

# Syllabus

## ENGL 1B -70 Critical Thinking Literature and Composition

- **Instructor:** Lene Moody
  - E-Mail: lmoody@taft.org
  - Telephone: 661-763-7812 or toll free 866 464 9229
  - Office Hours: by appointment
  - **Mailing address: Lene Moody, Taft College, 29 Emmons Park Dr, Taft CA 93268**
- **Units:** 3
- **Class Meets:** January 28 to May 29
- **Textbooks & Estimated Costs:**
  - Textbook: Literature, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, by Roberts (contact book store for latest price 661-763-7731)
  - Purchase Textbook: Slaughterhouse Five by Kurt Vonnegut (contact book store for latest price 661-763-7731)
- **Estimated Time Per Week:** Students can expect to devote on average at least nine hours a week to the class given the reading and writing assignments.
- **Special Requirements:** This course is not delivered through the Etudes program. Students can submit their work via U.S. postal mail, through the TC aides at TCI, or in person at the Learning Resource Center on campus. There is a file in the LRC where graded work can be picked up as well. If you choose the mail method, you must send me 5 large (8 x 10) and 5 small letter sized envelopes, all self-addressed and stamped, during the first week of class so I can get syllabus and handouts to you **and** later on mail your graded work back to you. *If the envelopes are not provided with the appropriate postage, graded work will be sent to the LRC.* Use the mailing address above. All work is to be type written. Students are welcome to contact me for help; all communication is encouraged.
- **Assignments:** Students will learn about literary terms such as character, plot, setting, point of view, and various forms of interpretation; additionally, the students will learn about the authors and historical contexts of our major texts so that they will be able to make sophisticated, intelligent and original responses – in essay and journal form – to the poems and essays as well as the novel and play we will be reading. Please remember to write your name on all assignments.  
*Journals:* When asked to write a journal, I expect you to write about your personal impression of the texts – whatever strikes you as interesting, clever, sad, funny, good or bad about the stories, play and poems we are reading. I invite you to use some of the things you are learning about literature (literary terms, approaches, history, etc.), but the emphasis should be on your own reading of the texts, and you should not research for your journal entries. Journals should be 1-2 pages long, typed, double spaced, 12 font.  
*Essays:* You will write one essay for three of the four genres we are studying: short story, poetry, and novel. You will write an extended journal about the play. You will find more specific directions for your essays in the class schedule below. Each essay should be 3-4 pages long, typed, double spaced, 12 font.

- **Proctored Quizzes (exams):** There are two proctored two hour quizzes where you will answer questions about the texts. You must write them by hand and you must bring your textbook with you since you are going to be writing about texts that are in it. You may take the proctored exams in the LRC or with an outside proctor. Taft College has a proctor agreement with Fresno Pacific University (located in downtown Bakersfield), so you may also schedule appointments there to take your exams. If none of these options work for you, you may find your own proctor and then submit the proctor form, which can be found on the Taft College Distance Learning Home Page. If you take your quizzes outside the LRC, your proctor must sign the finalized quiz and return it to me by mail.

**Plagiarism:** You will be dropped immediately for plagiarized work. All work must be your own, done during this semester. Give credit for words, facts, numbers, and ideas not your own. In your essays you must use MLA style documentation. You can also look up anything you need to know about proper MLA documentation on the web:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

If you have questions about documentation, ask at the LRC or make an appointment to see me.

**Method of this class:** Start the course immediately – January 28, 2008. Do your work according to the syllabus; the syllabus is your guide; it's important that you read it thoroughly Work at a steady pace. You will have to read and follow the instructions carefully. Get work to me as indicated in the syllabus. I return it as soon as possible. Label all work carefully with week number, your name, my name, and the assignment title, and please use a stapler for your finished assignments. Papers with no name will not get graded or recorded. I will accept work a week or two early, but no late work is accepted. Quizzes are open book Bring your textbook (Literature) with you when you take the quizzes. Remember, we will not contact you. Please contact me during the first week to let me know which method you will use and to request mailed materials. If I do not hear from you, I will assume you are doing the LRC method. *We mail only by request.* If at any point during the term I do not hear from you or receive any work from, you will be dropped. **No late work, no make ups, no extra credit.**

**Delays and extenuating circumstances:** communicate with the instructor and counseling office immediately. Instructor will consider situations of students having documented extenuating circumstances (death in the family, hospitalization, court dates). Sickness and computer breakdown are not extenuating circumstances.

