

ENGLISH 2201.027: Literary Heritage

University of Memphis, Fall 2008

Tuesday/Thursday 11:20-12:45

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Office hours: Tuesday 4-5, Thursday 1:30-2:30, and by appointment

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DESCRIPTION:

We will read texts from a variety of time periods and cultures, representing the literary modes of poetry, fiction, and drama. Lectures and assignments will emphasize literary analysis, critical thought, and clarity of expression. General Education objectives include:

- developing a perspective on the role of language in shaping and reflecting human experience,
- developing the ability to discover assumptions and implications, to synthesize multiple perspectives, and to clarify one's own view by evaluating ideas presented in literary texts, and
- developing skills in oral and written communication.

TEXTS:

- Available at University Bookstore: Kennedy, X.J. and Dana Gioia. *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing*. 10th ed. Portable. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2007.
- Additional texts are available on ECourseware.

CONDUCT AND POLICIES:

- While in class, you are expected to pay attention; you are not allowed to engage in private conversation, texting, or other behaviors that would disrupt class activities. Turn off your phones and other electronic equipment before class!
- Student conduct should accord with university expectations, as outlined by the Office of Judicial and Ethical Programs (<http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/>). Disciplinary procedures will also be governed by the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities.
- You are expected to be civil to others in the class. Discussion is an important element of this course, particularly online. You are encouraged to express your concerns and opinions, but please be aware that this right is shared by other members of the class.
- Any student who may need class or test accommodations based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to speak with me privately to discuss your specific needs. Students with disabilities should also contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at 110 Wilder Tower, 678-2880. SDS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.
- Bring the relevant text to *every* meeting of class!

GRADING:

- You must submit all assigned work in a timely fashion to pass this class.
- Attendance is required in this class.
- More than five unexcused absences will result in failure of the course. By virtue of maintaining your enrollment in this course, which is directed by this syllabus, you acknowledge this rule.
- More than two unexcused absences will lower your final grade.
- Repeated tardiness or early departure will be recorded as absence.
- If your absence is excused (sickness, family emergency, university function), please present evidence to Everett Wade. He will record the absence as excused and, if necessary, arrange for you to reschedule examinations.
- Plagiarism on any assignment may result in a failing grade for the course.
- Instances of egregious plagiarism—in which students have substantially presented someone else's work as their own with no or limited effort to acknowledge their sources—will result in a failing grade for the course through the procedure of Summary Discipline. (See Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities at <http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/>).
- Lesser instances, in which a student's work reflects genuine confusion over [when and how to cite sources](#), may be addressed by allowing the student to rewrite the essay or assignment; the final grade for that particular assignment may also be reduced.
- Time will repeatedly be set aside in lectures for addressing students' questions and concerns about plagiarism. Further queries should be addressed to the professor.
- You are required to submit essays to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (This statement was prepared by University of Memphis's Office of Legal Counsel, 10/17/05.)
- Though only essays must be submitted to Turnitin.com, plagiarism is not acceptable on any assignment. If you would like to include words or ideas that you have gleaned from another source, simply provide attribution to that source: you will not be faulted for sharing and documenting the results of your research.
- Your grade will be assessed according to a +/- scale. At the University of Memphis, an A- earns 3.84 out of 4 possible points; all other +/-s indicate a .33 distance from the nearest integer (i.e., a B+ = 3.33, and a B- = 2.67).
- Your course grade will be determined by a weighted average:
 - Quizzes: 20%
 - Assignments: 50%
 - Essays: 30%

QUIZZES:

In addition to reading assignments, there will be a quiz almost every day in this class. The goal is simply to ascertain that you have done the reading and to give you credit for that work. There

will be no complicated or “trick” questions; any answer that reflects familiarity with the reading will receive credit.

