Course Overview and Syllabus

Fall 2012

ENG 240.001 Reading Popular Culture

Instructor: James Nelson

Class: T&Th 12:30 – 1:50 PM
Bldg 12 Rm 103

Office: Building 5 Room 538

Campus E-mail: jnelson@monroecc.edu

Office Hours: MWF 10:00 – 10:50 AM,
TTh 11:30 – 12:20 PM or by appointment

Office Phone: 292-3390

Web Page: web.monroecc.edu/jnelson

Required Texts and Supplies:


Any collegiate-level dictionary

A stapler – I do not accept multi-page assignments unless they are stapled; bring the stapler to class.

Notebook

Course Learning Outcomes:

• Demonstrate an ability to recognize and explain the differences among the various genres of literature.
• Demonstrate the development of critical insight and an aesthetic sensibility towards literature.
• Demonstrate an ability to write, think, and speak about literature with clarity and precision.
• Demonstrate an understanding of the connections between literature and life experiences.
• Demonstrate the ability to use critical thinking skills to analyze various works of literature.

Course Description:

An introduction to reading and analyzing these primary genres of literature: fiction, poetry, and drama. The course may also include creative nonfiction. Students will respond critically to readings of different historical and cultural contexts through class discussion and written work. These contexts may include different world views, politics, classes, ethnicity, races, genders, and sexual orientations. (SUNY-H)
Instructor Expectations/ Important Information:

- I would appreciate hearing from anyone who needs any special accommodations for seating, testing, taking class notes, or completing assignments.

  - Participation
    - Attendance and punctuality obviously impact participation, but active participation is the primary basis of the participation grade.

- Any student who misses 4 or more classes may be recommended for withdrawal from this course.

- The door will be shut at the beginning of class. Students are expected to respect that boundary and not knock or attempt to enter after that point.

- All reading assignments must be completed for the class period. Students who have not completed the work in preparation for class discussion will be told to leave for the day in order to complete the work. This will be marked as an absence for that day.

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Written Requirements

- Academic dishonesty of any sort will not be tolerated. If any work handed in contains any material from an outside source which is not given proper citation, that work may earn an “F" and the student may be in danger of failing the class depending on the magnitude of the offense. Please see the MCC Student Handbook rules for plagiarism for further clarification.
  
  - Duplication is a form of academic dishonesty in which the student has handed in material for a grade in more than one class without having received permission from both instructors prior to handing it in. (This includes high school work as well as college-level.)
Policy on Late Work

- I do not accept late reflection papers. They must be turned in the day they are due, or they will not be accepted. If you cannot make it to class on a day when a paper is due, then you must make arrangements to have the paper delivered to my office by 3:30 PM that day.

The learning centers:

- Brighton – Bldg 11 Rm 106.
- Damon – Integrated Learning Center 4-130, Electronic Learning Center 4-071

Please check the learning centers for hours

Monroe Community College has a number of Learning Centers at Brighton (for example, Accounting, Math, Psychology, Writing, the Electronic Learning Center, etc.) and at Damon (for example, the Integrated Learning Center, Electronic Learning Center, etc.). Learning centers are staffed with instructional personnel and may be equipped with computers and software to assist students. It is recommended that students use the Learning Centers to get additional help with concepts learned in the classroom and with their homework. Please refer to your MCC student email to review your referral and objectives for your use of the Learning Center(s).

All English and Philosophy classes, including this one, are Writing Intensive (WR). In WR courses, students have the opportunity to learn course content through formal and informal writing assignments. To find out more about WR courses at MCC, consult your student handbook or visit the Writing Across the Curriculum website at http://www.monroecc.edu/depts/wac.

Emergency closing or class cancellation:

- College closings will be announced on local broadcasts starting at 5:30 AM. The MCC website will also display this information. To avoid overloading the phone lines, do not call the college.
- Class cancellations are available on the MCC website under “Quick Links” and via phone at 292-2066. Press “1” for Brighton.

Grading Breakdown:

Class Participation: 20%
Reflection papers 50%
Test 1 15%
Test 2 15%

A = Excellence 90-100%
B = Above Average 80 – 89%
C = Average 70 – 79%
D = Below Average 60 – 69%
F = Failure 0 – 59%
Syllabus

Introduction

Week 1
9/4
Discuss course overview and syllabus.
Read “Making the Grade” by Kurt Weisenfeld

9/6
Assignments due:
Handout: Hawkins: “Should We Study King Kong or King Lear?”
Handout – Browne: “Popular Culture – New Notes Toward a New Definition”

The Examined Life

Week 2
9/11
Assignments due:
Fagles: “Antigone” 3TP pp 55-128
View a Jerry Springer Show by 9/10 if you are going to complete Reflection Paper #1. It can be found on channel 31 (FOX) at 10:00 AM. Youtube.com also has shows.
Reflection paper #1

9/13
Assignments due:
Web Reading: Robertson: “One Week”
Web Reading: Yankovic: “Jerry Springer”
Web Reading: Eminem: “Lose Yourself”
Web Reading: Yankovic: “Couch Potato”
Web Reading: Martin and Carlsson: “I Want It That Way”
Web Reading: Yankovic: “I Bought It on Ebay”

