

Introduction to Short Fiction

Comparative Literature 135, 01:195:135:01

Rutgers University • Spring 2012

Instructor

Matthew Mangold, Grad. Teaching Fellow
m.d.mangold@gmail.com

Course Meetings

Mon. and Wed.
10:20 – 11:40 a.m. (period 2), 213 Beck Hall, LIV

Office Hours

Mon., 11:50 – 1:15 p.m., Kilmer Library
by appointment

Mailbox: 195 College Avenue,
Comparative Literature

Introduction to Short Fiction Stories are all around us. We read and hear them in the media, we watch them in films and on television, we tell them to our friends and hear new stories from them. We are always on the lookout for a good story, but what is it that makes a story good? And how do we learn to read and respond carefully and critically to stories that move us? In this course you will learn how to read and assess stories - primarily short literary works but also short films, short oral stories, and short novels - carefully and critically. You will also learn how to respond, in discussion and in your own thinking and writing, to the stories you read, hear and collect.

This course will introduce you to a wide variety of different authors and types of stories, and will supply you with the basic tools of literary analysis. These tools will help you answer questions about how stories are made, how they impact readers, what qualities make good stories, and how to distinguish between different types of stories. You will learn how stories can be unique and powerful reflections of particular places in the world or moments in history, you will learn how to compare stories written at different times or in different cultures, and you will discover how literature has often been a space where the voiceless have a voice. In the course of your reading, you will become more aware of your own particular social, political, and cultural location, a process that will be aided by reflective and analytic writing. Your writing will help you become a more informed reader of stories, films, and other cultural productions, and ultimately an active participant in the discourses that surround us today.

Learning Objectives and Fulfillments You will become acquainted with a wide range of authors, writing forms and styles, and relevant questions for literary analysis, while also gaining skills that will help you read and respond to the texts you encounter. Close reading and developing a responsibility toward what you read will be focused through **discussion, in class**

presentations, and structured critical and creative writing. These various ways of encountering writing will give you the skills required to meet the explicit SAS requirement that Arts and Humanities courses

- examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production;
- analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies (p); and
- engage critically in the process of creative self-expression.

Special focuses on learning to write intelligently and thoughtfully about literature, and on learning how to engage in a collaborative intellectual atmosphere through discussion should help you gain a persistently deeper understanding and more complete enjoyment of literature. Further, this course strives to meet the learning goals that have been developed by the Program in Comparative Literature for its respective majors, minors, and for non-majors who take these courses as electives:

- Students will demonstrate familiarity with a variety of world literatures as well as methods of studying literature and culture across national and linguistic boundaries and evaluate the nature, function and value of literature from a global perspective.
- They will demonstrate critical reasoning and research skills; design and conduct research in an individual field of concentration (such as literary theory, women's literature, post colonial studies, literature and film, etc); analyze a specific body of research and write a clear and well developed paper or project about a topic related to more than one literary and cultural tradition.

and is listed as fulfilling 3p AHp

Requirements and Grade Distribution, Policies

Participation: 20% Includes: **Attendance, Reading Notes, and Discussion Participation.**

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your grade. Those who will miss class to participate in sporting events or religious holidays must notify me before the absence if the absence is to be excused. If you expect to miss class, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. Students arriving more than 15 minutes late will be counted absent. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to catch yourself up on missed material.

Reading Notes and Discussion: You must print out and notate the material for each week. You should have answers prepared for questions that appear in the readings. For weeks when there are no questions in the reading, please prepare questions for discussion. Discussion is *your* time to explore the texts, the course and will predominately be guided by your questions, interests, and ideas.

Quizzes and in Class Writing: 15% Several short quizzes that will reflect your close reading of the material and knowledge of literary terms introduced in class. You are expected to keep detailed notes with term definitions and uses. There will be a series of eight in class writing assignments that you will have the chance to use for a creative project in place of your second paper, if you so choose.

Oral Presentation: 15% A 5-7 minute presentation on a story of your choice and a short film you feel connects to the story. Sign up during first class. Presentations will begin after second week of class.

Papers: 50% You will be required to write two shorter papers of 3 pages (15% each) and one longer comparative paper of 5-7 pages (30%). Topics for these papers will be distributed several weeks before the paper is due. You will receive a detailed outline of my expectations as well as a grading rubric when the papers are assigned.

All submitted written work should be typed in 12-point Times New Roman, with margins of 1 inch on all sides. Double space your papers and do not justify the margins. When writing more than one page, include page numbers. Proofread all papers to catch grammatical errors, spelling errors, and typos.

*As mounting evidence shows that laptops and other electronic devices are a distraction in college classes no laptops, cell phones, or pagers should be used or turned on during class.

Readings

Most required readings are posted using the sakai portal: <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>

Please Purchase:

Ousmane, Sembène. *Xala*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1976. ISBN:1556520700

Readings are collected from the following sources (for further reading):

Gogol, Nikolay. *The Diary of a Madman, The Government Inspector and Selected Stories*. New York: Penguin, 2005.

García Márquez, Gabriel. *Collected Stories*. New York: Harper Classics, 1984.

Ousmane, Sembène. *Xala*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1976.

Chartres, Ann, ed. *The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction*. New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2007

DiYanni, Robert, ed. *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2002.

Bausch, Richard and R.V. Cassill, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006

Hughes, Langston. *The Early Simple Stories*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002.

Akutagawa, Ryūnosuke. *Rashomon and Seventeen Other Stories*. New York: Penguin, 2006.

