

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Fall 2012

Discipline: English Literature
ENLT 2526: Studies in Fiction: International Short Story
Division: Lower
Faculty Name: John N. Serio

Prerequisites: Previous course(s) in literature

COURSE DESCRIPTION

As a form of literature, the short story is among the richest. With its sharp focus on usually one character or incident, the short story provides lasting insight and enduring enjoyment. As students voyage to Europe, Africa, and Latin America, they will read stories from countries on the itinerary that will serve as excellent portals into the lives, values, and issues facing people in those cultures. They will explore the impact local customs and mores play in defining a person's role and position in society. Students will also learn to appreciate the short story as a distinct art form, one that gives shape to both the inner life and outer reality. They will learn to examine the various functions of setting, style, characterization, point of view, symbol, and theme as each contributes to the artistry of expression. Students will sharpen their critical thinking and writing skills through class discussion and expository essays.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To teach students an appreciation of the enduring pleasures and significance of short fiction.
- To help students gain insight into the various countries on our voyage by reading a wide range of international writers from our ports of call.
- To demonstrate how the elements of fiction—plot, setting, style, characterization, point of view, symbol, irony, and theme—may be used to elucidate both the meaning and the magic of the short story.
- To explore how the short story enables readers not only to penetrate deeper into themselves, but also to step outside of themselves to appreciate and understand others.
- To sharpen students' critical thinking and analytical skills through discussion and expository writing.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Daniel Halpern, Editor
TITLE: *The Art of the Tale: An International Anthology of Contemporary Short Stories*
PUBLISHER: Penguin Group USA
ISBN#: 978-0-14-007949-4
DATE/EDITION: 1987
COST: \$22

AUTHOR: Thomas Colchie, Editor
 TITLE: *A Hammock Beneath the Mangoes: Stories from Latin America*
 PUBLISHER: Plume/Penguin Group USA
 ISBN#: 978-0-452-26866-1
 DATE/EDITION: 1992
 COST: \$22

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Key: *Tale—Art of the Tale: An International Anthology of Short Stories;*
Mangoes—A Hammock Beneath the Mangoes: Stories from Latin America

- Class 01 Course Introduction: The Genre of the Short Story
 Class 02 **Europe: Stories from Ireland**
 Samuel Beckett, “First Love” (*Tale* 82–93)
 Edna O’Brien, “Sister Imelda” (*Tale* 519–532)
 Class 03 Frank O’Connor, “A Set of Variations on a Borrowed Theme” (*Tale* 548–564)
 William Trevor, “Beyond the Pale” (*Tale* 711–729)
 Class 04 **Europe: Stories from England**
 Graham Greene, “Two Gentle People” (*Tale* 341–346)
 Doris Lessing, “The Habit of Loving” (*Tale* 385–401)
 V. S. Pritchett, “The Saint” (*Tale* 612–621)
 Class 05 **Stories from France, Germany, and Spain**
 Albert Camus, “The Adulterous Woman” (*Tale* 173–183)
 Heinrich Böll, “Action Will Be Taken” (*Tale* 94–97)
 Mercè Rodoreda, “Rain” (*Tale* 633–37)
 Class 06 **America: Stories from the United States**
 T. Coraghessan Boyle, “Greasy Lake” (*Tale* 133–140)
 Lorrie Moore, “How to Become a Writer”
 Class 07 **Africa: Stories from Morocco, Somalia, Ghana**
 Abdeslam Boulaich, “Cowardice” (*Tale* 122–123)
 Mohammed Mrabet, “Doctor Safi” (*Tale* 481–487)
 Mohammed Mrabet, “The Canebrake”
 Ama Ata Aidoo, “A Gift from Somewhere”
 Nuruddin Farah, “My Father, the Englishman, and I”
 Class 08 **Africa: Stories from Nigeria and Kenya**
 Chinua Achebe, “The Sacrificial Egg” (*Tale* 5–8)
 Ben Okri, “In the Shadow of War”
 Ken Saro-Wiwa, “Africa Kills Her Sun”
 Ngugi wa Thiong’o, “Minutes of Glory”
 Class 09 **Africa: Stories from South Africa**
 Nadine Gordimer, “The Life of the Imagination” (*Tale* 331–340)
 Nadine Gordimer, “Once Upon a Time”
 Zoë Wicomb, “You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town”
 Class 10 Examination
 Class 11 **South America: Stories from Argentina**

