

**Course Code & No. - Section:** ENGL 295 - Section 1  
**Course Title (Credits):** Reading and Responding to Literature (3)  
**Term & Year:** Spring / 2020  
**Course Ref. No. (CRN):** 10259

**Instructor:** Dr. Sarah Valentine  
**Phone(s):** (775) 831-1314  
**Email:** [svalentine@sierranevada.edu](mailto:svalentine@sierranevada.edu)  
**Office:** TBA  
**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Class Meeting Time:** TTh 1:00 - 2:45 p.m.  
**Location:** Prim Library, room 213

**Prerequisites (from Catalog):** ENGL 101

### **Required materials:**

*The Norton Introduction to Literature*, 13<sup>th</sup> ed. by Kelly J. Mays

Handouts from various sources, including:

*Literature and the Human Experience*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. by Richard Abcarian, et al.  
*The Making of a Story: The Norton Guide to Creative Writing*, by Alice LaPlante

### **Course description:**

This course focuses on approaches to literature that stress close reading with examination of different literary genres, styles and techniques. Students interpret and analyze major works and are introduced to various modes of literary criticism. Student responses to the readings include in-class discussion, 500-word daily response papers, creative writing, and a formal analysis paper. Possibly includes partner work and/or short presentations.

### **Student outcomes:**

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Respond verbally and in writing to literature
- Analyze and evaluate works in four genres: fiction, nonfiction, poetry and drama
- Write a critical essay from the perspective of one of the schools of literary criticism
- Write original creative work in each of the four genres studied
- Articulate, analyze and compare themes

### **Methods of assessing student outcomes:**

- In-class discussion to show engagement with course material and peer input

- Daily written assignments that show student's ability to study and analyze material independently
- Research midterm paper to show student's ability to apply the methods of literary criticism to a work of fiction
- Creation of original work to show student's understanding of genre from a writer's point of view
- Final expository paper to show student's self-assessment of achievement of learning goals

### **Attendance and expectations:**

Attendance is mandatory. Students get two free unexcused absences without penalty; additional absences must be accompanied by a signed and dated medical note, a statement for a verified school activity, or other compelling reason. Additional unexcused absences will decrease your grade significantly. Work is still due in class or by the due date even if a student is absent. In-class discussion is an important part of the course. Students must come to class having read and digested the material in order to participate fully. It is fine to come with questions about the material. In fact, this is encouraged. It will generate fruitful class discussion. Laptops are fine. Of course, refrain from using social media or any other unrelated internet sites in class. Eating and drinking is fine as long as it is not disruptive. You can bring a snack for the class. Especially around midterms this can be a nice morale booster. Just don't bring your whole lunch or anything too crinkly. Any food or drinks should not impede your ability to take part in class discussion.

### **How to do homework:**

This course focuses on assigning less reading, and in return **students are expected to read not just closely, but deeply**. Reading material will be dense, especially sections that deal with literary criticism. Therefore, it is impossible to skim any of the reading material, including assigned stories, poems, etc. Read slowly, take notes, think carefully in writing your response papers. Look up words and terms you do not know. Come to class with questions. Take notes in class and listen to what your peers and instructor have to say. If you don't understand something, ask. Use a folder to keep all of your notes, graded papers, and any other course material. This will help you on your midterm and final. Keeping a journal is not required, but it will be very helpful, especially for your creative work. Writers are always watching and listening. A snippet of conversation or an idea inspired the things around you could be the beginning of a story, essay, play or poem.

No late work, except under compelling circumstances, will be accepted.

### **Creative work:**

For every genre we study you will be asked to write a creative piece. This should be fun! You will not be graded on how well you write, rather that you have completed the assignment in good faith and understand the techniques and components of the given genre. For each genre we will have an in-class workshop period in which you can ask questions and get feedback on your

ideas. You do not need to have a full draft ready for these sessions, but you will need to at least have a concept and some working notes. Workshops will utilize small-group discussion and whole-class discussion.

### **Midterm Paper:**

Your midterm paper will be a 5-6-page research paper based on one of the schools of literary criticism. You will analyze **either**: “A Wall of Fire Rising,” by Edwidge Danticat (*NIL* 267-279) **or** “The Hunger Artist,” by Franz Kafka (*NIL* 317-323). You must use three non-internet sources from Prim Library, although you may use additional reputable sources from the internet. We will have one class period devoted to workshoping a rough draft of (or notes for) your research papers to address any questions or difficulties you may have and to discuss the assigned stories. Papers are due at the beginning of class on **Thursday, March 5, 1 PM. No exceptions.**

### **Final portfolio:**

Your final portfolio will consist of **one** revised piece of creative work (**a 3-5-page story, 3 poems, a 3-5-page personal essay, or a one act play**) and a 5-page expository paper detailing what you have learned about literature and literary criticism in this course. This is not a research paper, rather a self-assessment of what you have learned, how well you have met the course’s learning goals, and how you plan to use that knowledge in the future. Due **Friday, May 15, 11:59 PM. No exceptions.**

### **Prim Library:**

You will be required to use Prim’s online and on-site resources for your literary criticism midterm paper. Our poetry unit will utilize Prim’s **Poetry Center** as the basis for your assignments. You are encouraged to use the library (on-site or remotely) for other assignments as well. Take advantage of Prim’s wide range of resources, such as reserve material (use in library), reference materials (use in library), books (can be checked out), electronic databases, hardcopy periodicals, and Lib Guides (instructional).

