

Critical Reading for English Majors

Course Details

Clarissa Castaneda, PhD Office

Hours

E-mail

Required Texts

Ask the Dust by John Fante

978-0060822552

Play it as it Lays by Joan Didion

978-0374529949

The Norton Introduction to Literature (Portable Twelfth Edition)

978-0393938937

They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing (Fourth Edition)

978-0393631678

Suggested Texts

The American Heritage Dictionary (Fifth Edition)

978-0553583229

Bedford Glossary of Critical & Literary Terms (Fourth Edition)

978-1319035396

A Writer's Reference (Ninth Edition)

978-1319057442

*Additional readings will be provided.

Note on required texts: Bring the assigned text to every class meeting. If you are purchasing a text from amazon or another on-line retailer, **make sure that you are ordering the correct edition of the book. See the ISBN numbers.** The University Bookstore has copies of the books in stock for purchase. And, whenever possible, these texts are available at the library on-reserve

**This syllabus is subject to change with notice. Changes with appropriate notice will be made with attention to positive student impact and course needs.*

Course Description & Objectives

Description per department standards.

Course Objectives

In this seminar, you will be practicing a variety of tasks associated with professional literary scholarship: close reading/analysis of literary language; identifying and describing interpretive problems; developing original interpretations; assessing theories, contextual sources, and analytical tools of literary and cultural studies; conducting research using sound practices; and participating in critical dialogues in both written and oral forms.

English Department Learning Outcomes

Details here.

Class Policies

Attendance: Your success in this course depends on regular attendance and *active participation*. Please understand that Critical Reading is not a lecture class where you can get notes for classes you have missed or easily make up coursework. This is an English Literature course that requires your presence and constructive participation in class discussions, and many of the in-class activities cannot be made up. *Attendance will be taken daily, and unexcused absences and late arrivals may ultimately affect your ability to pass the course. Students are permitted to miss two classes, but any missed work or participation will negatively impact the student's grade. Three unexcused late arrivals are equal to one unexcused absence class. Any absence beyond two will negatively impact the student's final grade for the course; the instructor may automatically reduce your grade for the course by 1/3 of a grade for each unexcused absence beyond the two permitted absences.*

Class Etiquette and Decorum

It is expected that you will participate appropriately and as adults during class discussions. We are a diverse academic community representing different faiths, lifestyles, ethnicities, sexualities, and cultures. We will be discussing controversial issues in class—issues that typically elicit strong opinions, so it is especially important that you show tolerance and respect for your fellow classmates at all times. I am available during my office hours and by appointment to discuss any issue that students may have in regard to class discussions and/or assignments. This classroom is a collective space which promotes equality, knowledge building, critical thinking, and discovery.

Electronic Devices

Smart/cell phone use is not permitted in the classroom. You may not text, take phone calls, or otherwise engage with your phone during class time. Your phone must be silenced and put away before class begins. If you have an emergency, then leave the room to address your problem elsewhere.

Smart Tablets and Laptops: This is a tablet/laptop free classroom. Students are not permitted to use these electronic devices in class.

Late Work

Absence from class does not extend the due date of an assignment. All writing assignments are due electronically *before class meets*. You may turn in a homework assignment up to three days after the due date, but your assignment will be marked down 1/3 of a grade for each day after the due date and time. For example, if you turn in an assignment at 5 pm on Tuesday, after class has already met, then your final grade on the assignment will be marked down 1/3 of a grade. I do not accept assignments after the 3-day period for late submission.

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See my policy for late essays in the section below.

Required Assignments

1. **Three 2-page explication papers:** focus on close reading of language, in a single passage, 2 pages (double-spaced, approx. 600-words). These will provide basis for 5-page papers (15% total).
2. **Three 5-page revision/development papers:** focus on interpretation of language, argumentation, expansion and development of ideas (40% total).
3. **Two mini-teaching presentations:** Each student will give two 5-7 minute “teaching” presentations on different assigned readings for the course (15% total).
4. **Final exam:** cumulative comprehension and synthesis of course material (15%).

Essay Requirements:

The essays should primarily focus on close readings of select passages from the text that critically engage with theories and concepts discussed in class—and /or relevant extant theories and concepts that you introduce. A successful close reading also explores how an excerpt relates to text-at-large themes, characters, and symbols. All close readings within an essay’s body paragraphs must collectively support an argumentative thesis. Avoid summary and make a distinct claim in your thesis. Refer to the grading rubric for more information on what elements comprise an “A” paper.

