

Spectrum Program Session 1

Course Title: Literary Analysis Honors: Short Stories

Course Description

“The answers you get from literature depend on the questions you pose.” — Margaret Atwood. As students read, discuss and write about the short story, they learn to analyze literary works critically and coherently. Selections may include classics by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Virginia Woolf, Edgar Allan Poe, or Jack London, as well as contemporary works. Along with placing each reading in its biographical, historical, and cultural context, participants identify literary and aesthetic techniques and characteristics and use them in their creative writing. Students will also hone their ability to write essays with purpose and clarity. This class is an excellent prelude to honors or AP literature courses.

Essential Questions

- What makes a short story effective? What techniques and elements are characteristic of a short story?
- How can we evaluate author style and effectiveness in order to apply that knowledge to our own writing?
- In what ways can we connect the classic short stories to the contemporary ones using our critical thinking?
- How does a story’s historical and cultural context affect our critical understanding of it?
- How can we use different critical perspectives to help us understand the structure and content of a story?

Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Know the elements of a short story.
- Understand how to place a story in biographical, historical, and cultural context and why it is important to do so.
- Apply their knowledge of analyzing short stories to writing their own stories.
- Analyze short stories for structure, elements, and techniques, both in literary analysis essays and discussion.

Instructional Strategies

Students will complete several pre-assessments over the course of this class; these will help establish the preexisting knowledge with which students enter the course. Based on these pre-assessments, class activities will take various forms, including large group discussion, small group discussion, writing partners, and individual conferences with teacher and teaching assistant. Students will also be able to choose several of their final products, such as short story topics, literary analysis essay topics, and final story presentation. Finally, regular formative assessments, both written and verbal, will be administered to assess students’ progress and will be used to inform the class development.

Resources and Materials

Books

- Arp, Thomas R. and Greg Johnson. *Story and Structure*. 2008. ISBN-10: 9781413033090 (excerpts)
- King, Stephen. *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. 2010. ISBN-10: 9781439156810
- Rosa, Alfred and Paul Eschholz. *Models for Writers: Short Essays for Composition*. 2009. ISBN-10: 0312531133
- Strunk, William and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 1999. ISBN-10: 9780205309023
- Selected short stories (handouts)

***Short stories may include, but are not limited to:

- “Thank You, M’am” (Langston Hughes)
- “Harrison Bergeron” (Kurt Vonnegut)
- “Lamb to the Slaughter” (Roald Dahl)
- “The Most Dangerous Game” (Richard Connell)
- “EPICAC” (Kurt Vonnegut)
- “The Tell-Tale Heart” (Edgar Allan Poe)
- “A Summer’s Reading” (Bernard Malamud)
- “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” (Gabriel Garcia Marquez)
- “The Lottery” (Shirley Jackson)
- “The Destroyers” (Graham Greene)
- “My Name” (Sandra Cisneros)
- “Clean Sweep” (Joan Bauer)

Materials

- a. Notebook with several sections for note-taking, in-class writing, homework, etc.
- b. Blue/black pens for notes and homework
- c. Colored pens for editing and revising
- d. Highlighters (several colors) for annotating and marking your own and classmates’ writing
- e. Post-its for annotating texts and responding to classmates’ writing
- f. Laptop will be useful but not necessary

Student Assessment

Pre-Assessment

Students will complete a pre-assessment designed to inform the instructor of their existing knowledge regarding the elements and structure of a short story. This will include definition and short answer questions as well as a short essay that will serve as a writing sample.

CTD Grading Scale

A+	100-97%	A	96-93%	A-	92-90%
B+	89-87%	B	86-83%	B-	82-80%
C+	79-77%	C	76-73%	C-	72-70%
D+	69-67%	D	66-63%	D-	62-60%
F	below 60%				

Breakdown of Final Grade

10% class participation (discussion, peer revision)

20% homework (response to literature questions, reflections on class discussion)

30% literature response (short essays in response to questions based on short stories we read)

30% final short story and process (all drafts)

10% final short story presentation (student choice: may be a reading, a discussion of the writing process, etc.)

