

Honors World Lit: Short Stories from Around the World

ENGL 2331 sec 45 / MWF 10:00-10:50 / Killgore Research Room 107

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Course Description

This is a course in the *short story* as a literary form, and our focus is on short stories from around the world, most written from 1980 - present. We will develop a technical vocabulary for discussing how short stories are made, how they can be interpreted, and what purpose they serve. That is, why do people write and read stories? What kinds of things can this particular art form do, and what are its limits? Our readings will lead us to learn about life in other cultures and societies, immigrant experiences in the US, and hybrid identities.

WTAMU General Education Learning Outcomes

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| 1. Critical thinking | To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information. |
| 2. Communication Skills | To include effective written, oral and visual communication |
| 3. Teamwork | To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal |
| 4. Social Responsibility | To include intercultural competency, civic knowledge and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities |
| 5. Personal Responsibility | To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making. |

Course-Level Outcomes

This course directly engages all learning outcomes. Discussions and assignment address #1–3; through the content of our readings, we will engage 4 & 5.

Required texts, available at the University Bookstore:

1. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Strange Pilgrims*. Vintage. ISBN 1400034698
2. Haruki Murakami, *after the quake*. Vintage. ISBN 0375713271
3. Ludmilla Petrushevskaya, *There Once Lived a Woman Who Tried to Kill Her Neighbor's Baby: Scary Fairy Tales*. Penguin. 0143114662
4. Yiyun Li, *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*. Random House. ISBN 081297333X
5. Daniyal Mueenuddin, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*. W.W. Norton. ISBN 0393337200
6. Nadine Gordimer, *Jump and Other Stories*. Picador. ISBN 1250003768
7. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Thing Around Your Neck*. Anchor. ISBN 0307455912
8. *The Art of the Short Story*. Ed. Gioia and Gwynn. Longman. ISBN 0321363639

Assignments

- 1 presentation to introduce a short story collection. It must include relevant information about the author; interesting quotes from interviews (if available); and necessary contextual information. It must also contain a summary of responses from critics and appropriate quotes from reviews or scholarly articles. Provide a bibliography that contains one section on book reviews, another section on scholarly articles. You must preview a completed draft of the presentation in my office one week before it is due, and then make adjustments based on my feedback. (20%)
- Short quizzes & in-class writings. These are unannounced, and you must be in class to take the quiz. They are designed to make sure that you are keeping up with the reading and learning literary terminology. (20%)
- 2 papers. These are formally written, sustained arguments about short stories in response to a general prompt. (20% each)
- Participation in class discussions. (20%)

Professionalism

Because this is an Honors class, we will use a seminar-style format, which means we will sit at a table together and talk about our readings rather than taking notes while the professor lectures. You are expected to read all the material for every class, form ideas about it prior to class, and weave your voice into our class dialogue. Chronic lack of preparation (and participation) is easy to spot, and will result in an automatic deduction of your final grade, no matter how good your writing is. To make an A, you need to write well *and* carry your load each day in class. Good participation means sharing your insights with others and engaging with goodwill your classmates' ideas and questions. It also means helping others to join the discussion by direct (and generous) invitations, questions, and responses to their comments. There is such a thing, too, as *over*-participation.

Missing more than 3 class sessions may result in a reduction of your grade; at 5 or more absences, I will reduce your total final grade. The 3 absences I allow are precisely for when you are sick or have an important commitment somewhere else. If you experience extreme circumstances that are out of your control this semester, I encourage you to meet with me to work out a solution. You will submit both of your papers in the Turnitin Dropbox. Late work will not be accepted.

Please do not interact with your cell phone during class. Let it be known that I consider texting in class to be rude and distracting (to me).

What The Grades Mean

As (90–100): A-level work is excellent. It demonstrates a clear interpretation and a coherent execution of the assignment. It contains no or very few errors in content; it also uses literary terminology correctly. It is perfectly formatted and proofread. Most importantly, it demonstrates thinking that is complex, creative, and well-informed. It is rarely a first draft: the sentences are well-constructed and sometimes beautiful; the paragraphing makes sense; there is a clear logical progression of ideas. A student's passion for reading and writing often shines through on A-level work.

Bs (80–89): B-level work is good (B+) to average (B-), with B- being the default for “meets all expectations,” with errors (in content or polish) being balanced out by flashes of insight. B-level work is solid. It often shows the promise of A-level work, except that the writer ran out of time, failed to explicate passages fully, did not take the analysis far enough, fell into factual or interpretive errors, or made rhetorical choices (in

organization especially) that hindered the paper. B-level writing usually delivers a good engagement with the assignment sheet and demonstrates detailed knowledge of the work under examination. It also typically shows a very good command of English syntax and grammar as well as literary terminology. B- is the most common grade assigned in my literature courses.

Cs (70–79): C-level work is below average (C+) to poor (C-). C-level work often feels unthought-through or is an incomplete engagement with the assignment sheet. It fails to meet the expectations of the assignment. C-level work is often marred by a superficial knowledge or engagement with the literary work under examination. The argumentation is often elliptical, fragmentary, or incoherent; the writing itself is plagued with grammatical errors, word usage errors, and an ignorance or mis-application of literary terminology.

