

EN 210 - Freshman Literature Spring 2009
“How Ought We to Live?”: Generic Morality Vs. Ethical Examination
Janet St. Clair - Carroll Hall 107, 303.458-4226, jstclair@regis.edu

All assignments are to be completed *before* they appear on the syllabus. Read with pencil in hand, marking significant passages as you go. You are responsible for knowing all the listed literary terms. TEXT: *Norton Introduction to Literature*, Shorter Ninth Edition. Class is in Main Hall 136.

- Tu. Jan. 13: Introduction: requirements, expectations, etc. Discussion - Literature: What's in it for you?
Th. Jan. 15: **SHORT STORY**. Intros. to "Plot" & "Character" (66, 140), "Cask of Amontillado" (123)
Tu. Jan. 20: Intro to "Point of View" (120), "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" (507), "Why I Live at the P.O." (145)
Th. Jan. 22: "Boys and Girls" (422). **Paper #1 assigned**. Writing Workshop.
Tu. Jan. 27: "Theme" (264), "Sonny's Blues" (88). **Paper #1 due at beginning of period; pages must be stapled.**
Th. Jan. 29: "The Lame Shall Enter First" (375), Excerpt from "Writing Short Stories" (412).
Tu. Feb. 3: "A Good Man is Hard to Find" (364)
Th. Feb. 5: "Symbol" intro (230), "Young Goodman Brown" (232), "Hills Like White Elephants" (128) **Paper #2 assigned.**
Tu. Feb. 10: Editing/ Revising Workshop: **bring two copies of Paper #2.**
Th. Feb. 12: **Paper # 2 due.** Flannery O'Connor, cont. Short Story to dramatic production: "The Displaced Person."
Tu. Feb. 17: "The Yellow Wallpaper" (513)
Th. Feb. 19: "A Rose for Emily" (467) **Deadline for signing up for your In-Depth Observations Project topic.**
Tu. Feb. 24: "Odour of Chrysanthemums" (524)
Th. Feb. 26: **Midterm (Paper #3).** Have a great spring break next week!
Tu. Mar. 10: **DRAMA:** "Elements of Drama": 1092 -1102. *Streetcar Named Desire* Scenes 1-3 (1140-1164). Expect a quiz.
Th. Mar. 12: *Streetcar*, carefully complete the play before this class. Objective test and/or in-class essay. **Paper #4 assigned.**
Tu. Mar. 17: *Streetcar*: Dramatic Text to Film Production.
POETRY: In each chapter, **you will be responsible for all of the editors' commentary between poems**, even if you are not assigned a careful reading of all the poems they discuss. Read each poem at least twice, preferably at separate sittings, and mark significant aspects of each.
Th. Mar. 19: Some love poems: Pound (599), Roethke (691), Snodgrass (620), Kinnell (629), Heany (604)
Tu. Mar. 24: ...& more: Millay (655), Ortiz (637), Lee (631), Shakespeare (704), Browning (handout)
Th. Mar. 26: Lethal Lies: Owen (823), Betjeman (677), Jarrell (715), Piercy (619, 830). **Paper #5 assigned.**
Tu. Mar. 31: Editing/Revising Workshop: **bring two copies of Paper #5.**
Th. Apr. 2: The sonnet (), review Millay & Shakespeare (655,704), McKay (the sonnets on 922 & 923), Frost (810). **Paper #5 due at the beginning of the period.**
Tu. Apr. 7: Scanning poetry: Poems TBA
Th. Apr. 9: Presentation conferences: individual conferences
Tu. Apr. 14: In-Depth Observations Project Presentations
Th. Apr. 16: In-Depth Observations Project Presentations
Tu. Apr. 21: In-Depth Observations Project Presentations
Th. Apr. 23: Catch-up Day
Final Exam (**Paper #6**): 10:10 Tuesday, April 28

Office Hours: My office is Carroll Hall 107. Phone number is 303.458.4226. E-mail is jstclair@regis.edu (but I don't check it every day). Office hours are Tuesdays 9:25 – 10:30, Wednesdays 12:15 – 2:30, Thursdays 12:15 – 1:30, and by appointment. If none of these times work for you, see me after class to set up an appointment. I'm rarely on campus on Mondays. I welcome and encourage your visits.

General Guidelines

Course Description and Objective: This course examines genres. While focusing on the literary genres of short story, drama, and poetry, we will simultaneously analyze generic moral or ethical conventions—often ambiguous, oppositional, and even hypocritical—that inspire and inform the content and form of the texts we read. These examinations of the structures of both literary and cultural texts are intended to refine your competencies in all of the communications skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and to expand your intellectual flexibility as we work toward the rigorous critical thought and commitment to justice that characterize Regis University.