- Submit a quiz even if you do not know the answer, as responses will also be used to assess attendance.
- You are encouraged to use scrap paper for submitting quizzes. Always put your name on the quiz!
- Because quizzes will effectively be graded on a pass/fail basis (and because you should know whether you have submitted a reasonable answer to the question), quizzes will not be returned after grading. Everett Wade will maintain quizzes and score records; students who wish to know how they are doing in this area should contact him.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments serve multiple roles in this class, but the most important is to help students prepare for their more substantial and formal writing assignments—the essays—through consistent practice of writing and analysis, as well as through discussion with each other.

- All assignments should be submitted via ECourseware, to either the dropbox or the discussion boards, as indicated.
- All assignments should be written in a professional style: in other words, students should communicate in grammatically constructed sentences and paragraphs. The organization and diction of these assignments will not be graded as closely as will those aspects of essays: the writing you do in assignments is meant to be exploratory and therefore expected to be somewhat less polished. But your writing here is not meant simply for yourself or to communicate with friends, and it should conform to the standards of a professional and academic environment. (In other words, emoticons, phonetic spellings, and other attributes standard to text messaging are not appropriate for this course!)
- You are encouraged to quote assigned texts in your assignments; when you do so, please indicate the source of the quoted language parenthetically. (For fiction, use page numbers; for poetry; use line numbers; for plays, use act, scene and line numbers where available.)
- If you quote external sources in assignments, please indicate where you found them (author, title, and publishing venue or website, as appropriate); the format of your citation will not be graded.
- The guidelines below for how to respond to your classmates’ discussion postings are limited, but the most important objective is for you to indicate that you have read and thought seriously about their work. It may be that you initially have no opinion about their comments, but you are required to generate a comment. If their readings surprise you, say so—and note how your interpretation differed. If you simply agree, then discuss why that observation is important. It may help to think of beginning your comments with “Yes, and . . .,” “yes, but . . .,” “I didn’t see that, because I was thinking . . .,” or “I disagree, because . . .” Specific word count is far less important here than the demonstration of relevant thought.
- Except in dire circumstances, no extensions are available for assignments. Grades will drop by one point (A to B, etc.) for every day the assignment is late. Students who have missed the due-date by three days or more should contact the professor immediately.

ESSAYS:

One of the chief objectives of this required course is to help students develop their writing skills: faculty hope that, through writing short essays focused on critical analysis in the context of a course dedicated to examining the use of language closely, students will learn to be more

thoughtful, proficient and confident writers. Students should start and finish their first draft well before the due date in order to proofread their papers for clarity and organization, as well as for grammar and spelling.

- All essays must be submitted to Turnitin.com. Before submitting your essay, you will need to register with Turnitin. To do so, go to www.Turnitin.com, and click “new user” at the top right corner of the page. Log in as a student, and provide class ID **2366208** and enrollment password **2201LitHer**, as well as other enrollment information. (You will select your own login and password, but be sure to use your official name, because we will not be able to give you credit if we cannot identify your paper.) After you arrive at our class page, you can simply click “submit” next to the various essay assignments and browse the computer to upload your paper.
- Be certain that your essay has a clear and substantive thesis—placed at the end of the introduction—and that you support this thesis through amply cited textual evidence. Also, you should clarify for the reader how each paragraph of your paper supports the overall argument.
- As in assignments, when you quote from the text, indicate the source of the quote in parentheses at the end of your sentence. If you use external sources in any way, they must be documented; MLA style is recommended. (For guidelines, see textbook pt. IV, pp. 2148-2165.)
- My general grading guidelines for papers are available at my personal [webpage](#). Students seeking help or feedback before the due date can contact the professor or Everett.
- Students may request one extension for one essay during the semester. Only requests submitted before the due date will be honored; even requests submitted before the due date may be refused. (I cannot extend more than 30 extensions for any given essay assignment.) Extensions for essays 1 and 2 will last until the Monday after the due date; extensions for paper 3 last for 48 hours.
- Any paper submitted after the due date (or the second due date, for students with an extension) will receive a reduced grade. For essays 1 and 2, grades will drop by one point (A to B, etc.) for every day the paper is late. The same rule applies for essay 3, except that any paper submitted after Dec. 11 will receive an F.

