

SENIOR TUTORIAL IN ENGLISH

English 400-02
Spring 2004
T-Th 1:30-2:45

T.S. McMillin
Rice 110
x56726

"The curriculum of the Department of English is intended to aid students in developing methods for critical interpretation, to acquaint students with representative works in important periods of English, American, and Anglophone literature, and to introduce students to the main literary genres." —*Oberlin College Course Catalog 2003-2004*

The tutorial is designed to serve as a culmination of the English major. The Major requirements, while granting a certain importance to cultural difference, historical period, and genre, otherwise allow for students to structure their course of studies in numerous ways, which leads to different experiences for each student. Our course will enable you to

- ≈ reflect on what you have learned in your English studies;
- ≈ identify and evaluate some of the disparate approaches to literature you have encountered;
- ≈ develop a theory regarding "The Study of Literature," including the nature of literary objects, the best methods for interpreting those objects, and some of the reasons for pursuing such studies;
- ≈ apply your theory to a literary object or question of your own choosing.

I have divided the semester into three sections. The first section, "Studying Literature," will involve critical reflection on the study of English at Oberlin and development of a theoretical proposal for a literary study. Students will write two brief essays that will be used for class discussion; we will also read diverse short works by other authors to foster our understanding of the nature of literature and problems in interpreting it. (During the first weeks of the semester, students should also begin research for the final project.) In the second section, "Propositions," students will assist one another as each further develops and then applies his/her theory of literature to a particular topic. Work on that project constitutes the third section of the course.

Each student is expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings of the Tutorial and to complete all assignments by the designated time. 50% of the course grade will be based on Participation: readings; individual, small-group, and full class discussions; short (3-5 page) essays (including a prospectus for the final project), posted on Blackboard; responses to others' postings. The other 50% will be based on the final project itself (20 pages + annotated bibliography), including a presentation to the class in May.

Studying Literature

2/10 Critical Reflection: The Study of English at Oberlin

2/12 Research Session in Mudd with Megan Mitchell

- ESSAY #1 DUE Monday 2/16 (posted by 9 a.m.): Descriptive & Evaluative Critical Reflection on my study of literature (3-5 pp.) •

2/17 Discussion: Critical Reflections; The What-How-Why of Studying Literature

2/19 Discussion: Reading, Writing, & Literature. Readings: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"; Henry James, "The Figure in the Carpet"

2/24 Discussion: How to Read a Text. Reading: Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text"; Italo Calvino, "[11]" (from *If on a winter's night a traveler*)

2/26 Discussion: Why Read Texts? Reading: Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Circles"

- ESSAY #2 DUE Monday 3/1 (posted by 9 a.m.): A Theoretical Proposal for Literary Study (3-5 pp.) •

Propositions

3/2 Discussion: Implications of Theoretical Proposals

3/4 Research

3/9 Research

3/11 Research

- ESSAY #3 DUE Monday 3/1 (posted by 9 a.m.): Draft of Project Proposal (3-5 pp. + bibliography) •

3/16 Workshops

3/18 Workshops

3/23 Individual Meetings

3/25 Individual Meetings

Expositions

4/6 Research

4/8 Research

4/13 Workshops

4/15 Workshops

4/20 Individual Meetings

4/22 Individual Meetings

4/27 Presentations (2)

4/29 Presentations (2)

5/4 Presentations (2)

5/6 Presentations (1)

- DRAFT OF FINAL PROJECT DUE Friday 5/7 (posted by 4 p.m.) •

5/11 Workshops

5/13 Workshops