Due dates and times: The essay due dates for this course are detailed in the syllabus. All essays are due before class meets.

I will only accept essays in Microsoft Word file format. You may turn in the essay up to three days after the due date, but it will be marked down 1/3 of a grade for each day after the due date and time. For example, if you turn in an assignment at 10 pm on the due date, after class has met, then your final grade on the essay will be marked down 1/3 of a grade. **I do not accept essays after the 3-day period for late submission.**

Draft Reviews: I will review essay outlines and drafts that are submitted at least one week before the due date **during my office hours.** The student must be present in order to receive feed-back. Draft review appointments may be limited to 20 minutes per student. I do not review emailed papers, line-edit, or pre-grade papers.

Rewrites: I DO NOT allow rewrites of essays.

Essay Required Formatting: The essays must adhere to the current MLA formatting guidelines. This includes proper document formatting (e.g., one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12-pt. font, and double-spacing) and proper citation of sources. Visit Purdue OWL (online) for more information on MLA guidelines. The essays must include a “Works Cited” page.

Course website and Email

Check the course blackboard page daily for important information regarding assignments, presentations, class announcements, and access to supplementary readings. This is a “green” course and most supplementary material will be made available digitally. In-class handouts and hard-copy submissions will be minimal. Be sure to check your e-mail account daily!

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Email and Office Hours

When emailing the instructor, keep in mind that it *may* take up to 48 hours to receive a reply. Students who have a standing work or class conflict with office hours can email to schedule an appointment. Office Hours are “first-come, first-serve.”

Plagiarism and Academic Standards

Insert university language on plagiarism here.

Quizzes

Quizzes on assigned readings may be given at the start of class without advance notice. Late students will not be given additional time on a quiz, nor will they have the opportunity to make up a missed quiz. Generally, there is at least one quiz for each text assigned.

Need for Accommodation

Insert details here.

Title IX

Insert details here.

Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation

Insert details here.

Course Requirements

Students will regularly attend class; engage in meaningful verbal critical discourse; write three 2-page explication essays and three 5-page revision essays; give two mini-teaching presentation on two readings; and take a final exam. **At-home writing assignments, readings, and research assignments are to be completed before class. Active participation in class discussions is required.**

Requirements

Participation, Attendance, Quizzes	15%
Individual Presentations	15%
2-page Explication Essays	15%
5-page Revision Essays	40%
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>15%</u>
TOTAL	100%

*Participation grades are determined from the following: participation in class through attendance and preparation, responding to questions, engagement in group discussions, and visits to office hours.

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Course Schedule

Subject to Change *with Notice*

Week 1

❖ Tuesday, September 4th

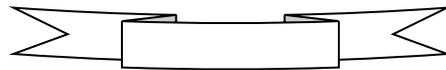
In-Class: Introductions
Review Course Syllabus

❖ Thursday, September 6th

Reading due: In the *Norton Anthology*

1-10	“Introduction”
574	William Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow”
559	Robert Hayden, “Those Winter Sundays”
478	Lydia Davis, “Head, Heart”
482	Edwin Arlington Robinson, “Richard Cory”
483	Thomas Hardy, “The Ruined Maid”
485	William Wordsworth, “I wandered lonely as a cloud”
672	Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “How Do I Love Thee?”
724	Linda Pastan, “love poem”
603	Howard Nemerov, “The Vacuum”
556	Sharon Olds, “Last Night”
488	Billy Collins, “Divorce”
493	Aphra Behn, “On Her Loving Two Equally”

Writing assignment due: 3 discussion questions related to three different poems



Week 2

❖ Tuesday, September 11th

Reading Due: Posted Electronically

T.S. Eliot	“Tradition and the Individual Talent”
Pat Mora	“La Migra”
Robert Browning	“Porphyria’s Lover”
Alfred, Lord Tennyson	“The Lady of Shalott”
Maya Angelou	“ <i>from</i> On the Pulse of Morning”
Agha Shahid Ali	“Postcard from Kashmir”

In the *Norton Anthology*

509, 511, 514	Speaker
518	Dorothy Parker, “A Certain Lady”
722	Pat Mora, “Elena”
521	Gwendolyn Brooks, “We Real Cool”
524-525	Situation and Setting