Attendance/ Participation: Since this is primarily a discussion class, attendance and active participation are required. I do not differentiate between “excused” and “unexcused” absences: you’re either in class or you’re not.

Five absences will result in your semester grade being lowered by one full letter grade; six absences (three weeks of class) will result in an F for the semester. Students with documented prolonged illness/ injury or excessive university-sanctioned absences may apply for special consideration.

Although there are penalties for absences, I offer rewards for good attendance. Assuming active participation, an attendance grade is assigned as follows: 0 = A+, 1 = A, 2 = A-, 3 = B, 4 = C, and 5 = D.

Daily Work: Most classes will involve a quiz, small group study question, or short response paper. These will earn “daily grades.” In most cases, daily assignments missed because of absence cannot be made up. Because many of us have legitimate reasons for missing one or two classes during the semester, or for coming to class unprepared once or twice, I will drop your lowest daily grade.

Grades: Your semester grade will be the average of approximately 18 to 20 “major grades,” as follows:

1. **Papers:** The *Streetcar Named Desire* test and Paper #1 are each worth one major grade. Papers 2, 3, 4 and 5 are worth two major grades each. One of those two grades is for content (the critical significance of your thesis and the strength of your development and support of that thesis), and the other is for form (how effectively you present your argument: organization according to attached Composition Guidelines when required, clarity, gracefulness of style, etc.) Unless otherwise instructed, the form grade of Papers 2-5 will be based on your incorporation of the Composition Guidelines attached to this syllabus.
2. **Cumulative grade for daily assignments:** the total number of individual daily grades (quizzes, etc.) will be condensed into four or five major grades, depending on how many daily grades there are. Some particularly demanding “daily grades” may be worth double credit.
3. **In-Depth Observations Project and Presentation:** This is your single most important grade of the semester, and will be worth three major grades. A detailed description follows.
4. **Attendance/ Participation:** This is worth two major grades.

Note: Failure to submit any assignment will result in a 0 (zero) which counts as two Fs.

Late Papers and Rewrites: Papers 1-3 may be turned in up to one week after the deadline at the expense of one letter grade on both form and content. If you do not turn in a paper by the end of that one-week grace period, you will receive two zeros (four Fs) for that paper. If you think special circumstances warrant an extension, make arrangements with me **before** the due date: extensions are not given on the due date unless extraordinary circumstances apply. Papers 4 and 5 will not be accepted late.

Rewrites of papers are optional unless you’re instructed otherwise. Rewrites are graded considerably more stringently than original submissions, so mere cosmetic touch-ups will almost certainly earn you a lower grade than your paper originally got. Rewrites require an office conference with me, and must be turned in no later than two weeks after the original was handed back. Paper 4 and 5 (your final exam) can’t be rewritten for credit.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is both an ethical and a legal breach. Anyone found to have submitted plagiarized work will be dropped from the class. If it’s too late to withdraw, the student will get an F for the semester. In either case, I will report instances of plagiarism to your advisor, and all of your professors. And believe me, your reputation will follow you. If you are having trouble with any aspect of your papers, please let me and/or one of the writing consultants help you. I want you to succeed, and I want you to know that you can.

In-Depth Observations Project and Presentation: Because, as college students and as adults, you will consistently be required to demonstrate a high degree of self-direction and responsibility, your most important grade will be earned on an assignment that you will design and complete yourself. You are free to choose almost any project you can conceive, as long as it involves a critical examination of literary, social, or cultural genres or conventions in

some way. On the following page are a few possibilities that you can use if you wish, but they are meant only to spur your imagination:

- Analyze strategies in TV ads used in McCain's and/or Obama's campaigns
- Analyze other TV or magazine ads for other strategies of manipulation.
- "Read" cars, clothes, make-up, etc., to interpret what they are meant to suggest about a person
- Study the narrative strategies of silent movies by Charlie Chaplin.
- Do a comparative interpretive study of the creation myth, flood myth, etc., in various cultures.
- Go to a series of readings/book signings at Tattered Cover, and analyze the conventions involved.
- Go to some plays, or movies on a related theme, or by some particular director.
- Get involved in a service project that seeks to transcend cultural difference in some way.
- Compare and distinguish two musical traditions: spiritual vs. gospel, black rap vs. Chicano rap, etc.
- Study Jacob Riis' early use of photography as a documentary social narrative.
- Look at labor unions' songs during the depression, or prison songs in the African American tradition, etc.
- Write a portfolio of poetry of your own, experimenting with various stanza forms.
- Do an analytical comparison of malls, restaurants, churches, etc (Park Meadows vs. ?, McDonald's vs. ?)
- Do an analysis of the ethics (or absence of ethics) in a popular television program, show how sit-com narratives reinforce or undercut gender or racial conventions, etc.
- Compare attitudes toward the War in Iraq with those of the Vietnam War (in political cartoons, in movies, in music, in student activism, etc.) Or don't compare: pick one area of focus.
- Research your family history to illuminate the immigrant experience, the evolution of agriculture, etc.
- Show how Hollywood attempts to influence politics, cultural values, etc. (Pick one film or one director?)

