Course Policies and Requirements for The Short Story

Professor: Jack Peters

Text: The Story and Its Writer (Eighth Edition; Bedford/St. Martin's)

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Course Requirements:
The requirements for this course are as follows: a mid-term exam (worth 30%), a final exam (worth 30%), an essay (worth 25%), and reading quizzes (worth 15%). There will be 1 make-up quiz for those who miss a quiz as a result of excused absences. I will also drop the lowest quiz score.

Course Subject Matter:
This course will be an investigation of the short story. We will study how to read and write about literature, and we will look at different aspects of literature and different approaches to studying it. We will also consider various movements (such as romanticism, modernism, etc.) as they appear in the various works we study this semester. We will also look at the stories in the context in which they appeared. The goal of this class is for you to gain a greater appreciation of the short story form and the cultures that produced it.

Course Policies:
Attendance/Promptness: You are allowed 2 unexcused absence without penalty. You can use the unexcused absences for any reason, but use them wisely. Their purpose is to allow you to miss class if something important comes up that does not constitute an excused absence. Illness, family emergency (e.g., death in the family), observance of religious holidays, and university-excused absences (e.g., participation in intercollegiate athletic events, etc.) are the only reasons for excused absences; work is not an excused absence, nor are traffic, car trouble, being in a wedding, bad weather, being in jail, and so on; also, all excused absences are subject to my judgement and require proof on your part. You also must attend at least 75% of class to get credit for attending class on any particular day. If you have 3 unexcused absences, I will drop your final grade for the class by 4%, and I will drop your final grade for the class by an additional 2% for every unexcused absence after that. If you miss more than 8 classes, I will probably ask you either to drop the class or take an incomplete (only in the case of excused absences). Each case will be treated individually, though. I will send around a roll at every class. It is your responsibility to sign the roll. If you don’t sign the roll and I don’t remember that you were in class, then I will assume you were absent on that day. Even though you have 2 unexcused absence to work with, you should try not to miss class unless it is absolutely necessary; it will be to your benefit to attend class, since the material discussed in class is what appears on the exams. Also, quizzes missed because of unexcused absences cannot be made up. As a result, students who chronically miss class generally don’t do very well in the course. Although I have no standard tardiness policy, if you are chronically late (in my judgment), I will count a certain number of tardy days as one unexcused absence. Also, reading
quizzes are usually given only at the beginning of class, so if you arrive late you would have less than the full
time to complete the quiz, or you may miss the quiz entirely. Quizzes missed because of tardiness cannot be
made up unless the tardiness is a result of a good, documented reason (comparable to the reasons for excused
absences). In addition, whether you're present or absent, you're responsible for all material we cover in class,
including any changes in due dates, policies, or reading assignments. So make sure you check the notes of
other students for any classes you miss. Finally, if you miss an exam, you must have a good, documented
excuse or you will probably not be allowed to make it up.

**Late Term Papers:** I expect term papers to be turned in on the day they are due; nevertheless, you have a grace
period for the term paper. The date is in the Daily Schedule. If you turn in the paper before the end of the
grace period, there is no penalty. If for any reason it comes in any time after the grace period ends by my watch
(even a minute or two), I’ll deduct 6% off the grade for the term paper. In addition, I’ll deduct 6% for each day
thereafter that your paper is not turned in. If you're out of town, and you want to turn in a late term paper to
avoid further penalty, you can always mail me the term paper, and I'll consider it turned in as of the postmark
date. The only exception to this late term paper policy is in the extremely rare case when it is impossible,
because of excused absences, to turn in the term paper on the due date or during the grace period. Otherwise,
there are no extensions beyond the grace period. If your term paper is late for an extended period, I may limit
the penalty somewhat.

**Grading Criteria for Term Papers:** The primary criteria for grading term papers will be content and
presentation. I weigh the content somewhat more heavily than the presentation, but both are important, and I
will expect you to be responsible for the rules of grammar, punctuation, and usage you learned in Freshman
English. The term papers should be about 7-8 pages long, but a little more or less doesn't matter to me. Just
make sure you adequately cover the material if it's short or that there isn't unnecessary information if it's long.
I do not scale paper grades.

**Accommodations:** In accordance with the terms and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section
504, Rehabilitation Act, I cooperate with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable
accommodations for you if you qualify as a student with disabilities. Please register with ODA, and present
your written request to me within the first week of class if possible.

**Term Papers, Exams, Grades, Rough Drafts, Informal Proposals, Etc.:**
**Texts and Readings:** The texts should be on sale at the student bookstore. You are welcome to use other
editions of the books, although the page numbering will likely differ and some of the material may be
different. I have also placed copies of the texts (though not necessarily the same editions as used in class) on
reserve in the library. You should read ahead for heavier reading periods.

