

Mary Baldwin University
Fall 2016

ENG 111 L: Introduction to Literature
Course Syllabus
BLACKBOARD COURSE

*** Be sure to consult the course Blackboard site, which will contain more specific notes and assignment descriptions, including dates and topics for Discussion Board postings.**

Instructor: Rick Plant, Prof. of English
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Office Hours: MWF 12 - 1 pm; Tues. 1:30 – 2:30 pm.

Please feel free to call or email at any time. Although the hours above are my “official” office hours, I am on campus and in the office five days a week, typically both morning and afternoon.

Required Text: *Literature: A Pocket Anthology*, 6th ed. R. S. Gwynn, ed.
New York: Pearson, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-0-321-94274-6

Course Description and Objectives: ENG 111: Introduction to Literature introduces students to the study of literature in the genres of poetry, short fiction, and drama. Within the Mary Baldwin College Common Curriculum, the course carries Humanities (H) credit and Writing Emphasis (W) credit. ENG 111 may also be used as an elective in fulfilling the requirements for the English major, the English minor, and the creative writing minor.

This course is designed to increase your understanding and appreciation of the complexities of literature and to improve your writing skills through writing (and re-writing) short essays of analysis and interpretation.

Learning Objectives:

The successful student will be able to

- Recognize many of the specific elements of literature in the genres of poetry, short fiction, and drama, and their effects on particular literary texts;
- Interpret and analyze works in multiple genres of literature, in thesis-based essays that incorporate specific evidence from the work(s) being analyzed;
- Use MLA format for citing quotations.

Components of Course Grade:

4 short essays @ 15% each	60%
final exam (essay)	15%
2 tests on literary terms @ 10% each	20%
Short assignments & Discussion Board responses	20%

* You'll notice that the above percentages total 115 %. Here's why: the final exam essay is required of all students in the course. However, in calculating your final grade for the course, I will "drop" your single lowest essay grade (whether that grade comes from essays 1-4 or from the final). * If you do NOT submit the final exam essay, I will replace your remaining lowest essay grade with a "0." **MBU policy requires that all students complete a final exam in all courses.**

Quizzes. Two tests of literary terms and their application will comprise 20% of your grade for the course. One of these will be a test of literary terms that apply particularly to fiction, the other a test of literary terms that apply particularly to poetry. Both tests will be open-book.

ET (Extended Time) policy. Mary Baldwin University has a mechanism, "ET," which allows students extended time to fulfill the requirements of a course. In such a case, the student must request the ET from the course instructor, who has the prerogative to grant or deny the request. I will give permission for an ET only when the following two conditions have been met: (1) The student has kept me informed during the semester about the specific conflicts or challenges (i.e. unusual extenuating circumstances) that have made it impossible for her to complete her work within the semester. And (2) the student has completed approximately half of the coursework prior to requesting the ET. (**"Approximately half" = at least two essays and at least one of the two quizzes.**)

Reading. Most of your reading assignments for this course will be *short* and should be *fun* – after all, you'll be reading a variety of poems, a variety of short stories, and a couple of full-length plays, works of literary art that speak to both the mind and heart. Because these *are* works of art, they are fairly dense and reward re-reading: There is more to appreciate in these works than "plot" (i.e. "what happens..."); and the more carefully you re-read and examine the works, the more you can appreciate their craft and subtlety, the various ways in which structure, language, and other elements contribute to the works' overall meaning and/or effect. * So I strongly urge you to read each assigned reading at least **twice**: the first time for a quick and general overview, and a second (or third!) time more slowly and carefully, annotating the text with your questions and observations. (Shorter poems might easily invite four or five readings.) The Blackboard response assignments should provide you with useful practice in, and some specific examples of, how to read and respond in a thoughtful, focused, analytical fashion to individual texts.

The course readings and assignments will be grouped by genre: approx. 5 weeks of fiction, approx. 5 weeks of poetry, and a final 2-3 weeks devoted to plays.

Essays. I will provide you with a specific prompt for each of the formal essays. The reading assignments and Blackboard responses preceding each essay assignment are designed to provide you with certain texts, critical vocabulary, and skills that will be useful to you in writing that new essay. Typically, for each essay I will provide you with an assigned topic or task, but you will have some choice in selecting *which* poem(s) or short story(s) you write about. *Please get in touch if you'd like me to assist you in your selection of texts or topic.*

Essay Format. Formal essays must be word-processed and submitted electronically via SafeAssign. Please double space, use 12-point font, insert page numbers, and title each essay. You are responsible for keeping a copy of every essay you submit.

Revision. Any essay that receives an initial grade of "C -" or lower must be revised and resubmitted, typically within one week. Students whose essays receive an initial grade of "C" or higher will have the option of revising and re-submitting that essay. Revisions need to demonstrate a substantial rethinking and reworking of the original paper—including some apparent additional attention to the literary text(s) being addressed. (What sort of “additional attention to the literary text”? New points of focus and/or additional textual evidence for ideas offered in the first draft. A simple correction of grammatical/mechanical errors marked on the first draft does not constitute a revision, and will not yield any improvement in the paper’s grade.) The essay’s original grade will serve as a baseline for the revision grade. An especially substantial and effective revision may raise the original paper grade by a full letter grade.