Ds (60–69) and the F (0–59): these grades indicate that you have entered a state of emergency because you are very far from meeting even the most minimum of expectations. Perhaps you forgot about the assignment until 4 a.m., perhaps you haven't read a thing all semester, perhaps you do not possess the skills necessary to pass a demanding class such as this one. If you receive this grade, I encourage you to see me as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. Any instance of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Head of the English Department and the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Students are responsible for informing themselves of all university regulations concerning academic honesty. For more information, please see the Code of Student Life, Appendix III (<http://www.wtamu.edu/administrative/ss/code/index.htm>)

On the Turnitin Software (from the handbook): WTAMU is committed to maintaining the integrity of the university academic mission as defined in the Academic Integrity Code. The instructor may exercise the integrity process by submitting student work to Turnitin, a commercial plagiarism detection software device that assists in preventing plagiarism. All documents submitted to Turnitin will remain in the restricted Turnitin.com database for the purpose of comparison and detection of plagiarism of future submissions. Use of Turnitin (turnitin.com) is subject to the licensing agreement between Turnitin and WTAMU.

Access Statement

If you need adaptations or accommodations because of a disability (i.e., physical, mental, psychological, learning), have emergency medical information to share with me, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. West Texas A&M University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity.

Schedule

The readings for the first month of the course are from *The Art of the Short Story*. Read the author bio for each and the “Author’s Perspective” excerpt following the story.

8/26	Introduction
8/28	Chekhov, “Lady with the Pet Dog”; Introduction: “The Art of the Short Story” p. 3–8.
8/30	Hemingway, “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” [in <i>Art</i>]; “Hills Like White Elephants” & “Indian Camp” [handouts]
9/2	Labor Day—no class
9/4	James Joyce, “The Dead”

- 9/6 James Joyce, "The Dead"; "Elements of Short Fiction" (p. 849–862)
- 9/9 Research Methods with librarian Amy Pajewski. Meet in Cornette Library.
- 9/11 Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"
- 9/13 Singer, "Gimpel the Fool"
- 9/16 Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"
- 9/18 O'Connor, "A Good Man is Hard to Find"
- 9/20 Carver, "Cathedral"
- 9/23 Garcia Marquez, *Strange Pilgrims*, "Bon Voyage, Mr. President" & "The Saint" [presentation]
- 9/25 Garcia Marquez, *Strange Pilgrims*, "I Only Came to Use the Phone"
- 9/27 Garcia Marquez, *Strange Pilgrims*, "The Trail of Your Blood in the Snow." **Lit Terms Quiz.**
- 9/30 Gordimer, *Jump*, "Once Upon a Time" [presentation]
- 10/2 Gordimer, *Jump*, "The Ultimate Safari" & "The Moment Before the Gun Went Off"
- 10/4 Gordimer, *Jump*, "Safe House"
- 10/7 Murakami, *after the quake*, "UFO in Kushiro" [presentation]
- 10/9 Murakami, *after the quake*, "Landscape with Flatiron"
- 10/11 Murakami, *after the quake*, "All God's Children Can Dance" & "Thailand"
- 10/14 From *The Art of the Short Story*: "Writing about Fiction" (863–877). Discuss paper 1.
- 10/16 Murakami, *after the quake*, "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo"
- 10/18 Murakami, *after the quake*, "Honey Pie"
- 10/21 no class: One-on-one paper conferences
- 10/23 no class. *Professor at a Shakespeare conference.*
- 10/25 no class. **Paper Due.** Submit to Turnitin Dropbox in WTClass.
- 10/28 Adichie, *The Thing Around Your Neck*, "Cell One" [presentation]
- 10/30 Adichie, *The Thing Around Your Neck*, "Imitation" & "A Private Experience"
- 11/1 Adichie, *The Thing Around Your Neck*, "The Thing Around Your Neck" & "The Headstrong Historian"
- 11/4 Mueenuddin, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, "Nawabdin Electrician" [presentation]
- 11/6 Mueenuddin, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, "Saleema"
- 11/8 Mueenuddin, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, "Provide, Provide" & "About a Burning Girl"
- 11/11 Mueenuddin, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, "In Other Rooms, Other Wonders" & "Our Lady of Paris"
- 11/13 Mueenuddin, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, "Lily" & "A Spoiled Man"
- 11/15 Li, *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*, "Extra" [presentation]
- 11/18 Li, *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*, "After a Life" & "Son"
- 11/20 Li, *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*, "Love in the Marketplace" & "A Thousand Years of Good Prayers"
- 11/22 Petrushevskaya, *There Once Lived a Woman . . .* "Revenge" and "A Mother's Farewell"
- 11/25 Petrushevskaya, *There Once Lived a Woman . . .* "Hygiene" & TBA
- 11/27 One-on-one Paper Conferences
- 11/29 *Thanksgiving*

12/2 Petrushevskaya, *There Once Lived a Woman . . .* TBA
12/4 One-on-one Paper Conferences
12/6 **Final Exam Period: Final Papers Due** (Friday) 8:00 a.m.