel. Université de Liège.

## PRIMARY TEXTS

- Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Manchester UP
- Richard Altick and John J. Fenstermaker, *The Art of Literary Research*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Norton
- Eric Keleman, *Textual Editing and Criticism: An Introduction*, Norton (TEC)
- Other articles/short stories as assigned, available online and/or e-reserve

## **ASSIGNMENTS, summary**

1. Campus Fiction Presentation (various dates): **10%**
2. Book Review Critique: **10%**
3. “2 ways of looking at a short story”: Abstracting theoretical approaches: **10%**
4. Evaluating Editions Discussion Paper: **10%**
5. Archival Research Show and Tell: **5%**
6. Historical Commentary and Annotation Project: **10%**
7. Annotated Bibliography of Literary/Academic Journals: **5%**
8. Grant/Fellowship Proposal: **20%** (10% proposal, 5% rationale, 5% Past/Future *Vita*)
9. Discussion Questions/Participation (including mini conference paper): **20%**

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1 ~ Tuesday, January 15, 2013**

- *Readings: Art of Literary Research*, cha. 1-2
  - Bring information about 2 different grants to discuss in class
- Resources to get you started:
- UChicago Graduate Student Grant/Fellowship Blog:  
<http://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/studentgrantsfellowships/>
  - Dissertation Fellowships Wiki:  
[http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/Dissertation\\_Fellowships\\_2012-13](http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/Dissertation_Fellowships_2012-13)
  - Humanities and Social Sciences PostDoc Wiki:  
[http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/Humanities\\_and\\_Social\\_Sciences\\_Postdocs\\_2012-13](http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/Humanities_and_Social_Sciences_Postdocs_2012-13)
  - Creative Writing Jobs/Fellowship Wiki (scroll down for annual awards):  
[http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/CreativeWriting\\_2012](http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/CreativeWriting_2012)
  - Canada Council for the Arts Prizes: <http://www.canadacouncil.ca/prizes/>
  - Boston University list of Humanities Postdoctoral Fellowships and Grants  
Deadlines: <http://www.bu.edu/cas/faculty-staff/procedures-forms/research/humanities-post-doctoral-fellowships-and-grants-deadlines/>

### **Week 2 ~ Tuesday, January 22, 2013**

- *Readings: Beginning Theory*, cha. 1-5
- Please start familiarizing yourself with the WVU libraries’ digital collections (from the libraries’ main page, click “collections” → “digital collections”); pick a particular resource from this list and be prepared to talk about it

### **Week 3 ~ Tuesday, January 29, 2013**

- *Readings: Beginning Theory*, cha. 6-13
- *Due:* Book Review Critique

### **Week 4 ~ Tuesday, February 5, 2013**

- *Readings:* 2 or 3 of Saunders, Beerbohm, Moore, Borges (i.e., be prepared to discuss your own proposals and those of others working on different stories: how will we decide what papers to include in our conference?); *Beginning Theory*, cha. 14-15
- *Due:* Short Story Abstracts

**Week 5 ~ Tuesday, February 12, 2013**

- *Readings:* *Art of Literary Research*, cha. 3; “Why Study Textual Editing and Criticism” (TEC), “Text Technologies and Textual Transmissions” (TEC)

**Week 6 ~ Tuesday, February 19, 2013**

- *Readings:* “Textual Criticism and Kinds of Editions” (TEC), A.E. Housman, “The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism” (TEC)

**Week 7 ~ Tuesday, February 26, 2013**

- *Readings:* TBD
- *Due:* Evaluating Editions Discussion Paper

**Week 8 ~ Tuesday, March 5, 2013**

- *Readings:* *Art of Literary Research*, cha. 4-5
- *Due:* Archival Research Show and Tell

**Week 9 ~ Tuesday, March 12, 2013**

- *Readings:* TBD
- *Misc.:* For today’s class, bring in a marginal annotation (not yours) from a book in your own collection or from the library for show and tell

