

Intermediate English II - Introduction to Literature in English Spring 2014

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 15:00-17:00

Description:

This course will introduce students to literature in English by providing an overview of major genres and authors that comprise the canon of American literature from the 17th century to the present along with the intellectual and aesthetic traditions that shaped them. The goals of the course are:

- To increase students' proficiency at reading various types of English texts, including poetry, fiction, essays, creative non-fiction, and drama.
- To improve students' ability to recognize figurative language in English and analyze its function within a text.
- To increase fluency and spontaneity in written English through daily reading journals and short formal writing assignments.
- To building listening and speaking skills in English through class discussion and structured oral/aural assignments.

For the sake of simplicity, we will be using an anthology that presents works in their historical sequence along with an editorial apparatus that provides supplemental historical information. This is not, however, designed to be an historical survey. We will be reading these works out of order.

Required Texts:

Norton Anthology of American Literature, Shorter Eighth Edition

Dave Eggers, *Zeitoun*

Joel and Ethan Coen, *Fargo* (film)

Assessment:

30% - Dialectical Reading Journal

30% - Homework Assignments and Quizzes

20% - Midterm Test (Units I-III)

20% - Final Test (Cumulative)

Attendance:

You are counted absent if you miss more than twenty minutes of any given class period. Regular and timely attendance is essential to doing well in this class. You are allowed 3 "free" absences for the entire semester. Each subsequent absence will result in the deduction of 1 point from your final

grade. If you have an extreme setback that requires you to miss multiple weeks of class and that you can document, you should come discuss it with me as soon as humanly possible.

Late Work:

Written assignments must be uploaded to my.nes.ru prior to class on the day the assignment is listed on the syllabus. I will continue to accept work submitted after that point at a penalty of 1 point per day.

Make-up Work:

If a student receives a failing grade in the course, he/she may complete an additional writing project equivalent to the missed or failing assignment. This project must be completed during the designated make-up period and will be assessed by a three-member panel, including the course instructor.

Electronics:

Laptops, tablets, and e-readers are permitted so long as they do not become a problem. If I suspect that an electronic device is being used inappropriately, I will ask you to turn it off and put it away. Cell phones should be turned off and kept in your bag or pocket.

Communication:

Students should check their nes.ru accounts regularly, as important information about the course (emergency cancellations, deadline changes) may be communicated in that way. Email is also the best way to reach me, though understand that I do not respond to email after 22:00 or before 9:00. If you have a question about an assignment, you should not wait until the morning it is due to ask.

The Dialectical Reading Journal:

In the most basic sense, “dialectic” simply means conversation, but it is a term that also describes forms of logical reasoning and back-and-forth argument used to resolve differences between two parties or positions. For the purposes of this semester-long assignment, the two parties in question are you as an audience (reader/listener/viewer) and writer and the texts you consume and produce. In many ways, the relationship between audience/author and text produces a kind of tension as you struggle both to comprehend and make meaning. Your journal will be the place where you work through (but probably will not resolve) that tension, where you will not only keep notes on readings and class discussions but chart your progress as both a consumer and producer of texts.

The journal I am asking you to keep is a double-entry journal. You may keep it on paper or as a computer file, but it needs to have two discrete sides, much like the columns of a ledger:

- On one side, you will keep your notes on readings, homework assignments, and class lectures and discussions. It is not essential that you have an entry for every single day, but consistency will ultimately be reflected in your grade.

- On the other side, you will reflect briefly **at weekly intervals** on your progress as an audience and (where applicable) a producer (writer/speaker) of texts. You should not only consider vocabulary or grammar issues that impede communication but any cultural or personal factors that might be relevant.

At the end of the semester, you will hand in your journal along with an accompanying essay that will be used to determine your grade. The essay should be roughly 1000 words, and citing specific examples from your journal, it should make an argument for how you have progressed this semester.

Counting for 30% of your final grade, the journal and essay are the most important elements of the course. Even though I won't be looking at it every day, you should take it as seriously as any other homework assignment, particularly the second side.

Schedule (subject to change):

Homework assignments and required readings are listed on the date they are **due.*

***Online assignment components are hyperlinked in the electronic version of this document. They are also available on my.nes.ru under the "Documents" section.*

Unit I: Antebellum Fiction

Week 1 (January 20-24)

T – Introduction

F – Washington Irving, "Rip van Winkle," Edgar Allen Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart"

Week 2 (January 27-31)

T – Nathanael Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown," "The Minister's Black Veil"

Writing: 300-600 words describing yourself as a reader and a writer. Reflect on your past experiences in both Russian and English and describe the type of progress you would like to make during this semester. Upload a copy of this essay prior to Tuesday's class, but save another copy to serve as the first entry of your journal.

F – Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*

Week 3 (February 3-7)

T – Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*

F – Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* Chs. VII, IX, and XII

Research: Explore the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* [multi-media archive](#) at the University of Virginia, select one artifact that captures your attention, and prepare to describe it to your peers in class in 2-3 minutes.

Unit II: Rhetorical Traditions

Week 4 (February 10-14)

T – John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" & Roger Williams, selection from *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution*

F – Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

Listening: Choose one of the following sermons by iconic American ministers and pay attention to the rhetorical techniques they use. What persuasive point are they trying to make? What values do they appeal to? Do they use logic or primarily appeal to the emotions of the audience? In addition to the content of the sermon, what can you say about their delivery? Does the speaker emphasize certain words or phrases? How does he do so?

[Billy Graham, New York Crusade](#) (1957):

[Carlton Pearson, "Why Hell is a Vulgar Concept"](#) (2013):

Bonus: Watch this sermon parody by famous American comedian Richard Pryor. What conventions of the sermon is he mocking?