Joyce, James. *Dubliners*. New York: Dover, 1991

Chekhov, Anton. *Anton Chekhov's Short Stories*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979.

Schedule

- W 1/18 Reading Stories: Origins and Definitions of the Short Story
 Luke, "The Prodigal Son"
 Aesop, "The Wolf and the Mastiff," "The Dog and the Shadow"
 Petronius, "The Widow of Ephesus"
 Anton Chekhov, "A Chorus Girl"
 Short Film, Story Corps
- M 1/23 Plot and Structure, Character, Setting
 Frank O'Connor, "Guests of the Nation"
 Kay Boyle, "Astronomer's Wife"
 Bobbie Ann Mason, "Shiloh"
- W 1/25 Point-of-View, Language and Style, Theme, Irony and Symbol
 William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily"
 James Joyce, "Araby"
 Eudora Welty, "A Worn Path"
 D. H. Lawrence, "The Rocking-Horse Winner"
- M 1/30 Poe In Depth, "The Black Cat," "The Purloined Letter," "Single Effect"
- W 2/1 Nikolai Gogol, "The Nose"
 Ryūnosuke Akutagawa, "The Nose"
- M 2/6 Akutagawa, "Rashomon," "In the Bamboo Grove," "The Potter's Tale," "The
 Writer's Craft" Film excerpt from Kurosawa, *Rashomon*
- W 2/8 Guy de Maupassant, "Boule de suif," "An Adventure in Paris"
 "The Writer's Goal" Tolstoy, "What is Art," from *Guy de Maupassant*
- M 2/13 Anton Chekhov, "Vanka," "Sleepy," "Gooseberries," Letters
 Tolstoy, "How Much Land does a Man Need?"

- W 2/15 Chekhov, "On Love," "Lady with the Dog," "Student," "The Darling," Letters
Tolstoy, "Chekov's intent in 'The Darling'"
- M 2/20 Lawrence, "Odour of Chrysanthemums"
Lawrence, Draft Passage from "Odour of Chrysanthemums"
John Steinbeck, "The Chrysanthemums"
Jay Parini, "Lawrence and Steinbeck's Chrysanthemums"
1st Paper Due Monday 2/20 (literary analysis + close reading)
- W 2/22 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"
Virginia Woolf, "Kew Gardens"
Gilman, "Undergoing the Cure"
Gilman, "Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper"
Gilbert and Gubar, "A Feminist Reading"
- M 2/27 Joyce, "The Sisters," "An Encounter," "Eveline," "A Little Cloud,"
"A Painful Case"
- W 2/29 Joyce, "The Dead," film excerpts from John Hurston's *The Dead*
Richard Ellmann, "A Biographical Perspective on Joyce's 'The Dead'"
Frank O'Connor, "Style and Form in Joyce's 'The Dead'"
- M 3/5 Franz Kafka, "The Metamorphosis," Koji Yamamura, "A Country Doctor" (short
film)
- W 3/7 Writing Exercise: Story and Lyric Poetry; Density and the Haiku form
- Spring Break 3/10 - 3/18
- M 3/19 Flannery O'Connor in Depth, "A Good Man is Hard to Find," "The Life You
Save May be Your Own"
- W 3/21 O'Connor, "Parker's Back," "Everything that Rises Must Converge"
- M 3/26 Hurston, "Sweat," Walker, "Everyday Use," Bambara, "The Lesson"
- W 3/28 Hughes, "The Weary Blues," "Simple Stories" Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"
Clip, "Bebop"

- M 4/2 Jorge Luis Borges “The Garden of Forking Paths,” “The Circular Ruins,” “The End of The Duel,” “Borges and I,” “Pierre Minard, Author of the Quixote” Nabokov, “First Love”
2nd paper Due Monday, 4/2
- W 4/4 Marquez , “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings,” “The Handsomest Drown Man in the World,” “The Sea of Lost Time”
- M 4/9 Sembene Ousmane, *Xala*
- W 4/11 Ousamane, *Xala* Excerpts from film, Ousmane, *Xala*
- M 4/16 Achebe, “Civil Peace,” “Marriage is a Private Affair,” Camus, “The Guest,” Rifaat, “Distant View of a Minaret”
- W 4/18 Sandra Cisneros, in *Depth*
- M 4/23 Jen, Jin, Murakami
- W 4/25 Carver, Englander, O’Brian
- M 4/30, Writing workshop, loose ends

Wed. May 9, exams end, Final paper due!

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is an extremely serious matter. When referring to ideas other than your own, always acknowledge your sources clearly and completely, whether you are quoting or paraphrasing. You are expected to know and abide by the official Rutgers policy on academic integrity (see below). If in doubt, feel free to contact me. Any violation of this policy will result in a formal complaint to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. Students found guilty of plagiarism will fail the course and face disciplinary action. Please note Rutgers’ Academic Integrity Policy:

“Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be promptly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one’s own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: “to paraphrase Plato’s comment...” and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information that is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in

reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some case, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member. Cases of plagiarism will be pursued following university regulations." For further information, please consult:

Recommended Plagiarism Tutorials online

1. *Take a 20 minute interactive-tutorial on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity,*
<http://sccweb.scc-net.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/Intro.html>
2. *For another view, use the Camden Plagiarism Tutorial*
<http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModule/Plagiarism/>
3. *Consult Don't Plagiarize: Document Your Research! for tips about how to take notes so that you don't plagiarize by accident.*
http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib_instruct/instruct_document.shtml

For more information on Rutgers' policy on academic integrity, visit:

http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/docs/AIPolicyDraft_1_25_2010.pdf

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should follow procedures outlined at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>