EGL 192.07: Introduction to Fiction, Spring 2014

Instructor: Benjamin Blickle
Office Hours: Monday 10 a.m. – Noon, Wednesday: Noon – 1:00 p.m.
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Course Description:
In this course we will examine modern fiction, with special attention to what prose accomplished in the last century and how these accomplishments relate to our contemporary understanding and appreciation of literary texts. Our course will feature novels and shorter pieces by authors such as Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Woolf, Munro, Ford, Cather, and Greene, among others. Lecture and discussion will foreground careful analytical reading and critical writing. Final grades will be determined by quizzes, exams, essays, responses, and class participation.

Required Texts:
The Good Soldier, Ford Maddox Ford (1915)
The Professor’s House, Willa Cather (1925)
Passing, Nella Larsen (1928)
The End of the Affair, Graham Greene (1951)
The Seas, Samantha Hunt (2004)
*Additional short readings will be distributed in class and via BlackBoard

Course Objectives:
This class will focus on reading texts closely with attention to language, content and form; such texts include published works and drafts of student writing for the purposes of peer review. Through peer and instructor review, as well as revision, we will also learn to write focused, organized and convincing analytical essays in clear, standardized English prose, working with both primary and secondary sources. We will direct our efforts towards thesis-driven, interpretive essays of increasing length and complexity. These essays will teach us to understand conventions of literary study, including: familiarity with literary terms, genres, devices; knowledge of poetic, dramatic, narrative and rhetorical forms; awareness of literary criticism and theory. Our class meetings will include discussions of others’ perspectives, asking productive questions, and articulation of our ideas. We will cover a broad range of English and American literatures with an understanding of how texts emerge from, respond to and shape historical and cultural contexts. Some of this reading will address non-Western literatures with attention to aesthetic traditions particular to these bodies of literature and awareness of how texts emerge from, respond to and shape historical and cultural contexts.

Attendance & Participation:
Students are entitled to four absences. Additional absences will be counted against the final grade one-third of a letter grade for each absence. (Ex: A student with five absences who earns an “A” in course assignments will receive an “A-”) The concept of
“explained absences” does not apply in this course. Full attendance requires a student be present for the entire class. If you arrive more than ten minutes late or leave more than ten minutes early, you will be marked absent for the day. Participation grades will be based on quality as well as quantity of contributions.

Classroom Respectfulness:
To minimize distractions, cell phones must be turned off and put away during class. Unless you have informed me that you have a family emergency or other specific event that requires you remain reachable, your phone should never be visible, and I will ask you to put it away if I see it. For the same reason, I prefer that students not use laptops in class. If you are accustomed to taking notes on a laptop, please see me during the first week of class.

Blackboard (http://blackboard.stonybrook.edu):
The class Blackboard site for this class will contain course content and discussion posts. Our course syllabus and all assignments will be available on Blackboard. In addition to this material, we will use the site to supply links and other materials to supplement our course documents and to contextualize key elements of our assigned readings.

Writing Assignments:
In this course you will write several papers during the semester. In the response papers you will make an argument based on analysis of one text we discuss in class. In the final paper, you will make a synthesized argument based on analysis and of two (different) texts. One of the goals of this class will be drafting and revising your own essays. To this end, I will provide detailed instructions to begin your assignments, which you will then revise with my feedback as well as your peers’ leading up to the final due date. All papers must be typed, in Times New Roman (or other standard font), 12 point, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, stapled. In addition to these papers, you will also write quick reactions to readings, annotations, homages and other brief assignments. This writing will be designed to engage you with the reading material and your longer essays. You will receive a cumulative grade for these supplementary assignments at the end of the semester.

Late Papers:
Keeping up on the reading and assignments will be essential to this class. The drafting and revising processes are intended to help you work towards satisfying final essays in an efficient and timely manner. Late papers will be penalized a third of a grade for each day late. Final paper grades may be penalized for late drafts.

Quizzes and Responses:
To make sure that everyone is following the reading schedule, you will periodically respond in writing to the assigned texts. On some occasions, these in-class assignments will be quizzes, short writing responses, or creative exercises. Your responses will not require memorization or regurgitation of minute details; instead, they will test your understanding of major characters, plot events, and narrative style. For your final grade I will drop your lowest response grade before calculating your average. *Note: there will
be no opportunity to make up these responses outside of class, you need to be present during the quiz or writing exercise to take them. If you are not present, the quiz or response will not be factored in calculating your final grade.

**Final Grade Calculation:**
Class Participation and Attendance = 15%
Quizzes and In-class Assignments = 15%
Short Response Papers = 35%
Final Paper = 35%

**Academic Integrity:**
Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person’s work as your own is always wrong. Faculty members are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary.

**DSS Assistance:**
If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128; Telephone: (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

**Critical Incident Management:**
Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty members are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students’ ability to learn.

**Schedule of Classes:**
*Readings scheduled each day should be completed before class.*

**Monday, January 27th**
Introductions
Syllabus
Goals and expectations
Handout and introduce reading assignments for Wednesday

**Wednesday January 29th**
“Helping” by Robert Stone
“The Afterlife” by Amy Hempel
Close reading as a class
Monday February 3\textsuperscript{rd}
*The End of the Affair*, Part 1

Wednesday February 5\textsuperscript{th}
*The End of the Affair*, Part 2

Monday February 10\textsuperscript{th}
*The End of the Affair*, Part 3

Wednesday February 12\textsuperscript{th}
Short stories
Short Response Paper 1

Monday February 17\textsuperscript{th}
*Passing*, Part 1

Wednesday February 19\textsuperscript{th}
*Passing*, Part 2

Monday February 24\textsuperscript{th}
*Passing*, Part 3

Wednesday February 26\textsuperscript{th}
Short stories

Monday March 3\textsuperscript{rd}
*The Professor’s House*, Part 1
Short Response Paper 2

Wednesday March 5\textsuperscript{th}
*The Professor’s House*, Part 2

Monday March 10\textsuperscript{th}
*The Professor’s House*, Part 3

Wednesday March 12\textsuperscript{th}
Short stories

Monday March 17\textsuperscript{th}
SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Wednesday March 19\textsuperscript{th}
SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Monday March 24\textsuperscript{th}
*The Good Soldier*, Part 1
Wednesday March 26th
*The Good Soldier*, Part 2
Short Response Paper 3

Monday March 31st
*The Good Soldier*, Part 3

Wednesday April 2nd
Short stories

Monday April 7th
*The Seas*, Part 1
Short Response Paper 4

Wednesday April 9th
*The Seas*, Part 2

Monday April 14th
*The Seas*, Part 3

Wednesday April 16th
Short stories
Short Response Paper 5

Monday April 21st
*The New York Trilogy*, Part 1

Wednesday April 23rd

Monday April 28th

Wednesday April 30th
Short stories
Rough Draft of Final Essay

Monday May 5th
Short stories
Final Essay Discussion and Workshop

Wednesday May 7th
Final Essay Due / Wrap-up