[Richard Pryor, "Rev. James L. White"](#) from his 1977 NBC special:

Week 5 (February 17-21)

T – Thomas Paine, "Common Sense," Thomas Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence"

F – William Apess, "The Indian's Looking Glass for the White Man"

Week 6 (February 24-28)

T – Various speeches

Speaking: Select one of the following speeches from your anthology and elsewhere and prepare a brief section of it (2-3 paragraphs) to deliver orally in class. The text does not need to be memorized, but you should be familiar enough with it that you can speak naturally without constantly glancing at the script. Pay attention to delivery techniques (pacing, posture, tone, volume, etc.) and make sure that they are appropriate to the content of the text. Your performance will be judged by your classmates.

Tecumseh, "Speech to the Osages" (anthology)

Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address" (anthology)

Sojourner Truth, "Speech to the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, 1851" (anthology)

[John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address"](#)

[Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Women's Rights are Human Rights"](#))

[Elie Wiesel, "The Perils of Indifference"](#)

F – Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience," *Walden* Ch. 2

Week 7 (March 3-7)

T – Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* Ch. XIV

F – W.E.B. Du Bois, "Pushkin," and *The Souls of Black Folk* Chs. I and III

Listening/Writing: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois are considered the founders of two differing traditions of anti-racist protest. Those who follow in Washington's footsteps are considered more conservative and accommodationist, while those who model themselves after DuBois tend to be more radical. Read and

listen to the following speeches by Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., select **one**, and write a 600 word essay making an argument for which tradition that chosen figure belongs to. Cite specific examples from both the chosen figure and the figure you think he is most indebted to. Essays must be uploaded prior to class.

Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet" – [audio](#), [text](#)
[Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream"](#)
[Martin Luther King, Jr., "I've Been to the Mountaintop"](#)

Unit III: Autobiography

Week 8 (March 10-14)

T – Mary Rowlandson, selections from *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Rowlandson*

F – Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography* Parts I and II

Listening: David Sedaris is a world-famous American writer and humorist known for telling stories about his life. "[The Santaland Diaries](#)," an account taken from his personal diary of working as an elf at a New York department store and read for the program "Morning Edition" on National Public Radio is the story that essentially began his career.

Week 9 (March 17-21)

T – Harriet Jacobs, selections from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Zitkala-Sa, "Impressions of an Indian Childhood"

F – Midterm Test over Units I-III

Week 10 (March 24-28)

Consultation Week – no class

Unit IV: Poetry

Week 11 (March 31 – April 4)

T – Walt Whitman, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," *Drum-Taps*, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"

Listening: Ralph Vaughn Williams' setting of three Whitman poems about the Civil War (one of which you read) to music in *Dona Nobis Pacem*, which commemorates the First World War.

II. [Beat! Beat! Drums!](#)

III. [Reconciliation](#)

IV. [Dirge for Two Veterans](#)

F – Emily Dickinson, various poems

Speaking: Select and memorize any Dickinson poem from your anthology to recite to the class.

Week 12 (April 7 – April 11)

T – Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," all poems in the anthology; Countee Cullen, all poems

Listening: Hughes is renowned for using blues and jazz rhythms in his poetry. Listen to the following musical examples for reference:

Robert Johnson, "[Crossroad](#)"

Muddy Waters, "[Mississippi Delta Blues](#)"

F – Gertrude Stein, "Objects"

Week 13 (April 14 – April 18)

T – William Carlos Williams, "The Young Housewife," "The Red Wheelbarrow," "This is Just to Say"

Listening/Writing: Listen to [this recording](#) of contributors to National Public Radio's *This American Life* writing their own versions of Williams "This is Just to Say." Transcribe at least two of their imitations, inserting line breaks where you think they should go based on the author's pauses and the degree to which they imitate Williams' own poetic rhythms. Then, write your own version.

F – Wallace Stevens, "The Idea of Order at Key West," "Of Modern Poetry"

Unit IV: Post-WWII Prose and Film

Week 14 (April 21-25)

T – Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (read the entire play)

F – Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

Speaking: On Tuesday, you will be assigned to a group tasked with performing a scene from *Death of a Salesman*. On Friday, you will have the opportunity to rehearse together after preparing your parts on your own. These scenes will be performed during the subsequent class period.

Week 15 (April 28 – May 2)

T – Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* – student performances

F – Spring Break – no class

Week 16 (May 5 – 9)

Spring Break – no class

Week 17 (May 12 – 16)

T – Richard Wright, "The Man Who Was Almost a Man," Ralph Ellison, "Battle Royale"

F – Sandra Cisneros, "Woman Hollering Creek," Louise Erdrich, "Fleur"

Week 18 (May 19 – 23)

T – Dave Eggers, *Zeitoun*

F – Dave Eggers, *Zeitoun*

Writing/Speaking: *Zeitoun* was a highly celebrated book when it first appeared but has come under subsequent criticism due to incidents in the Zeitoun family following the publication of the book (which may or may not have been related to the trauma experienced during the events the book describes). **After you finish the book**, read the linked articles and write a 600 word essay that answers the following question: do these problems make the book any less persuasive or is the author's point valid regardless of the questions that have been raised afterward?

In class, you will be asked to take a side in a debate based on the argument you make in your essay, which should be uploaded to the course website prior to class.

[Victoria Patterson, Salon.com](#)

[Robbie Brown, New York Times](#)

Week 19 (May 26 – May 30)

T – Joel and Ethan Coen, *Fargo*

F – Joel and Ethan Coen, *Fargo*

Week 20 (June 2 – June 6)

Final Test - TBD