**Informal Proposals and Rough Drafts:** Informal proposals summarize what you're going to write about and
should contain a brief summary and the thesis statement of your proposed term paper; that way if you're
completely off track we can catch it before it's too late. These proposals may be handwritten or typed and
usually run about ½ page. They are not graded but must meet minimum standards (which I will go over in class)
and must be turned in by the last day to change topics or I will deduct up to 4% from the final grade of the paper.
Also, if the informal proposal is not adequate, I will require you to re-write it. Rough drafts may be
handwritten or typed and should be fairly complete and must be true rough drafts—not simply a second copy
of your final draft. Rough drafts are not graded but must be turned in with the final copy of the paper or I will
deduct 5% from the final grade of the paper. Also, please label your rough draft, so I don't mistake it for the
final draft.
Term Papers: You will be required to write 1 term paper (due on the date listed in the Daily Schedule). The topic will be of your choosing, but the term paper must deal at least 50% with works we will be reading in the course or that are listed on the Daily Schedule. You may change term paper topic after you have turned in an informal proposal, but you must then turn in a new informal proposal. You may not change topics after the dates indicated on the Daily Schedule except in unusual circumstances. Please put your name and the title of the paper on the first page of your paper and include a cover sheet with your name, date, and the title of the paper. When you turn in your paper, be sure to have me initial the cover sheet. This is your receipt that I received the paper, so don't lose it, because if you can't produce it, and I don't have a paper from you and can't remember receiving one, I will assume you didn't turn one in. I do not scale paper grades. Finally, although I do not require it, it would be helpful if you turn in your assignments in a folder.

Mid-Term and Final Exams: The mid-term exam will likely be made up of 10 short-answer questions that will demonstrate your understanding of the material we have covered to that point. The final exam will also likely be made up of 10 short-answer questions, and 1 essay question that you will choose from several alternatives. The essay is intended to demonstrate your ability to apply what you have learned in different contexts from those we discussed in class. You will need a blue book for the final exam. If necessary, I scale mid-term and/or final exam grades, either by lowering the standards for a single grade or multiple grades, by scaling the entire class, or by using a slightly sliding scale, depending on the type of scale required in a particular situation.

Final Grades: Your final class grade will be calculated based on the percentages noted earlier. I use standard percentages for grades (0%-59.4%=F; 59.5%-69.4%=D; 69.5%-79.4%=C; 79.5%-89.4%=B; 89.5%-100%=A). If necessary, I scale final grades, either by lowering the standards for a single grade or multiple grades or by scaling the entire class, depending on the type of scale required in a particular situation. There are no extra credit assignments in this course.

Reading Quizzes: Reading quizzes are unannounced and are usually given during the first 10 minutes of class. You may not have a quiz each class, but there will be a fair number of them. The purpose of reading quizzes is to determine whether you have read the material, not necessarily whether you have understood the material. As a result, if you have read the material carefully, you should do well on the quizzes, but if you have not read you will probably not do well. I do not scale quiz scores.

Make-Up Quizzes: A make-up quiz will be given once during the semester. It will cover the reading for that day and will be taken only by those who have missed quizzes as a result of an excused absence. I will then take the score for the make-up quiz and replace the zero on the missed quiz with the score on the make-up quiz.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Finally, if you plagiarize the term paper or cheat on an exam or quiz, you will receive the maximum penalty allowed to me, and I'll report you to university standards for disciplinary action, regardless of your past performance or class standing.
Daily Schedule (Tentative)

January 15: Introduction to course
January 17: Kate Chopin, “The Story of an Hour,” “Désirée’s Baby”
January 24: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper”
January 31: Ambrose Bierce, “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”
February 5: Joseph Conrad, “Heart of Darkness”
February 7: Joseph Conrad, “Heart of Darkness”
February 14: Tadeusz Borowski, “His Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen”
February 21: Alice Walker, “Everyday Use”
February 26: Stephen Crane, “The Open Boat”; Edith Warton, “Roman Fever”
February 28: Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown”
March 5: Mid-Term Exam
March 7: Leo Tolstoy, “The Death of Ivan Ilych”
March 12: Spring Break
March 14: Spring Break
March 21: James Joyce, “The Dead”
March 28: Katherine Mansfield, “Miss Brill”
April 4: Amy Tan, “Two Kinds”
April 18: Flannery O’Connor, “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”; Last day to turn in informal proposal without penalty and last day to change topics
April 25: James Joyce, “A raby”; Ryunosuke Akutagawa, “In a Bamboo Grove”
April 30: Jorge Luis Borges, “The Circular Ruins”
May 2: Washington Irving; “Rip Van Winkle”; Course conclusion; Essay Due (both rough draft and final draft)
May 9: Final Exam 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.; Grace Period for Essay Ends at 1:30 p.m. Sharp (by my watch)