SCHEDULE:

T, 8/26 Introduction to Course

UNIT IA: ELEMENTS OF POETRY

Th, 8/28 Tone

Philip Larkin, “This Be the Verse” (1971), ONLINE
 Robert Hayden, “Those Winter Sundays” (1962), II: 1117
 Theodore Roethke, “My Papa’s Waltz” (1948), II: 674-675
 Elizabeth Bishop, “One Art” (1976), II: 998-999
 Edgar Allen Poe, “The Raven” (1845), ONLINE

T, 9/2 Sound and Meter

Sylvia Plath, “Daddy” (1965), 1150-1152
 Robert Frost, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” (1923), 1110

Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool" (1960), II:833-834 and commentary (1969), 847-848

Langston Hughes, "The Weary Blues" (1926) and "Song for a Dark Girl" (1927), 1032-1033

ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE IN DROPBOX

Recommended: *Literature* II, 812-824, 831-833 (skim for terms and advice on reading and analysis, but feel free to skip the poems embedded in this section of text)

Th, 9/4 Image I

Wilfred Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est" (1920), 698-699

William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow" (1923), 688

William Shakespeare, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" (1609) and "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" (1609), 1164

Adrienne Rich, "Living in Sin" (1955), 1157

Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" (1923), 880-882

ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARD

T, 9/9 Image II: Metaphor and Symbol

Richard Wilbur, "Love Calls Us to the Things of this World" (1956), 739

Sylvia Plath, "Metaphors" (1960), 771

Robert Frost, "The Importance of Poetic Metaphor" (1930), 784-785

John Donne, "The Flea" (1633), 1102

William Butler Yeats, "Poetic Symbols" (1901), II: 906-907

Christina Rossetti, "Uphill" (1862), 902

William Blake, "The Sick Rose" (1794), 1087

ASSIGNMENT 3, PART I DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARD

UNIT IB: PROBLEMS IN POETRY

Th, 9/11 Reverence and Remembrance

John Donne, "Batter my heart, three-personed God, for you" (1610), 709-710

George Herbert, "The Pulley" (1633), 778

T. S. Eliot, "Journey of the Magi" (1927), 1104-1105

Yusef Komunyakaa, "Facing It" (1988), 942

Shirley Geok-lin Lim, "Riding into California" (1998), 1137

Gwendolyn Brooks, "The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till" (1960),

ONLINE (bottom of page)

Mary Jo Salter, "Welcome to Hiroshima" (1984), 1160-1161

S, 9/13 ASSIGNMENT 3, PART II DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARD

T, 9/16 Protest

Dudley Randall, "Ballad of Birmingham" (1966), 796-797

Langston Hughes, "I, Too" (1926), "Ballad of the Landlord" (1940), and "Dream Deferred" (1951), 1032, 1034, and 1037

Essays by and on Hughes and his poetry, 1038-1048

ASSIGNMENT 4, PART I DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARD

Th, 9/18 Translation and Transculturation

Ezra Pound, "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter" (1915), 1154

Skim other translations of "A River-Merchant's Wife," ONLINE

Rhina Espaillat, "Bilingual/Bilingüe" and "Being a Bilingual Writer" (1998), 937 and 949-950

Aaron Abeyta, "thirteen ways of looking at a tortilla" (2001), 963-964

One poem from pp. 970-982

Comments on writing and translation, 983-984

ASSIGNMENT 4, PART II DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARD

S, 9/20 ASSIGNMENT 5 DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARD**T, 9/23 WRITING WORKSHOP****UNIT II: DRAMA**

Th, 9/25 Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* through Scene II, 1285-1306