**Revisions:**

Revise each essay; put a large R at the top of the paper and return it to me before or with the next assignment with the original graded copy of the essay included. You earn extra points for each revised essay.

Keep all your work for this class in a folder; bring this folder with you to any appointments you make to see me. We cannot discuss your work unless you have it with you. You may not submit journals and quizzes for revision.

## Class Schedule

Before you start the class, please read this important information:

- You must submit your work by the weekly/biweekly deadline. No late work will be accepted. Students who use the mail method must have their work postmarked on the due date, and students who use the LRC method will have their work time-stamped when they turn it in- the same goes for TCI students.
- You must tell me within the first week of class whether you will be using the mail method or the LRC method (this does not apply to TCI students). Do not fax or email any of the assigned work.
- If I have not heard from you at all by the deadline of the first week's assignment, you will be dropped from the class.

### Week 1

Read Chapter One in Literature. This chapter describes different ways you can read, understand, respond to and write about literature. There is really no right or wrong way to read and understand a story, play, poem or novel as long as you don't intentionally read something into the text that is not there. When you respond to the texts in your journals and in your essays, use your common sense and also take note of how the stories make you feel and let that guide what you want to say about what you have read. Good literature opens up for hundreds of different ways to think and write about it, so sometimes it can be hard to figure out where to start. This chapter gives you an idea of different ways you can focus on a story/play/poem/novel and write sensibly about it. After you have read Chapter One, write your first journal entry about what approach to "The Necklace" interests you the most and why. It can be any of the six approaches mentioned on p. 18.

On pp. 41-41 there is a good example of how to write an essay about fiction. On p. 31 you see a neat, short outline for that essay. I expect you to write similar outlines for the essays in this class. A good outline always includes a thesis statement and topic sentences.

**By Monday February 4, turn in Journal #1 - approach to "The Necklace"**

### Week 2

Chapter Two previews the literary terms discussed in the book. Those are terms such as character, plot, point of view, setting, theme, idea, symbol irony, and so on. These are terms we use to pick a story apart, so to speak, in order not to ruin it but to appreciate it, and that is exactly why you are learning those terms in the weeks ahead. Still, it's important to remember that fiction should also be appreciated in its entirety, just as it is. On p. 58 of Literature, Roberts and Jacobs remind us that "throughout each story we read, no matter what characteristics we are considering, it is most important to realize that a work of fiction is an entirety, a unity. Any reading of a story should be undertaken not to break things down into parts but to understand and assimilate the work *as a whole*. The

separate analysis of various topics is a *means* to that end, *not* the end itself. The study of fiction, like the study of all literature, is designed to foster our growth and to increase our understanding of the human condition.”

With that in mind, read Raymond Carver’s “Neighbors” and write a journal entry about it. How did it make you feel? How do you make sense of the story?

**Journal entry #2 is due on Monday February 11**

**Week 3**

We will be reading two short stories by Edith Wharton. First read about her life and career on pp. 499-500 and on the Edith Wharton handout. Then read “Pomegranate Seed” starting on p 524. Then write a journal entry about your initial reaction to the story. Since we are going to spend a lot of time studying Edith Wharton, I recommend you watch Martin Scorsese’s fantastic adaptation of Wharton’s novel The Age of Innocence. It will give you a good idea of what Wharton’s fiction is all about.

**Journal entry #3 is due on Monday February 18**

**Week 4**

Read Chapters 3 and 4 and write a journal entry about how plot & structure and characters are presented in “Pomegranate Seed.”

**Journal entry #4 is due on Monday February 25**

**Week 5**

Read chapters 5 and 6 in Literature and write a journal entry about how point of view and setting are presented in “Pomegranate Seed.”

**Journal entry #5 is due on Monday March 3**

**Week 6**

Read chapters 7 and 8 and write a journal entry about the style and tone of “Pomegranate Seed.”

**Journal entry #6 is due on Monday March 10**

**Week 7**

Read chapters 9 and 10 and write a journal entry about symbolism and theme in “Pomegranate Seed.”

Take Quiz #1 at the LRC or with your proctor. Bring your textbook. The quiz will be on the approaches to literature you have studied in 3-10.