**Week 10 ~ Tuesday, March 19, 2013**

- *Readings:* TBD
- *Due:* Historical Commentary/Annotation Project

**Week 11 ~ Tuesday, March 26, 2013**

\*\*\*Spring Break ~ No Class \*\*\*

**Week 12 ~ Tuesday, April 2, 2013**

- *Readings:* TBD
- *Due:* Annotated bibliography of academic/lit journals

**Week 13 ~ Tuesday, April 9, 2013**

- *Readings:* TBD

**Week 14 ~ Tuesday, April 16, 2013**

- *Readings:* TBD

**Week 15 ~ Tuesday, April 23, 2013**

- *Readings:* TBD
- *Due:* Grant proposals

**Week 16 ~ Tuesday, April 30, 2013**

- *Due:* Mock conference presentations

## ASSIGNMENTS, detail

### 1. **Campus Fiction Presentation: 10% (due various weeks)**

Students are asked to offer a 12-15 minute scripted presentation that introduces the novel/author to their classmates with the ultimate goal of considering what the chosen novel reveals about contemporary academic life. Students are expected to hand in their script for grading/comment. Various dates; no more than 2 presentations/seminar.

Possible texts:

- *Straight Man*, Richard Russo (1997)
- *Moo*, Jane Smiley (1995)
- *Nice Work*, David Lodge (1988)
- *Trading Places: A Tale of Two Campuses*, David Lodge (1975)
- *Small World: An Academic Romance*, David Lodge (1984)
- *The Lecturer's Tale*, James Hynes (2001)
- *Lucky Jim*, Kingsley Amis (1954)
- *Possession*, A.S. Byatt (1990)
- *The Human Stain*, Philip Roth (2000)
- *Swann: A Literary Mystery*, Carol Shields (1987)
- *The Groves of Academe*, Mary McCarthy, (1953)
- *Pictures from an Institution*, Randall Jerrell (1954)
- *Wonder Boys*, Michael Chabon (1995)
- *Giles Goat-boy*, John Barth (1966)
- *The Rebel Angels*, Robertson Davies (1981)
- *Sarah Bastard's Notebook*, Marian Engel (1974)
- *Pnin*, Vladimir Nabokov (1957)
- *Tolstoy Lied*, Rachel Kaddish (2006)
- *The History Man*, Malcolm Bradbury (1975)
- *Eating People is Wrong*, Malcolm Bradbury (1959)
- *Blue Angel*, Francine Prose (2006)
- *The Masters*, C.P. Snow (1951)
- *Zuleika Dobson*, Max Beerbohm (1911)

### 2. **Book Review Critique: 10% (due week 3)**

Students are asked to familiarize themselves with a relatively recent *academic book* (either a work of criticism, theory, or scholarly anthology) as well as 3 reviews of that book in scholarly or literary journals, and write a 4-5pp paper. Papers may consider the reviewers' rhetorical stances, the context in which the book and/or reviews appear, the nature of controversy in book reviews, or the function of academic book reviewing.

### 3. **"2 ways of looking at a short story" Abstracts: 10% (due week 4)**

Students are asked to consider one of the following stories from a variety of methodological approaches to produce two 300 word abstracts (about the same story) that would lead to very different articles/conference presentations. Students may have the best results by considering a historical, quantitative, archival, or textual method along with a literary/theoretical approach.

- "Adams", George Saunders\* (from *Persuasion Nation*; online here: [http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/08/09/040809fi\\_fiction?currentPage=1](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/08/09/040809fi_fiction?currentPage=1))
- "Enoch Soames", Max Beerbohm (online here and elsewhere: <http://www.readbookonline.net/readOnLine/427/>)
- "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote", and/or "Shakespeare's Memory"\*; Jorge Luis Borges (from *Labyrinths, Borges: A Reader*) – bragging rights to those who can read these stories in Spanish

- “People Like That Are the Only People Here”, Lorrie Moore (from *Birds of America*)

\*these texts are available from The New Yorker fiction podcast

#### **4. Evaluating Editions Discussion Paper: 10% (due week 7)**

Students are asked to locate a critical scholarly edition of a major canonical work by an author of their choice (note: much mid-20<sup>th</sup> century authors’ works are not out of copyright – e.g. Samuel Beckett – and remain unavailable for such treatment) and offer a 6 pp. review evaluating the editorial approach taken by the text’s editor(s). Successful papers will use specific examples (and possibly comparison with other critical editions) to evaluate the editorial rationale provided for the edition’s text and consider the edition’s intended audience.