ESSAY 1 DUE TO Turnitin.com

Recommended: Introduction to Sophocles' theatre, 1277-1284

T, 9/30 *Oedipus the King*, Ode II – end, 1306-1322

Th, 10/2 Richard Wright, "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow" (1937), ONLINE

ASSIGNMENT 6A DUE IN DROPBOX

PERFORMANCE/LECTURE IN LIEU OF CLASS: DETAILS TBA

T, 10/7 Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie* (1945), Scenes I-V, 1837-1860

ASSIGNMENT 6B DUE IN DROPBOX

Th, 10/9 Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*, Scenes VI - end, 1860-1883

T, 10/14 FALL BREAK—NO CLASS

Th, 10/16 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, 1472-1499

ASSIGNMENT 7, PART I DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARD

T, 10/21 *Hamlet*, Act II, 1499-1518

A. C. Bradley, "Hamlet's Melancholy" (1903), 1659-1660

ASSIGNMENT 7, PART II DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARD

Th, 10/23 *Hamlet*, Act III, 1519-1546

Rebecca West, "Hamlet and Ophelia" (1958), 1660-1661

ASSIGNMENT 8 DUE IN DROPBOX

T, 10/28 *Hamlet*, Acts IV-V, 1546-1588

ASSIGNMENT 9 DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARDS

Th, 10/30 Terrence McNally, “Andre’s Mother” (1988), 1993-1995

UNIT IIIA: ELEMENTS OF FICTION

T, 11/4 Plot

Ha Jin, “Saboteur” (2000), 178-185

Margaret Atwood, “Happy Endings” (1983), 477-479

Joyce Carol Oates, “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” (1970), 613-624

Gretchen Schulz and R. J. R. Rockwood, “Fairy Tale Motifs in ‘Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?’” (1980), 2194-2195 (book IV)

ESSAY 2 DUE TO Turnitin.com

Th, 11/6 Setting

Tim O’Brien, “The Things They Carried” (1990), 625-636

Chinua Achebe, “Dead Men’s Path” (1972), 463-464

Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown” (1829), 548-557

T, 11/11 Perspective and Tone

Jamaica Kincaid, “Girl” (1983), 578-579

Katherine Ann Porter, “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall” (1930), 76-82

William Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily” (1931), 29-34

James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues” (1957), 43-63

Th, 11/13 NO CLASS

ASSIGNMENT 10, PART I DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARDS BY NOON

F, 11/14 ASSIGNMENT 10, PART II DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARDS

T, 11/18 Symbol

Octavio Paz, “My Life with the Wave” (1951), 643-646

Ralph Ellison, “Battle Royal” (1952), 527-536

Shirley Jackson, “The Lottery” (1948), 239-245 and “Biography of a Story” (1960), 253-255

Jorge Luis Borges, “The Gospel According to Mark” (1970), 486-489

Th, 11/20 NO CLASS

ASSIGNMENT 11, PART I DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARDS BY NOON

F, 11/14 ASSIGNMENT 11, PART II DUE ON DISCUSSION BOARDS

UNIT IIIB: CONTEXTUALIZING FICTION

T, 11/25 Unit on “The Yellow Wallpaper,” 424-442

Th, 11/27 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY: NO CLASS

T, 12/2 Unit on “Everyday Use,” 443-460
ASSIGNMENT 12 DUE TO DISCUSSION BOARDS

T, 12/9 **ESSAY 3 DUE TO Turnitin.com BEFORE NOON!**

ASSIGNMENTS AND ESSAYS:

Assignment 1: Reading Poems/Reading about Poems

Due: Sept. 2 in dropbox

Length: Approximately 125-150 word paragraph

Topic: Pick one of the following:

1. Read Brett Millier’s brief essay on Elizabeth Bishop’s “One Art,” found in the fourth (“Writing”) section of your anthology on p. 2185. Explain how knowing the role of loss in Bishop’s own life affects your understanding of or your response to the poem. If this knowledge doesn’t change your response, explain why not.
2. Read Edgar Allen Poe’s “Philosophy of Composition” (online; you may focus solely on relevant sections), and explain how knowing about Poe’s writing process affects your understanding of or your response to “The Raven.” If this knowledge doesn’t change your response, explain why not.