Week 3
9/18-20
Assignments due:
Web Reading – Thoreau: Excerpt from “Where I Lived and What I Lived For” Read by 2/7
Watch Ferris Bueller’s Day Off if you are going to complete Reflection Paper #2
Reflection paper #2 due 9/18

Karma in Popular Culture

Week 4
9/25-27
Assignments due:
Watch Fight Club outside of class for 9/25 – we will discuss the film 9/25-27

Week 5
10/2-4
Assignments due:
Web Reading – Hawthorne: “The Minister’s Black Veil” read by 10/2
King: Storm of the Century – Have the entire book read by 10/2
Reflection paper #3 due 10/2

Specialized Visions of Culture

Week 6
10/9-11
Assignments due:
Watch Citizen Kane outside of class for 10/9 – we will discuss the film

Week 7
10/16
Assignments due:
Test 1 – You will have 50 minutes in-class time to complete the test

10/18
Assignments due:
Watch The Matrix on your own before class
Reflection paper #4

Week 8
10/23-25
Assignments due:
We will continue our discussion of The Matrix
Week 9
10/30-11/1 Assignments due:
Watch Star Wars IV: A New Hope by 10/30

Week 10
11/6 Assignment due:
Rowling: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone – Have it all read by 11/6
We will discuss the “Harry Potter phenomenon”
Reflection paper #5
11/8 Assignments Due
Orwell: 1984 – Book 1
Reflection paper #6
In order to complete the reflection paper, you will need to read the web readings on the Boy Scouts of America and the Hitler Youth.

Week 11
11/13 Assignments due:
Orwell: 1984 – Books 2-3
11/15 Assignments due:
Web Reading: McCloud: Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art

Week 12
11/20 Assignments due:
Moore and Lloyd: V for Vendetta – Books I-II
11/22 Enjoy Thanksgiving break – Don’t eat too much turkey!
The Big Finish/The Show Must Go On

Week 13
11/27 Assignments due:
Moore and Lloyd: V for Vendetta – Book III
11/29 Assignments due:
Web Reading: “Orpheus Myth” – Have it read for 11/29
Watch Moulin Rouge on your own before class 11/29

Week 14
12/4-6 Assignments due:
We will continue our discussion of Moulin Rouge

Week 15
12/11 Assignments due:
Web: “Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”
Web Reading: Roberts: “Afternoons and Coffeespoons”
12/13 Assignments due:
Test 2 – You will have 50 minutes in-class time to complete the test
Reflection Paper Guidelines
Eng. 240

Requirements:

- The paper will be a critical examination of the readings. You will make an argument about your understanding of the work. To prove that argument, you need to use quotes and specifics from the text.

- Please **do not do research for these papers**. I want to know what you think rather than what “experts” have to say. If you feel you will be unable to complete the assignment without research, do not forget to properly cite all material used.

- Make sure to check the Reflection Papers over so that they follow standard written English rules. Because they are to be graded, please be sure to type or word-process each paper. **Handwritten work will not be accepted.**

- The Reflection Papers shouldn’t be less than one page, but please limit them to no more than two.

- You may choose any four of the six topics to complete by their due dates. If you would like to do a fifth, I will drop the lowest grade.

The reflection paper assignments:

1. What similarities do you see between the Leader of the Chorus in Antigone and Jerry in The Jerry Springer Show? How does the show appear to perform the same functions as Greek tragedy? How is it different (besides the fact that it is produced on different technology over 2000 years later)? Please use specifics from the play and the Springer episode you watched to prove your analysis. Due 9/11

2. In Thoreau’s excerpt from “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” he outlines a plan for how he suggests people should live their lives. Does Ferris in Ferris Bueller’s Day Off live up to these ideals? How or how not? Please offer specific examples from the essay and film to prove your argument. Due 9/18

3. Both Hawthorne’s “The Minister’s Black Veil” and King’s Storm of the Century examine the effects of secret sin on small towns in New England. What do the two authors conclude about the power of secret sin? How does the concept of secret sin influence the decisions of the citizens and the leaders of the two towns? Please use specifics from both Hawthorne’s short story and King’s teleplay to prove your argument. Due 10/2

4. In The Matrix, the characters are CONSTANTLY commenting on “belief.” How does belief alter what happens within the Matrix? Please offer specific examples from the film to prove your argument. Due 10/18

5. In Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone, Harry, Ron and eventually Hermione become best friends. What is the value and significance of these relationships? Since Harry is obviously the hero/antihero, how do Ron and Hermione’s friendships complete him? What different understandings do they bring to his experiences in the wizarding world? Please offer specifics from the book to prove your arguments. Due 11/6

6. In 1984 Winston remarks upon the fervent adoration of the Spies for the Party and for their country. In what ways is this youth organization similar to the Boy Scouts of America and to the Hitler Youth? In what ways are these organizations different? Please offer examples to prove your argument. Due 11/8

**The Reflection Papers combined are worth 50% of the grade – Don’t forget to hand them in.**