**Journal entry #7 is due on Monday March 17. Take the quiz no later than March 17.**

### **Week 8**

Now you read the second Wharton story, “Roman Fever” and the selected criticism on pp. 550-561. Then you choose one of the approaches you have studied in chapters 3-10 and write a 3-4 page essay about “Roman Fever” based on that approach. You may also use one of the writing topics on page 503. I want you to use the criticism from pp. 550-560 and at least two other sources you have found at the library or on the internet. Use sober, professional sources, such as literary journals and university web sites. Include an outline and works cited page with your essay.

**By Monday March 24 turn in the essay.**

### **Week 9**

The next three weeks we are going to read poetry. If you think reading poetry is boring, please give it a chance and look at the poems with fresh eyes...there really are good reasons why so many people go nuts over poetry. If you are into music, you are into poetry. All lyrics are poetry, and whether you like Snoop Dog or John Mayor, every time you sit in your car and squeak along with your favorite music artist, you are reciting poetry.

Remember also that you can apply the same approaches to poetry (chapter 3-10) as you did to the short stories.

Start on page 609 with the overview. Then read “Schoolsville” and answer questions 1, 2, and 3 in your journal. Read the commentary on p 611 and then read “Hope” and answer questions 1, 2, and 3 in your journal, and read the commentary on p. 612. Then read the last poem, “Here a Pretty Baby Lies” and answer questions 1, 2, and 3 in your journal. Finally, read the section called “How to Read a Poem” pp. 615-616.

**By Monday March 31 turn in journal #8**

### **Week 10**

Read Emily Dickinson’s “Because I Could Not Stop for Death” (p. 620) and write a journal entry about your initial reaction to the poem. You may center your entry around the questions on p. 621. Remember that a poem sometimes is like a puzzle that takes a while to solve, so you may have to read the poem 4-5 times or more before you figure out how the poem makes sense to you. Again, there is no right answer to the puzzle other than the unique way the poem speaks to you and what you experience while reading it.

**By Monday April 7 turn in journal #9**

### **Week 11**

Read the background information on Emily Dickinson pp. 1011-1019. Then write a 3-4 page essay about “Because I Could Not Stop for Death” and one of her other poems listed on pp. 1019-1020. As you write your essay, use the background information you have read to support your ideas and arguments. You may research the poems and include other sources, but you don’t have to. Base your essay on one of the approaches studied in chapter 3-10 or the topics listed on p. 1019.

**By Monday April 14 turn in the essay.**

**Weeks 12 and 13**

These two weeks you will read Ibsen's famous play, A Dollhouse. This play was written in 1879, a time when women were busy advocating their right to vote and in general their right to be seen as more than daughters, wives, and/or mothers. Therefore, many critics have seen this play's heroine, Nora, as a modern woman trying to break out of a marriage where she is regarded as nothing more than a doll in a doll's house. However, there is much more to this play than a feminist approach, so while the feminist approach certainly has some validity, recent critics have taken a good hard look at Nora and pointed out some of her serious and very human flaws: she plays her husband like a violin in order to get what she wants, she is vain and greedy, and in the end she is willing to put herself first even if it means her children come second (or third).

Read the background information on pages 1754 to 1759. Then read the play. As you read, think about Nora as a character and think about the motives she has for doing what she does.

When you are done reading the play, read the critical essays by Hemmer, Lutterbie, and Templeton found in the section starting on page 1865.

Then write a two page journal where you answer the following questions:

*Is Nora a victim of circumstance or a villain who brings about problems? What is Ibsen's View? What is yours? Why?*

**By April 28 turn in journal # 10**

**Week 14**

Read Slaughterhouse Five and write a journal about your initial reaction to the book.

If you have trouble getting started on your journal, the following questions can help you: Did you like it? Why or why not? The structure and plot is not the usual beginning, middle and end – structure. Did that confuse you? Why do you think it is structured that way? What do you think of the main character?

**By Monday May 5 turn in Journal #11**

**Weeks 15 and 16**

Read the articles in the Slaughterhouse Five packet. Then choose an approach to the novel (chapters 3-10 or your own topic) and write a 3-4 page essay where you quote and paraphrase from the novel itself and the articles in the packet. You may add articles from your own research, but that is not required. Include an outline and a works cited page with your essay.

**By Monday May 19 turn in the essay**

**Final Exam:** By Monday May 26 take Quiz #2 at the LRC or with an outside proctor. All final revisions are also due on May 26.

## **Grading**

10 Journals, 15 points each	150 points
Dollhouse journal	30 points
2 quizzes, 50 points each	100 points
3 essays, 40 points each	120 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>400 points</b>