Objectives:

- To explore your own process of poetic interpretation—i.e., how (or whether) learning about a poet’s life or aesthetic theory shapes your understanding of a poem. Do you observe that focusing too closely on an “Author,” in Roland Barthes’ terms, serves “to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing” (*Literature* IV, 2213)?
- To practice writing in a context where there is no “right” or “wrong” answer, but only fully-expressed or insufficiently clear opinions. In other words, you are clearly the expert on this question, because only you know whether reading these external sources helps you understand the poem more fully or, in contrast, alienates you from the poem. Your job is to explain your experience to readers.

Advice: Read the poem through once or twice before reading the essay, and write down some phrases describing your thoughts about it. Then, after reading the essay, read the poem through again, and see how your perceptions have changed. The first sentence (topic statement) of your paragraph should describe this change succinctly, and the rest of the paragraph should explain how and why your response to the poem changed. To do so, you should quote specific phrases from the essay or poem that influence your interpretation.

Assignment 2: Introduce Yourself

Due: Sept. 4 to group discussion boards

Length: A paragraph or so

Topic: Introduce yourself to the members of your discussion group, providing standard collegiate details (year, major) and whatever else you choose to share regarding your thoughts about reading, literature, and writing. (Keep in mind that your professor will

also be reading this post: your goal here is to present yourself in a way that is both genuine—i.e., an approach that will help your classmates get a sense of who you are—and professional.)

Objectives:

- To practice writing formally/professionally in an electronic/discussion venue
- To facilitate exchange with your classmates later in the course

Assignment 3: Performing Poetry

Due: To group discussion boards: **Part I on Sept. 9 and Part II on Sept. 13**

Length: **2 parts: 1 posting of approximately 300 words (or significantly shorter with audio attachment), plus 4 responses of approximately 30 words**

Topic: **Part I:** Imagine that you have been asked to read one of the poems discussed in class on Tuesday, Sept. 2, for an audience. Describe how you would perform the poem: what words would you stress? What pace might you use, and how might you vary that pace? What tones or moods would you try to convey? Students equipped to record a reading digitally should upload their recordings as part of their discussion post: in this case, of course, the initial post can be significantly shorter, simply saying, for example, what effect was sought through the performance.

Part II: Respond on the discussion board to the other members in your group, describing what you found interesting about their performance choices.

Objectives:

- To think about the role of meter and sound in poetry
- To practice translating text into spoken verse
- To practice explaining your performance choices through written or spoken language
- To explore how performance choices vary

Assignment 4: Reading Images

Due: To group discussion boards: **Part I on Sept. 16, and part II on Sept. 20**

Length: **Approximately 300 words for initial post, plus 4 responses of approximately 30 words**

Topic: **Part I:** Choose ONE image from any poem that was assigned for this class through 9/11. Describe one meaning that it serves to convey, and how it does so. You may want to consider, for example, whether the image constitutes a metaphor or symbol, or is serving more directly to convey a kind of mood or experience; you should also think about how image interacts with other elements of the poem—its tone, its development, or other images.

Part II: Respond to the postings of other members in your group, describing what you found interesting about their interpretation. Does it correspond to your initial reading of the poem?

Objectives:

- To practice using textual evidence to support and demonstrate a point. (Please note that you cannot simply quote the poem, and expect the reader to understand the significance of that quote. When you cite textual evidence, always explain its relevance to *your* argument.)
- To observe how interpretations of images can differ.

