

Vesalius College

Course description

Course title: Form and Meaning in Literature

Course code: LIT 111E

Teacher responsible: Patricia Costa, Ph. D., Associate Professor of Literature Studies at Vesalius College

Course description:

LIT 111E is an introduction to the study of literature. Its aim is to help students enjoy literature by making them better informed readers of three literary kinds or genres (short fiction, poetry, drama). Class discussion and assignments therefore focus on developing the skills required for reading, interpreting, evaluating and writing about literature.

Students will be asked to write short responses to their readings on a regular basis. Three lengthier (4-5 page) essays on each genre (short story, poem and play) will also be required. The particular scope of each essay will vary so as to practice the skills required for different types of literary analysis, including appropriate critical terminology and research that uses the MLA style of documentation.

Course objectives:

After completing this course, the successful student will

- Be able to analyze literary texts sufficient to produce explications and interpretations of literary works as well as of parts and devices within those texts ;
- Develop a basic understanding of genre and the influence of genre on understanding literature ;
- Develop a working understanding of the fundamental terms and ideas of literature, such as point of view, plot, character, image, symbol and figurative language ;
- Write analytical papers that continue the learning objectives of GNE 111 and 112 : clear theses, effective introductions and conclusions, logical patterns of essay organization and logical argument that advances a particular explication or interpretation of a literary work, an argument which is distinct from plot summary and from sociological writing about literature ;
- Manage quotations from literary and secondary texts as a means of developing paragraphs, so that quotations do not dominate the paragraphs nor are the quotations under explained once used ;
- Perfect writing skills on the level of the sentence, showing sentence variety and control of syntax to achieve clarity, consistent use of apt and varied diction, using quotations in sentences while maintaining grammatical correctness and punctuation ; and
- Be familiar with the MLA style for documentation.

Grade weighting scheme:

Written Assignments-----	Subtotal = 70%
Short story paper	15%
Poetry paper	15%
Drama paper	15%
Response journal	25%
Examinations-----	Subtotal = 30%
Short story examination -----	10%
Poetry examination-----	10%
Drama examination-----	10%
Total-----	= 100%

Used course material (handbooks, readers, readings, newspapers, magazines) and references:

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed.
New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

The Norton Introduction to Literature. 8th Shorter Edition.
Ed. Alison Booth et al. New York : W.W. Norton &
Company, 2001.