Post-Assessment

Students will complete a pre-assessment designed to inform the instructor of their existing knowledge regarding the elements and structure of a short story. This will include definition and short answer questions as well as a short essay that will serve as a writing sample.

Schedule

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments/Assessments
6/27	Introductions (instructor, TA, students, authors, short story elements/characteristics)	Welcome! Course expectations Pre-assessment Learning profiles Writer's Notebook Dissecting a short story (plot structure)	Pre-assessment Practice on short story #1
6/28	Literature and discussion: the classics	What makes a classic short story? Share practice short story responses Read short story #2 Writer's Notebook Discussion groups Dissecting a short story (characterization)	Read Stephen King excerpt #1
6/29	Writing gurus	Discuss King excerpt: why write? Read short story #3 Writer's Notebook How do you analyze a short story? Begin short story analysis of a short story of your choice Dissecting a short story (point of view)	Draft 1 of short story analysis
6/30	Writing about writing	Share/workshop short story analysis Conference with instructor/TA Writer's Notebook Strunk and White reading group #1 Dissecting a short story (dialogue)	Revise short story analysis

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments/Assessments
7/1	Connecting reading and writing	Share Strunk and White responses Writer's Notebook Share short story analyses How do we apply what we know about analyzing short stories to writing our own? Brainstorming session: topics, characters, etc. for your own story Placing a story in context (historical and social) Week 1 reflection	Plot map, character/conflict chart, and plan for short story Read/answer questions about short story #4 (final classic short story)
7/4	Creating a short story	Share developments from reflections Return short story analyses – revise IF NECESSARY Creative writing group #1 – share plans for short story, begin drafting Reading group #2 – share responses for short story #4 Writer's Notebook Importance of literary criticism	Draft 1 of short story
7/5	Drafting a short story	Creative writing group #3 – read-aloud of draft 1 of short story Whole class mini-lesson: suspense, dialogue, or character Individual writing time (work on skills presented in mini-lesson specifically) Writer's Notebook	Revise short story
7/6	Reconnecting reading and writing	Read short story #5 (contemporary) as a class; highlight elements, plot structure, etc. Side by side: compare/contrast your short story with any of the 5 we have read so far Writer's Notebook Character analysis	Revise short story Response to short story #5

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments/Assessments
7/7	Beyond the plot	Writer's Notebook Share response to short story #5 Tone, mood, and figurative language: more to a story Conference with instructor and TA regarding progress and revision of short story	Revise short story
7/8	Polishing the draft	Share short stories in creative writing group #3 Analyze peers' short stories for characterization, tone, mood, etc. Writer's Notebook Week 2 reflection Reading groups – Strunk and White #2	Strunk and White response #2 Fine-tune short story
7/11	Editing the draft	Share developments from reflections Editing v. revising Peer and self editing session Writer's Notebook Proposal for final presentation Read short story #6	Finish proposal for final presentation Short story #6 response
7/12	Final projects	Return short stories Conference with instructor/TA about final presentation proposal Writer's Notebook Reading group #3 – Stephen King Begin final project: new short story, revise existing short story, analyze short story, etc.	Continue final project progress
7/13	Final projects	Writer's Notebook Reading group #4 – Strunk and White Final project work	Continue final project progress
7/14	Final projects	Writer's Notebook Final project work: what do you need to polish your project? Individual/peer conferences Practice presentations	Final project

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments/Assessments
7/15	Presentations Post-assessment	Presentations Post-assessment Final reflection	

CTD Statement on Third-Party Web Sites

Instructors are required to thoroughly review any third-party web sites they intend to use in their courses for inappropriate content. However, because web content continuously changes, CTD disclaims any responsibility for any of the content contained on third-party web sites used in course materials. If you become aware of anything that may be inappropriate, please notify CTD staff immediately.

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