Assignment 5: Prospectus for Essay 1**Due:** Sept. 20 to discussion boards**Length:** One paragraph or so**Topic:** Write a paragraph that responds to the following queries:

1. Which poem will you discuss for Essay 1?
 2. On which element of the poem will you focus?
 3. How do you believe this element of the poem shapes its overall impact on the reader? (In other words, what will be your conclusion, roughly?)
 4. How did you choose this element of this poem? What seems noteworthy about it?
- Note, also, if you have any concerns or confusion about how to write this essay.

Objectives:

- To develop a focus and plan for essay 1
- To develop material that may be useful in the introduction and conclusion of essay 1
- To observe others' approaches to writing essays on poetry
- To create dialogue about areas of concern with fellow students and professor

Essay 1: Analyzing Poetry**Due:** Sept. 25 to Turnitin.com**Length:** Approximately 600-700 words**Topic:** Choose one element—such as tone, image patterns, meter, or symbolism—from one of the poems we have read this semester and explain how that aspect of the poem enhances or otherwise shapes its overall impact on the reader.**Objectives:** Argumentation and interpretation of poetry**Advice:** Please note that this essay will require a formal introduction, in which you introduce your topic to your reader and shape your thesis, as well as a formal conclusion, in which you “wrap up” the argument, or remind the reader how all the pieces of your argument fit together, and why they matter. In the body of the paper, you will need to describe both the element of the poem that you are discussing and the overall effect of the poem, each of which will require you to quote the poem and explain how the words quoted demonstrate the claim you are making. But while description comprises an important aspect of your paper, its purpose is always to *support your argument*: always keep in mind that your goal is to demonstrate the accuracy of your thesis. Accordingly, your essay should be structured in a way that makes that purpose clear: in each section of your argument, show how what you are discussing supports your larger claim. Also, note the guidelines for quoting poetry in part IV of your anthology, pp. 2121-2122.**Assignment 6A: Wright performance (preparation)****Due:** Oct. 2 to dropbox**Length:** One paragraph**Topic:** Having read Wright's “The Ethics of Living Jim Crow,” how easy or difficult do you think it will be to adapt this essay for a one-man performance? Briefly explain.**Objective:** To think about the differences between prose and dramatic performance**Assignment 6B: Wright performance (review)****Due:** Oct. 7 to dropbox

Length: One or two paragraphs

Topic: Each of you should have attended at least one event in the Richard Wright Centennial. How did this event help you think about drama, Wright, or literary production more generally?

Objectives:

- To think about performance and/or scholarship
- To review an event

Assignment 7: Responding to drama

Due: To group discussion boards: Part I on Oct. 16 and part II on Oct. 21

Length: Approximately 200 words for initial post, plus 4 responses of approximately 20 words each

Topic: **Part I:** *Oedipus the King* was written for an annual competition, so we can be sure that Sophocles wanted to make a strong impression on his initial audience. Williams, in his production notes for *The Glass Menagerie*, insists that he is seeking to create “a more penetrating and vivid expression of things as they are” (1883). Based on your readings of *Oedipus* and *The Glass Menagerie*, what moment in these plays (choose one) do you think would create the strongest impression on an audience? Why? (Consider whether this impact would emerge from plot revelation, staging, or some other aspect of the play.)

Part II: Respond to the postings of other members in your group, noting whether the moment they describe seemed remarkable to you. Do you even remember the moment they describe? You may want to consider (for yourself, if not in discussion) what makes moments that seem vital to you less interesting to other viewers.

Objectives:

- To recall plays read before break
- To think about how theatrical scenes produce their impact on an audience
- To observe how responses to plays differ among viewers

Assignment 8: Summarizing

Due: Oct. 23 to dropbox

Length: 200-300 words

Topic: Describe what happens in *Hamlet*, Act III. Do not omit any important action, but be as concise as possible.