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526	Linda Pastan, "To a Daughter Leaving Home"
527	John Donne, "The Flea"
528	Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"
530	Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach"
546, 548, 552	Theme and Tone
547	W. D. Snodgrass, "Leaving the Motel"
724	Marge Piercy, "Barbie Doll"
554	William Blake, "London"
555	Paul Laurence Dunbar, "Sympathy"
550	Adrienne Rich, "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers"

Writing assignment due: 3 discussion questions related to three different poems

❖ Thursday, September 13th
Reading Due:

Posted Electronically
Resource on writing about poetry

In the *Norton Anthology*

566, 567, 570 Precision, Ambiguity, Denotation, Connotation, Word Order

566	Sarah Cleghorn, [The golf links lie so near the mill]
568	Walter de la Mare, "Slim Cunning Hands"
569	Theodore Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz"
572	Sharon Olds, "Sex Without Love"
574	William Carlos Williams, "This Is Just to Say"
580, 582	Metaphor, Personification
583	Emily Dickinson, [Because I could not stop..]
715	Langston Hughes, "Harlem"
582	Linda Pastan, "Marks"
583	Simile and Analogy
584	Robert Burns, "A Red, Red Rose"
589	William Shakespeare, [Shall I compare thee...]
590	Randal Jarrall, "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner"
593, 595, 598	Symbol
597	Dorothy Parker, "One Perfect Rose"
598	William Blake, "The Sick Rose"
603	Adrienne Rich, "Diving into the Wreck"
1250	Writing: Paraphrase, Summary, Description

Writing assignment due: 3 discussion questions related to three different poems



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Week 3

❖ Tuesday, September 18th

Reading due:

Posted Electronically
Resource on writing about poetry
Walt Whitman, "That Music Always Round Me"
Walt Whitman, "To a Locomotive in Winter"
M. NourbeSe Philip, "Ratio" from *Zong!*
M. NourbeSe Philip, video on excerpt from *Zong!*
Charles Olson, "Projective Verse"
Charles Olson, "As the Dead Prey Upon Us"
Edgar Allen Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition"
Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Each and All"

In the *Norton Anthology*

609-612 The Sounds of Poetry
613 Helen Chasin, "The Word Plum"
615 Alexander Pope, "Sound and Sense"
618-627 Poetic Meter
620 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Metrical Feet"
623 Anonymous, "There was a Young Girl from St. Paul"
623 Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "from The Charge of the Light Brigade"
624 Jane Taylor, "The Star"
625 Anne Bradstreetm "To My Dear and Loving Husband"
626 Jesse Pop, "The Call"
627 Wilfred Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est"
628 William Shakespeare, "Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore"
629 Walt Whitman, "Beat! Beat! Drums!"
698 Emily Dickinson, "My Life Had Stood a Loaded Gun"
699 Emily Dickinson, "Tell all the truth but tell it slant"
691 William Blake, "The Tyger"
730 Poe, "The Raven"
1248-1269 "The Literature Essay"

Writing assignment due:

First Two-Page Explication Paper due.
You will select one poem assigned for reading in Weeks 1-3, and write a two-page explication paper. Your essay is due, in Word document format, before class. You **MUST** select a poem which was not explicated in the *Norton Anthology* or extensively discussed or lectured on in class.

❖ Thursday, September 20th

Reading due:

Posted Electronically
Resource on Writing About Poetry
Laurie Ann Guerrero, "Last Meal: Breakfast Tacos..."
Maceo Montoya, from *A Letter to the Poet from his Brother*

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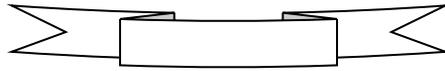
Aja Monet, "What My Grandmother Meant to Say Was"
 Joy Harjo, "Becoming Seventy"
 Lorna Dee Cervantes, "Four Portraits of Fire"
 Amira Baraka, "History as Process"
 Victor Hernandez Cruz, "El Poema de lo Reverso"
 Sherman Alexie, "How to Write the Great American Indian Novel"
 Leslie Marmon Silko, "Ceremony"
 Maxine Hong Kingston, from *I Love a Broad Margin to My Life*
 Julia de Burgos, "A Julia de Burgos (To Julia de Burgos)"