#### **5. Archival Research Show and Tell: 5% (due week 8)**

For this class of “show and tell” in the WVU rare book room and archives, students are asked to do a 5 minute presentation introducing their classmates to an object of interest. At the end of the class period, the most interesting/engaging artifact will be voted on, and an impressive (and in no way ironic) prize will be awarded.

#### **6. Historical Commentary and Annotation Project: 10% (due week 10)**

Details about this assignment will be discussed in class.

#### **7. Annotated Bibliography of Literary/Academic Journals: 5% (due week 12)**

Students are asked to create a document identifying at least 5 literary or academic journals in which they have placed/hope to place their future work. For each journal provide the following:

- peer-reviewed status (blind, double blind, etc.)
- acceptance rate
- issues/year
- preferred bibliographical style (Chicago, MLA, etc.)
- academic/university/workgroup affiliation
- a description of journal’s scope/traditional interests, evaluated firsthand against the journal’s purported interests as declared on their masthead

#### **8. Grant/Fellowship Proposal: 20% (due week 15)**

The major project in ENGL 680 is a grant proposal for a large external fellowship of your choice that you one day hope to win (e.g. a Mellon postdoc, a Fulbright, an NEA literature fellowship, a SSHRC postdoc) or a smaller library or teaching external fellowship that you are actually interested in applying for in the next year or two (a Folger, a Huntington, a CCCC, a writing retreat like The Banff Centre, etc.). Students will pick their fellowships in consultation with the professor (meetings should take place before week 8), and complete all the requirements for the fellowship for which an individual applicant would be responsible (project description, funding rationale/budget, etc.). In addition to the fellowship proposal, students are required to provide a 3 page reflection on the grant-writing experience along with their application materials and a fully-up-to-date vita. The project will be marked as follows: 10% proposal, 5% rationale, 5% CV.

## **9. Discussion Questions/Participation (including mini conference paper): 20%**

Students are expected to prepare at least 2 questions/comments to spark discussion for each class; these questions may or may not be called upon individually – ideally, they will emerge organically in seminar. The last class of the term will consist of our CON-ference of short mock papers designed to blow off steam and familiarize students with both presenting their work and organizing a university symposium.

### **POLICIES**

#### ***Cell Phones***

Cell phones distract from the purpose of the course and **must be turned off** (not just silenced) while we are in seminar. If there is a genuine reason why you need to keep your phone on during class time, please speak to me privately.

#### ***Social Justice***

WVU is committed to social justice. Students have the right to expect their campus to provide a positive and respectful learning environment free from discrimination and harassment both inside and outside the classroom. In ENGL 680, students are expected to uphold the WVU commitment to social justice by demonstrating curiosity, consideration, and tolerance for diversities in race, sex, political affiliation, gender identity, age, disability, economic status, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. I don't expect students to agree with each other, but I require that students listen thoughtfully to each others' points of view. Please let me know if you have questions or concerns about this matter.

#### ***Special Needs***

If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me as soon as possible. WVU Office of Disability Services at G-30 Mountainlair. Phone: (304) 293-6700  
Voice/TDD: (304) 293-7740 Email: [access2@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:access2@mail.wvu.edu).

#### ***Reading***

Graduate students are expected to have completed all of that week's assigned readings in advance of the seminar, in order that they may most fruitfully participate in classroom discussion. Please bring copies of the reading to class.

#### ***Assignments***

All assignments should be word-processed, double-spaced in 12 point font, and adhere to either Chicago or the Modern Language Association style guidelines. Every assignment should have a specific title that indicates the argument or purpose of the assignment itself and, where appropriate, contain a properly-formatted "Works Cited" page. Please number your pages.

#### ***Incompletes***

A grade of incomplete is warranted only if a substantial amount of course work has been completed by the end of the semester.