### **SNC Core Themes:**

Course provides: Professional preparedness in the liberal arts. Entrepreneurial thinking and sustainability.

### **Grading policy:**

20% Attendance  
30% Daily responses/presentations  
10% Creative work  
15% Midterm paper  
25% Final project

### **Course grades:**

100-90% = A  
89-80% = B  
79%-70% = C  
69%-60% = D  
59% or lower = F

## **Class Schedule**

**\*Subject to change**

**Week 1 – Intro: How do we read and respond to literature?**

**Tues 1/21 – What is literature?**

**Thurs 1/23 – Intro to literary criticism**

**Week 2 – Reading Fiction**

**Tues 1/28 – Plot, Narrator, Character**

**Thurs 1/30 – Setting, Symbol and Figurative Language, Theme**

**Week 3 – Responding to Fiction**

**Tues 2/4 – Choosing a critical point of view**

**Thurs 2/6 – Sample Essay**

**Week 4 – Writing Fiction**

**Tues 2/11 – Reading as a Writer**

**Thurs 2/13 – Fiction workshop**

**Week 5 – Reading and Responding to Nonfiction**

**Tues 2/18 – Types of Nonfiction**

**Thurs 2/20 – Compare/Contrast**

**Week 6 – Writing Nonfiction**

**Tues 2/25 – The Personal Essay**

**Thurs 2/27 – Personal Essay workshop**

**Week 7 – Midterm Week**

**Tues 3/3 Midterm paper workshop**

**Thurs 3/5 Midterm papers due in class (\*no late work will be accepted)**

**Spring Break Week! 3/10-12**

**Week 8 – Reading Poetry**

**Tues 3/17 – Sound – Rhyme and Meter**

**Thurs 3/19 – Structure – Internal and External**

**Week 9 – Responding to Poetry**

**Tues 3/24 – Scansion**

**Thurs 3/26 – Sound and Sense**

**Week 10 – Writing Poetry**

**Tues 3/31 – Prim Poetry Center**

**Thurs 4/2 – Poetry workshop**

**Week 11 – Reading Drama**

**Tues 4/7 – Elements of Drama**

**Thurs 4/9 – Stage, Sets, Setting**

**Week 12 – Responding to Drama**

**Tues 4/14 – August Wilson’s *Fences***

**Thurs 4/16 – August Wilson’s *Fences***

**Week 13 – Writing Drama**

**Tues 4/21 – The One-Act Play**

**Thurs 4/23 – Drama workshop**

**Final revised creative piece and expository paper due on Canvas: Sunday, Apr. 26, 11:59 PM**

**\*No late work will be accepted**

**College Policies and Procedures**

**SNC Honor Code, Sanctions for Cheating/Plagiarism, Non-discrimination Policy:**

All course work must represent your original work. We will discuss how to cite sources correctly. SNC believes students must be a high standard of integrity in all aspects of college life

to promote the educational mission of the College and to encourage respect for intellectual property and the rights of others. **A cheating or plagiarism violation will result in failing the course.** Each student brings to the SNC community unique skills, talents, values, and experiences which, when expressed within the community, contributes to the quality of the educational environment and the growth and development of the individual. Students share with members of the faculty, administration, and staff the responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment conducive to learning and personal development for all students. Therefore SNC students are obliged to comply with its regulations and procedures, which they are expected to read and understand.

1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Student receives a zero for assignment/exam and counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Student fails course and receives counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Student is expelled.

### **ADA Accommodations:**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with a documented disability are eligible for support services and accommodations. If a student wishes to request accommodations, please contact the Director of Academic Support Services at (775) 831-1314 x7534, office in Prim Library: PL 304.

### **SNC Email System:**

The SNC email system is the official communication vehicle among students, faculty, and administrative staff and is designed to protect the confidentiality of student information as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Students should check their College email accounts daily during the school year.

### **SNC Mission Statement:**

Sierra Nevada College graduates will be educated to be scholars of and contributors to a sustainable world. Sierra Nevada College combines the liberal arts and professional preparedness through an interdisciplinary curriculum that emphasizes entrepreneurial thinking and environmental, social, and economic sustainability.