Objectives:

- To practice summarizing a complex text
- To distinguish summary from other modes of writing

Essay 2: Explication of Play

Due: Nov. 4

Length: 800-1000 words

Topics: Choose one of the following topics:

1. In *Oedipus the King*, the chorus from lines 955-997 (pp. 1312-3) is notably ambivalent: they begin by asserting their desire to be consistently pious (“Destiny find me filled with ambivalence” [955]) and end by threatening to withhold worship from the gods (“Never again will I go reverent to Delphi” (1313). How can we understand the chorus’s confusion in this scene, and how does doing so

help us to understand the play more generally? (You could use this format to develop a similar paper based on other scenes or characters, looking at how ambiguity or irrationality in their behavior can be understood, and, further, how that understanding elucidates a broader theme in the play.)

2. When Oedipus blinds himself, the chorus suggests that he was forced into this act by a superhuman force: “one of the dark powers pointing the way . . . someone, something leading him on” (li. 1391, 1393). Oedipus equivocally argues that “Apollo . . . ordained my agonies”—or shaped his path—“but the hand that struck my eyes was mine” (li. 1469, 1470). This question of agency—human or divine—emerges many times in the play, some more blatantly than others. How do you think the play resolves this issue—or does it leave the question unresolved? You should focus on one scene to support your answer, but you may compare that scene with others.
3. Near the conclusion of *The Glass Menagerie*, Amanda accuses Tom of “manufactur[ing] illusions,” thereby stating one of the central themes of the play (1882). Pick one scene from the play and explain how it displays one or more characters’ habit of nurturing and inhabiting fantasies. Consider not only what the illusion is and what the character finds so captivating about that false representation of life, but also how this fantasy is revealed in the play through such features as dialogue, staging, screens, etc.
4. One central theme of *Hamlet*—introduced in the first scene—is the difficulty of interpreting others’ intent or virtue: the guards, for example, are unsure whether the spectre is a demon or the ghost of the dead king. This problem affects much of the play’s action as well, since characters’ choices depend on what they believe concerning the trustworthiness of others. Pick one scene from the play, and explain how it augments, or provides a distinct perspective on, this theme. Alternatively, you could pick a scene and describe how you would stage it to demonstrate the characters’ difficulty in interpreting their peers.
5. A related theme is introduced explicitly in the second scene: the relationship between “being” and “seeming,” as well as the difficulty and possible inadvisability of expressing what one truly feels (I.ii.76-86). Pick one scene from the play, and explain how it provides a distinct perspective on this theme. Alternatively, you could pick a scene and describe how you would stage it to demonstrate the degree to which characters’ actions match or diverge from their inner state; consider also whether apparent divergences result from a “show” put on for others, or from an internal state that is so confused and ambivalent that it cannot be expressed in a straightforward way.

Objectives: Argumentation, interpretation of drama

Advice: Be careful that you do not allow the chronology of the play’s plot to guide the progression of your paper; instead, you should organize your paper in a way that will best enable you to communicate and support your argument.

Assignment 9: Prospectus for Essay 2

Due: Oct. 28 to discussion boards

Length: One paragraph or so

Topic: Write a paragraph that responds to the following queries:

1. On which paper topic are you writing?

2. How did you choose between topics focused on textual analysis and those focused on staging?
3. On which scene of the play will you focus?
4. How did you choose this scene? What seems noteworthy about it?

Note, also, if you have any concerns or confusion about how to write this essay.

Objectives:

- To develop a focus and plan for essay 2
- To develop material that may be useful in the introduction and conclusion of essay 2
- To observe others' approaches to writing essays on drama
- To create dialogue about areas of concern with fellow students and professor

Assignment 10: Interpreting Voice

Due: To group discussion boards: **Part I on Nov. 13 by noon, and part II on Nov. 14**

Length: **Approximately 200 words for initial post, plus at least 4 responses of approximately 50 words each**

Topic: **Part I:** As your anthology explains, an “omniscient narrator” in fiction “has the ability to move freely through the consciousness of any character” and “also has complete knowledge of all of the external events in a story.” Though writers have the option of using such a narrator to tell readers everything we might want to know about the plot, they often choose to narrate through voices whose understanding is necessarily limited—and often even flawed. Discuss one passage in one of the stories read for this week and explain how the use of a limited perspective affects readers' experience of the narrative.