Once you've decided on a topic, come talk to me about it. You're encouraged to work collaboratively, as long as you design your project in such a way that I can grade each person individually (this protects you). Take this assignment seriously: it is your opportunity to guide your education toward your own interests, and I'm confident you'll do exceptional work.

I expect that you'll invest a minimum of twenty-five hours into this project. Start early, and you'll be surprised what great resources turn up—programs on PBS, guest speakers on campus, new books on the subject, people who know experts on your topic, etc. As soon as we know each other's topics, we can help put each other in touch with resources. You do not have to write a formal paper for this assignment if you can show me the scope and results of your efforts in the body of your presentation.

Once you've gotten my approval on your topic (and this is only to make sure we both agree that your idea has the potential to earn an A), you can sign up for a presentation date. Your presentation will be about ten to twelve minutes long *per person*, and will summarize your research/ work. You are encouraged to make the presentation as innovative and interesting as you can, using music, video clips, Power Point, or whatever works for your topic.

Before class on the day of your presentation, you will give me a complete bibliography of all print and non-print resources you used, and a full outline of your presentation that begins with your thesis statement and parenthetically sites your sources wherever you use them (show how and where you used your sources).

Once again: the important thing is to get started! This is your most important grade of the semester.

***A.D.A. Note:** If you have a documented physical disability that I should know about, please tell me how I can accommodate you.

And now, on the other side of this page, FREE with every fully-paid tuition, your very own

COMPOSITION GUIDELINES!

Composition Guidelines

Use these Composition Guidelines to improve your grade on your critical papers. This format is certainly not the only way to organize and develop an academic paper. It is, however, a particularly good form to know because it makes it practically impossible to get off track or confuse your reader, no matter how long your paper is. It is applicable or adaptable to a great many (most?) of the writing assignments you will have both in college and in

your future professional life because it emphasizes focus, clarity, and logical development. Accommodating your papers to this format is therefore part of your critical/ research writing assignment for this class. Unless you have gotten prior permission to use a different organizational form, it will not be possible to earn an A on your critical paper form grade without following these ten guidelines.

1. A clear, precisely defined, and insightful THESIS STATEMENT that identifies the author and text (for textual analysis) and tells the reader in one sentence the critical position that your paper will develop and support. (Ask yourself, "What is the PURPOSE of this paper? Exactly what am I setting out to prove?") For this class, make this the first sentence of the paper.

2. An adequately developed INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH that explains specifically how the topic will be examined. For our purposes, no funnel introductions, no generalizations, and no vague "teasers": your introduction must give your reader a solid and specific understanding of the scope and direction of your discussion.

3. A logical and easy-to-follow ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN. Your introduction will set this up; your topic sentences will keep your reader on course.

4. A clear TOPIC SENTENCE for each paragraph that does these two jobs: a) expresses the idea developed in that paragraph and b) relates the central claim of the paragraph to overall thesis development. For this class, make this the first sentence of each paragraph.

5. PARAGRAPHS that adequately develop and support their topic sentences, and never deviate from precise development of topic sentence and thesis. No plot summary, no vague support, no generalizations--only solid textual proof of your thesis.

6. Smoothly integrated and correctly punctuated SUPPORTIVE QUOTATIONS with full and correct documentation.

7. SENTENCES that are grammatically correct, succinct, gracefully constructed, and logically interconnected. Complex ideas require simple expression: unnecessarily big words and convoluted sentences are for amateurs.

8. A CONCLUSION that unifies and encapsulates the various points of your argument/critical position. Don't bring new points into the conclusion, because these guidelines require that you develop and support all your claims.

9. An OVERALL PAPER that presents a clear, unified, and coherent position that conforms to the requirements of the assignment (no merely "informational" highschool-type research papers, for example). In critical writing, every word must relate specifically to the development of your thesis (no broad claims or generalizations).

10. ORIGINALITY of thought and evidence of scholarly INSIGHT.

The function of formal writing is to communicate your ideas clearly to someone else. For this reason, I am very strict on organization (unity and coherence) and support (proving the validity of your thesis). Because it is also important neither to waste your reader's time nor to dilute the power of what you have to say, I am also hard on redundancy, wordiness, and vagueness: be concise and precise. Be sure to proofread, and try to get someone else to read your paper before you submit it for a grade. See me or a writing consultant for substantive help on your papers; work with a writing consultant on cosmetics and proofreading. **When you visit the writing center for help, be sure to show them these composition guidelines** so they understand the expectations.