- Jorge Luís Borges, “The Aleph” (*Tale* 110–121)
 Jorge Luís Borges, “The Circular Ruins” (*Mangoes* 25–29)
 Jorge Luís Borges, “The Book of Sand”
 Class 12 Luisa Valenzuela, “I’m Your Horse in the Night” (*Tale* 739–741)
 Julio Cortázar, “Bestiary” (*Tale* 230–240)
 Julio Cortázar, “Axolotl” (*Mangoes* 11–15)
 Class 13 Mempo Giardinelli, *An Impossible Balance* (Chapters 1–4)
 Class 14 Mempo Giardinelli, *An Impossible Balance* (Chapters 5–9)
 Class 15 Mempo Giardinelli, *An Impossible Balance* (Chapters 10–Epilogue)
 Class 16 **South America: Stories from Uruguay**
 Horacio Quiroga, “The Dead Man” (*Mangoes* 5–8)
 Armonía Somers, “Waiting for Polidoro” (*Mangoes* 16–21)
 Juan Carlos Onetti, “The Dog Will Have Its Day” (*Mangoes* 32–41)
 Eduardo Galeano, “The Story of the Lizard Who Had the Habit of Dining on His Wives”
 Class 17 **South America: Stories from Brazil**
 Jorge Amado, “The Miracle of the Birds” (*Mangoes* 94–100)
 Murilo Rubião, “The Ex-Magician from the Minhota Cavern” (*Mangoes* 103–107)
 Claice Lispector, “Love” (*Mangoes* 110–118)
 Class 18 Moacyr Scliar, “The Plagues” (*Mangoes* 164–176)
 João Guimarães Rosa, “The Third Bank of the River” (*Mangoes* 179–183)
 João Ubaldo Ribeiro, “It Was a Different Day When They Killed the Pig” (*Mangoes* 186–191)
 Class 19 Lygia Fagundes Telles, “The Corset” (*Mangoes* 194–221)
 Rubem Fonseca, “Lonelyhearts” (*Mangoes* 224–236)
 Class 20 **America: Stories from the United States**
 Richard Wright, “Big Black Good Man” (*Tale* 786–795)
 Russell Banks, “The Child Screams and Looks Back at You” (*Tale* 65–70)
 Class 21 Tobias Wolff, “Hunters in the Snow” (*Tale* 774–85)
 Raymond Carver, “Fat” (*Tale* 197–200)
 Woody Allen, “The Kuglemass Episode”
 Class 22 **Caribbean: Stories from Dominica**
 Jean Rhys, “Fishy Waters,” “The Whistling Bird,” “Heat”
 Class 23 Jean Rhys, “Sleep It Off Lady,” “Who Knows What’s Up in the Attic?”
 Class 24 Examination

Note: There will be several out-of-class essays, format and due dates to be announced.

FIELD-LAB: Port: Buenos Aires

Date: Friday, November 3, 2012

Title: Latin American Writers

Field-Lab Assignment: Expository Essay on Field-Lab Experience

This required all-day Field-Lab in Buenos Aires will introduce us to Latin American fiction. In the morning, we will meet with Argentinian writer Mempo Giardinelli, whose recent novel, *An Impossible Balance*, we will have read and discussed in class (this should lead to a lively and significant exchange). Prof. Giardinelli will discuss his work with us, as well as the art of fiction in general. He will also provide a historical overview of Latin American fiction, highlighting various stages and various authors as it progressed from romanticism and naturalism in the nineteenth century to modernism and magical realism in the twentieth century.

In the afternoon, we will take a literary walking tour of Buenos Aires, focusing on one of the most renowned and influential writers in the world, Jorge Luís Borges. The tour will be led by Professor Alejandro Frango, who teaches courses in Argentine and Latin American contemporary literature. He describes the tour this way: “The walking tour starts at the corner of Gurruchaga & Guatemala streets, the site of the mythical foundation of Buenos Aires according to Jorge Luís Borges. The walk explores Palermo and the production of Borges as a writer and his approach to the suburbs of the city of Buenos Aires and its characters. Then, we go to the Xul Solar Museum [Xul Solar is the adopted name of Oscar Solari, an artist and collaborator with Borges] to see the masterpieces of this interesting character; next, we take a subway to Café Tortoni, where we end with a general discussion about Borges and Buenos Aires.”

METHODS OF EVALUATION

- 20% Class participation/attendance (the Socratic method of teaching will be employed and students will be encouraged to volunteer their contributions to class discussion, and not simply respond when called upon)
- 30% Two in-class essays and/or examinations
- 30% Two formal critical essays
- 20% Field-Lab Assignment

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

AUTHOR: Kate Figes, Editor
TITLE: *The Penguin Book of International Women's Stories*
PUBLISHER: Penguin Group USA
ISBN #: 978-0-140-26188-2
DATE/EDITION: 1997
COST: \$17

AUTHOR: Daniel Halpern, Editor
TITLE: *Art of the Story: An International Anthology of Contemporary Short Stories*
PUBLISHER: Penguin Group USA
ISBN #: 978-0-140-29638-9

DATE/EDITION: 2000
COST: \$22

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS
None

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
None