Part II: Respond to the postings of other members in your group. You might note, for example, questions that remain about aspects of the voice in the story that your classmates haven't discussed, or you might explain your agreement or disagreement.

Objectives:

- To practice interpreting fiction
- To observe how readers' interpretations differ
- To begin contemplating possible topics for the final paper

Assignment 11: Interpreting Experimental Fiction

Due: To group discussion boards: **Part I on Nov. 20 by noon, and part II on Nov. 21**

Length: **Approximately 250 words for initial post, plus at least 4 responses of approximately 50 words each**

Topic: **Part I:** The stories for this week diverge from realism, which, in the words of your anthology, “attempt[s] to reproduce faithfully the surface appearance of life, especially that of ordinary people in everyday situations” (IV: G24). Ralph Ellison's fiction uses such potent symbols and explores dreams and other forms of altered consciousness so vigorously that it has been called “superrealism”; other stories diverge from common experience even more starkly. Focusing on one passage in one of the stories read for this week, discuss how such experimental representations enhance readers' understanding, or, on the other hand, how they may alienate and confuse readers. (Note Shirley Jackson's account of how readers first responded to “The Lottery.”)

Part II: Respond to the postings of other members in your group. You might note, for example, questions that remain about aspects of the symbolism or in the story that your classmates haven't discussed, or you might explain your agreement or disagreement.

Objectives:

- To practice interpreting fiction
- To observe how readers' interpretations differ
- To begin contemplating possible topics for the final paper

Assignment 12: Prospectus for Essay 3

Due: Dec. 2 to discussion boards

Length: A paragraph or so

Topic: Write a paragraph that responds to the following queries:

1. Which story will you discuss for Essay 3?
2. On which element of the story—or which aspect of its historical context—will you focus?
3. How do you believe this element of the story shapes its overall impact on the reader, or, what significant choices does this story reflect in its representation of its historical context? (In other words, what will be your conclusion, roughly?)
4. How did you choose this element of the story and/or its historical context? What seems noteworthy about it?

Note, also, if you have any concerns or confusion about how to write this essay.

Objectives:

- To develop a focus and plan for essay 3
- To develop material that may be useful in the introduction and conclusion of essay 13
- To observe others' approaches to writing essays on fiction
- To create dialogue about areas of concern with fellow students and professor

Essay 3: Analyzing Fiction

Due: Dec. 9 by NOON to Turnitin.com

(Papers submitted after Dec. 11 receive an F.)

Length: Approximately 800-1000 words

Topic: Choose one of the following:

- Choose one element of one story—such as setting, plot, perspective, or symbolism—from one of the stories we have read this semester and explain how that aspect of the story enhances or otherwise shapes its overall impact on the reader.
- Choose one story and explain how it represents or responds to some aspect of its historical context. You will need to do some research for this paper; sources should be cited using MLA style (see book IV).

Objectives: Argumentation and interpretation of fiction

Optional Extra Credit

Due: Dec. 3 by NOON by attachment to lduck@memphis.edu (earlier is better)

Length: Approximately 300 words

Topic: Review one live dramatic performance. Options include plays being performed at the University of Memphis (<https://umdrive.memphis.edu/g-theatre/www/td/html/season.html>) and *The Glass Menagerie* at Memphis' Playhouse on the Square (<http://www.playhouseonthesquare.org/>).

Uses:

- A make-up assignment for students unable to attend any of the events scheduled as part of the Richard Wright Centennial.
- An extra-credit assignment for students seeking to improve their grade. You are allowed to use one of these reviews to replace a low assignment grade with an A or to increase one essay grade by 1 full point.