In the *Norton Anthology*

633-644	Internal Structure
633	Pat Mora, "Sonrisas"
635	Galway Kinnell, "Blackberry Eating"
636	Seamus Heaney, "Punishment"
639	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Frost at Midnight"
641	Sharon Olds, "The Victims"
643	Walt Whitman, "I Hear America Singing"
645	Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind"
655-665	External Form
657	Richard Wilbur, "Terza Rima"
659	Dylan Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle..."
660	Natasha Trethewey, "Myth"
661	Elizabeth Bishop, "Sestina"
662	Ciara Shuttleworth, "Sestina"
663	E.E. Cummings "l(a)"
663	E.E. Cummings, "Buffalo Bill's"
664	George Herbert, "Easter Wings"
667-668	Sonnets
669	William Shakespeare, "My mistress' eyes..."
670	John Milton, "When I consider how my light is spent"
671	William Wordsworth, "Nuns Fret Not"
672	Christina Rossetti, "In an Artist's Studio"
673	Edna St. Vincent Millay, "What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why"
676	Gwendolyn Brooks, "First Fight. Then Fiddle."
677	Billy Collins, "Sonnet"
704	Paul Laurence Dunbar, "We Wear the Mask"
714	Langston Hughes, "Harlem"
715	Langston Hughes, "I, Too"
725	Sylvia Plath, "Daddy"
741	Derek Wolcott, "A Far Cry from Africa"
1279-1294	"The Writing Process"

Writing assignment due: 3 discussion questions related to three different poems

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Week 4

❖ Tuesday, September 25th

Reading Due: Posted Electronically
Resource on writing about fiction

In the *Norton Anthology*

12-33	“Fiction: Reading, Responding, Writing”
14	Anonymous, “The Elephant...”
17	Linda Brewer, “20/20”
21	Marjane Satrapi, “The Shabbat”
57-66	“Understanding the Text: Plot”
60	Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, “The Shroud”
66	James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”

Writing assignments due: Draft of 5-page poetry paper due. And, you must bring a hard copy to class for peer review.

❖ Thursday, September 27th

Reading Due: Posted Electronically
Junot Diaz, “Monstro”

In the *Norton Anthology*

110-115	“Narration and Point of View”
122	Ernest Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephants”
127	Jamaica Kincaid, “Girl”
1308-1339	“Guide to Quotation, Citation and Documentation”

Writing assignment due: 2 discussion questions about essay format, structure, and/or citations. Be as specific as possible. Questions which address “issues” called to your attention after peer review would be great!
1 discussion question on one of the short stories assigned for reading on 9/25 or 9/27.



Week 5

❖ Tuesday, October 2nd

Reading Due: Posted Electronically
Benjamin Alire Saenz, from *Everything Begins and Ends...*
Kiana Davenport, from *House of Skin*
Jonathan Safran Foer, "Here We Aren't, So Quickly"

In the *Norton Anthology*
1340-138 "Character"
138 Toni Morrison, "Recitatif"
156 David Foster Wallace, "Good People"
164-171 "Setting"
166 Italo Calvino, from *Invisible Cities*
186 Amy Tan, "A Pair of Tickets"
203 Judith Ortiz Cofer, "Volar"
213 "Symbol and Figurative Language"
219 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birth-Mark"

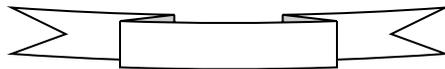
Writing assignments due: FINAL DRAFT of your first 5-page essay is due (in Word document format) before class.

❖ Thursday, October 4th

Reading Due: Posted Electronically
Resource on writing about fiction
Sherman Alexie, from *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight...*
Sandra Cisneros, from *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*
Nora Zeale Hurston, from *The Complete Stories*

In the *Norton Anthology*
249 "Theme"
249 Aesop, "The Two Crabs"
254 Stephen Crane, "The Open Boat"
275 Yasunari Kawabata, "The Grasshopper..."

Writing assignment due: 3 discussion questions related to three different stories



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Week 6

❖ Tuesday, October 9th

No class. Holiday.

