**English 297** **A Intermediate Interdisciplinary Writing -Humanities**

**Course Syllabus**

## Important Info

**Instructor:**Norman Wacker

**Class Meets**: M, W 1:00 -2 :20 p.m., THO 231

**Office Hours:**M/W 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

**Office**: Padelford Hall A18

**E-mail:**nwacker@uw.edu

## Objectives:

The primary objective of this course is to establish an interactive classroom community to look hard at the way we read and appraise works of literature and their impact on the lives of readers, writers and the larger imagined communities in which they live.

Literary texts, whether fiction, poetry, dramatic literature, memoir or literary criticism shape our perception of the peoples and worlds they depict, dating back to ancient times, in ways as pervasive and as influential in the lives and times of its readers over as cinema, animation, computer games and social media are in our own.

## Overview:

Particularly since the 19th century, stories from many societies and times have, through print and translation, had far reaching distribution within and across world cultures. The short story, and short story collections, offer windows on culture, sensibility and personal conduct. Along the way the craft of organizing and reflecting on human experience through fiction surged in influence, as print media, popular literacy, the magazine and book trades created mass and global readerships.  The short story, serialized stories and novels began to be freely available, inexpensive and popular. In the process, they became mirrors which readers held up to themselves and their own times, even as they engaged the times and places of others.

Our course consists of 4 major themes: *Fiction and Intercultural Communication; Cultural Criticism; Poetry and History; Memoir and Graphic Novels*.

## Key Questions Raised by Our Course:

What are the impacts of craft and innovation in this medium on its readers, their sensibility, sense of fashion and conduct? How do writers and their approach to character, point-of-view, social convention, plot, use of narration, and dialogue, frame the inner and the social experience of the reader?  We will use discussion of these fundamental questions, informal writing about our reading experience and analysis of the way our writers construct that experience, to document our experience as readers, even as we explore and analyze the practice of the writer.

## Core Questions for Reading Notes:

1. Name and highlight or mark-up the things that capture your attention as you read.
2. Upon reflection, what are some of the ways the patterns you noticed matter?
3. What did you learn as you worked with this text about the range of approaches that can be employed in using this genre (short story, poem, critical essay, memoire, graphic novel)?

## Requirements and Grading Policy

*Class Participation*

Engaged preparation and active participation in each class meeting, including: Canvas HW assignments, sharing informal responses to the assigned reading for each class meeting, informal reading notes, weekly debriefs on new facts about the author, time period, cultural context, and bringing written *work-in-progress* for each of our three writing assignments.

*Three Major Projects*

Out of 4 major themes, you will write 3 major essays. Three short analytical papers on 1) what we *see* and experience when we read and / or the writer’s hand in what we read, 2) analysis of the way one of our required stories works and why it matters. See more details in the **When You Start to Write Your Major Paper** document.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Course Component** | **% of Total Grade** |
| Major Essay 1 | 30% |
| Major Essay 2 | 20% |
| Major Essay 3 | 30% |
| Class Participation  (aggregated hw and in-class activity) | 20% |

Reading List:   
Lydia Davis, “Five Stories”

Jamaica Kincaid, “On Seeing England for the First Time”

Chimamanda Adiche, “The Thing Around Your Neck”

Andric, “Letter from 1920”

Bazdulj, “The Other Letter”

Octavia Butler, “Speech Sounds”

James Joyce, “The Dead”

Alice Munro, “The View from Castle Rock”

Chimamanda Adiche, “The Danger of a Single Story”

Langston Hughes 200, “Years of African American Poetry”

Makarand Paranjape, “From Absent Authority to Present Responsibility:

An agenda for Indian (English) Criticism”

Molly Crabapple “Where Else Can They Go?”

Alamgir Hashmi, “Ramazan Libation”

TS Eliot, “The Wasteland”

Wislawa Szmborska “View with a Grain of Sand”

Art Spiegelman, “Maus”

Primo Levi, “Survival in Auschwitz”

David Albahari, “Gotz and Meyer”

W.B. Sebald, “On the Natural History of Destruction”