Plagiarism. Plagiarism, submitting someone else’s ideas or words as though they were one’s own, is an honors violation at Mary Baldwin College. (See the *MBC Student Handbook*.) To avoid even accidental plagiarism in this course, please adhere to the following guidelines and/or consult the instructor with your questions: You are encouraged to discuss the assigned readings out of class (particularly on the Blackboard discussion board). However, the written work that you submit must be entirely your own. Do not share drafts with other students or seek assistance from anyone other than the instructor or a Writing Center tutor. **Unless instructed otherwise, you should not consult any secondary sources for your papers.** These prohibited secondary sources would include books, critical articles, internet sources, and/or the notes and papers of other students.

Unacknowledged use of secondary sources will constitute **plagiarism** and will result in an automatic “F” for the course. If you are ever in doubt about whether you may or may not consult and/or incorporate “researched” information in your papers, *please ask the instructor for clarification and assistance.*

Helpful Resources. Please feel free to consult with me for help in understanding any of the assigned works, the essay topics, and/or for help with your writing. Another good

resource for a review or examples of particular writing conventions is the Purdue University OWL (Online Writing Lab) website: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>. (Select Non-Purdue Instructors and Students in the menu box to access.) Finally, the MBU Writing Center on the Staunton campus allows you to work one-on-one with a trained tutor.

The following sections in *Literature: A Pocket Anthology* (6th edition) will be especially useful to you :

Writing about Literature (Appendix A)	p. 1303-1330
Reading and analyzing poetry	pp. 305-342, 973-977
Reading and analyzing fiction	pp. 7-26, 972-973
Reading and analyzing drama	pp. 805-828, pp. 977-979
Index of critical terms	p. 1017-1019

General Schedule

- **Consult the Blackboard site for specific assignments, including discussion board prompts, essay assignments, and specific due dates.**

Assignments will typically be due by Sunday at 9 pm. For that reason, the weeks designated below run from Monday through Sunday.

Week #1 (Aug. 29 – Sept. 4) Introduction to course and one another. Reading for genre, artistry, and message. Readings on BB.

Week #2 (Sept. 5 - 11) **Introduction to Fiction.** Gwynn, pp. 7-17. “Dead Men’s Path” (172); “The Story of an Hour” (54); “Everyday Use” (224).

Week #3 (Sept. 12-18) **Stories of Maturation.** “A White Heron” (38); “The Man Who Was Almost a Man” (113); “Young Goodman Brown” (21).

Week #4 (Sept. 19-25) **Modern Masterpieces.** “Paul’s Case” (69); “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” (195). **Due: Essay #1** (3-4 pages).

Week #5 (Sept. 26- Oct. 2) “A Rose for Emily” (91); “Cathedral” (183). Review of terms.

Week #6 (Oct. 3 - 9) **Due: Fiction Test. Introduction to Poetry.** Read pp. 1-6, pp. 305-314. “In A Station of the Metro”(610). Other readings on BB.

Week #7 (Oct. 10 – 16) **Due: Essay #2** (3-4 pages).
* *Note: 10/14 – 10/17 is Fall Break in Staunton*

Week #8 (Oct. 17 - 23) “Metaphors” (521), “We Real Cool” (485), other readings on BB. Gwynn, pp. 314-323. “Song” (362); “Sonnet 18” (398); “The Snow Man” (449).

Week #9 (Oct. 24 - 30) **Sound, Sense, and Structure: the Sonnet.** Read Gwynn, pp. 334-340, with particular attention to pp. 338-339. “Sonnet 29” (351), “Ozymandias” (393), “After Disappointment” (565). (**Due:** 2 assignments related to essay #3. Be sure to check BB.)

Week #10 (Oct. 31 – Nov. 6) Read Gwynn, 967-970, 973-977. “My Papa’s Waltz” (475). **Writing an essay of explication.** See examples on BB. **Due: Essay 3** (2-3 pages).

Week #11 (Nov. 7 - 13) **Ars Poetica.** “Tell All the Truth...” (424); “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” (381); “Terence, This is Stupid Stuff” (581); “Anecdote of the Jar” (448). “My Husband Discovers Poetry” (543). Other *ars poetica*

poems on BB. Review of poetry terms.

Week #12 (Nov. 14 - 20) **Due: Poetry Test. Introduction to drama.** Read Gwynn, 593-605.
“Trifles,” (875), “Sure Thing” (943).

Week #13 (Nov. 21 - 27) **Due: Tuesday, 11/22: Essay #4.**
** Note: Thanksgiving Break is 11/24 – 11/27*

Week #14 (Nov. 28 – Dec. 4) “The Cuban Swimmer” (952). Slippage, review.

Week #15 (Dec. 5 - 11) **Final Exam due.**

***The Final Exam—as well as any additional work (late work or revisions)—is due by 9 pm on MONDAY, Dec. 11.**