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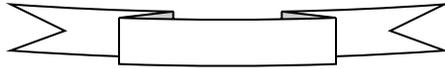
❖ Thursday, October 11th

Reading Due: Posted Electronically
Resource on writing about drama

In *They Say/I Say*
14-29 “They Say”

In the *Norton Anthology*
768-771 “Drama”
784 “Responding to Drama”
792 “Writing About Drama”
800-811 “Elements of Drama”
1101-1171 *Hamlet* (Acts I-III)

Writing assignments due: 3 discussion questions related to three different acts



Week 7

❖ Tuesday, October 16th

Reading Due: In *They Say/I Say*
101-145 “Tying It All Together”

In the *Norton Anthology*
1171-1210 *Hamlet* (Acts IV-V)

Writing assignment due: 2 discussion questions related to two different acts

❖ Thursday, October 18th

Writing assignment due: Second 2-Page Explication Paper due: You will select one scene from *Hamlet* and write a two-page explication paper. Your essay is due, in Word document format, before class.



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Week 8

❖ Tuesday, October 23rd

Reading Due:

In *They Say/I Say*
53-100 "I Say"

Research Due:

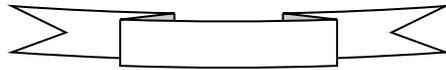
Find one piece of peer-reviewed literary criticism on *Hamlet*. Read the article and be prepared to summarize/discuss in class.

❖ Thursday, October 25th

Writing Due:

Draft of 5-page *Hamlet* paper due. And, you must bring a hard copy to class for peer review.

2 questions on drama essay format, structure, and/or citations.



Week 9

❖ Tuesday, October 30th

Reading Due:

Ask the Dust by John Fante ("Introduction" and Chapters 1-9)

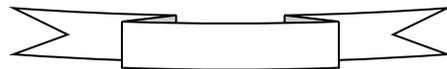
Writing assignments due: 3 discussion questions related to three different chapters

❖ Thursday, November 1st

Reading Due:

Ask the Dust by John Fante (Chapters 10-11)

Writing assignments due: FINAL DRAFT of your second 5-page essay on *Hamlet* is due (in Word document format) before class.



Week 10

❖ Tuesday, November 6th

Reading Due:

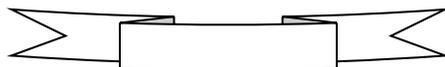
Ask the Dust by John Fante (Chapters 12-19)

Writing assignments due: 3 discussion questions related to three different chapters

❖ Thursday, November 8th

Research Due:

Find one academic source on *Ask the Dust*. Read the article and be prepared to summarize/discuss in class.



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Week 11

❖ Tuesday, November 13th

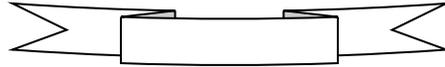
Reading Due: *Play It As It Lays* by Joan Didion (“Introduction” and pages 1-84)

Writing assignments due: 3 discussion questions related to three different sections

❖ Thursday, November 15th

Reading Due: *Play It As It Lays* by Joan Didion pages (85-123)

Writing assignment due: 3 discussion questions related to three different sections



Week 12

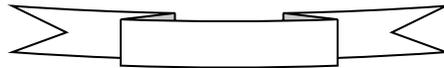
❖ Tuesday, November 20th

Reading Due: *Play It As It Lays* by Joan Didion pages (124-213)

Writing assignment due: Third 2-Page Explication Paper due. You will first decide whether you want to write about *Ask the Dust* or *Play It As It Lays*. Then, you will write a two-page explication paper focusing on an excerpt from the novel of your choice. Your essay is due, in Word document format, before class.

❖ Thursday, November 22nd

No class. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday!



Week 13

❖ Tuesday, November 27th

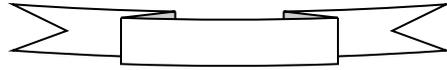
Writing assignments due: Draft of 5-page Fante or Didion paper due. And, you must bring a hard copy to class for peer review.

2 questions on novel essay format, structure, and/or citations.

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❖ Thursday, November 29th

Research Due: Find one academic source on *Play It As It Lays*. Read the article and be prepared to summarize/discuss in class.



Week 14

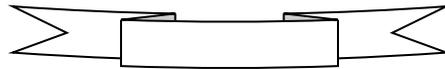
❖ Tuesday, December 4th

Writing assignments due: FINAL DRAFT of your third 5-page Fante or Didion essay due (in Word document format) before class.

In-Class: Presentations and/or Final Exam Review

❖ Thursday, December 6th Last Class Meeting

In-Class: Presentations and/or Final Exam Review



Finals Week

❖ Wednesday, December 12th at 3:00 pm

Bring a blue book to class.