

**English 201 (Section 2)**  
**Fall 2009**

**English 201: Approaches to Literary Study--Texts, Syllabus**

Texts:

Barry, *Beginning Theory*

Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Bedford Case Study in Critical Controversy)

Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Signet edition, with alternate third act)

Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Norton Critical Edition)

Gibaldi, ed., *MLA Handbook*

**Wed. Aug. 26:** First day of class

**Fri. Aug. 28:** Getting started. Reading: *Beginning Theory*, pp. 1-16. Questions: What do we mean by English studies? Where does English--as an academic discipline--come from? What is academic discourse? How does academic discourse differ from just plain discourse. Why, in English, do we read what we read? (Get a good dictionary and look up the various meanings of *canon*. Write those meanings down and bring them to class.) How is writing rhetorical? What is the role of personal response in writing about literature? What is the SQRRR approach to intensive reading.

**Mon. Aug. 31:** Reading: *Beginning Theory*, pp. 16-21. Exercise in close reading (prose). Questions: What is close reading? When we read closely, what do we look for in the text? What is liberal humanism? What are its chief Tenets? Writing assignment: Read "Hills Like White Elephants" without any particular attempt at literary/critical analysis. Then write down, briefly, your personal response to the story. Next, read the story again, this time as closely as possible and chart your close reading by pausing to take notes of what you take to be major issues, themes, images, etc. Last, write down any questions you have about the story that your close reading didn't answer. Be prepared to discuss both the story and your response to it.

**Wed. Sept. 2:** Reading: "My Papa's Waltz." Exercises in close reading (poetry). Question: Do we "read" poetry differently than we do prose? Writing assignment: You're the teacher; you've assigned your class "My Papa's Waltz," and you want to "game plan" your class. Make a list--in order of importance--of the questions you want to ask both of the poem and your students. (Note: identifying the *tone* of Roethke's poem is crucial to understanding its meaning, so make sure you know what we mean by *tone* in literary analysis.)

**Fri. Sept. 4:** Readings: "Richard Cory" and "Model Student Analysis." Writing Assignment: one-page analysis of the model student analysis.

**Wed. Sept. 9:** Reading: "Araby" (handout); Assignment: read the story "closely," again playing a typical Liberal Humanist/New Critic/Formalist; take notes, mark up the text, look up words (like "Araby," of course).

**Fri. Sept. 11:** Readings: Chap. 5, "Psychoanalytic Criticism" in *Beginning Theory*, and handouts "Guide to Psychoanalytic Criticism" and the single page "Practicing Psychological Criticism" (with the poem "Narrow Fellow in the Grass" by Emily

Dickinson).

**Mon. Sept. 14:** Reading: Poe's "The Black Cat"; Assignment: read the story from a psychoanalytic perspective and prepare a one-page "outline" of a psychoanalytic interpretation.

**Wed. Sept. 16:** Readings: Chap. 6, "Feminist Criticism" in *Beginning Theory*, and the poem "Barbie Doll" by Marge Piercy.

**Fri. Sept. 18:** Reading: "The Yellow Paper"; Assignment: read the story from a feminist perspective and prepare a one-page "outline" of a feminist interpretation.

**Mon. Sept. 21:** First major essay due: interpretation of "Yellow Wallpaper" based on one of the critical approaches we've studied so far. In class, we'll go around the room and "outline" our papers. So be prepared to talk.

**Wed. Sept. 23:** Reading: Act 1 of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

**Fri. Sept. 25:** Reading: Act 2 of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

**Mon. Sept. 28:** Readings: Chap. 7, "Lesbian/Gay Criticism" in *Beginning Theory*, and handouts.

**Wed. Sept. 30:** Readings: both Acts 3 of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (that's the "Broadway" version and the "alternate" version--favored by Williams); Assignment: consider which version you feel most effectively communicates Williams' "vision."

**Fri. Oct. 2:** Readings: Three articles on *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*; first three group presentations: Groups 1, 2, 3.

**Mon. Oct. 5-: Fri. Oct. 9:** During this week we'll be "writing" essays on *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. I'll provide a detailed description of exactly what we'll be doing--but you will need your *MLA Handbook* for in-class work

**Mon. Oct. 12- Wed. Oct. 14:** For these two classes we'll be "work-shopping" our *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* essays.

**Mon. Oct. 19:** *Huckleberry Finn*, pp. 32-135; Group 4: brief comments on Twain's use of first-person "vernacular" narrator ("Was Huck Black?" handout).

**Wed. Oct. 21:** *Huckleberry Finn*, pp. 125-210; Group 5: *Old Man River*--brief comments on the role of the Mississippi river in T.S. Eliot's view ("The Boy and the River," pp. 286-290).

**Fri. Oct. 23** *Huckleberry Finn*, pp. 211-265; Group 1: brief comments on "Come Back to the Raft Ag'in, Huck Honey!" (pp. 528-534).

**Mon. Oct. 26:** Racial Controversy over *Huckleberry Finn*: "The Controversy over Race" (pp. 335-339); Groups:

Group 2: Presentation: "Morality and *Huck Finn*" (pp. 340-348).

Group 3: Response.

Group 4: Presentation "Born to Trouble: One Hundred Years of *Huckleberry Finn*" (pp. 371-381).

Group 5: Response.

**Wed. Oct. 28:** More Racial Controversy: Groups:

Group 1: "More than a Reader's Response" (pp. 405- 422).

Group 2: Response.

Group 3: "On the Nature and Status of Covert Texts" (pp. 423-434).

**Fri. Oct. 30:** Still more Racial Controversy; Groups:

Group 1: "The Struggle for Tolerance" (pp. 382-405).

Group 2: Response

Group 3: "From *Huckleberry Finn* as Idol and Target" (pp.435-456).

**Mon. Nov. 2:** "The Controversy over Gender and Sexuality in *Huckleberry Finn*" (pp. 471-476); Groups:

Group 1: "Reformers and Young Maidens" pp. 476-496).

Group 2: "Reading Gender in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*" (pp. 496-509).

**Wed. Nov. 4:** "The Controversy over the Ending" (pp. 277-283); Groups:

Group 1: "Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling, and *Huckleberry Finn*" (pp. 289-304).

Group 2: "Jim's Africanist Presence in *Huckleberry Finn*" (pp. 305-310).

**Fri. Nov. 6- Wed. Nov. 11:** For the next three classes we'll be "work-shopping" in preparation for our next major writing assignment--on *Huckleberry Finn*. A separate handout will provide guidelines for the essay and a schedule for the work-shopping process.

**Fri. Nov. 13:** No class. *Huckleberry Finn* essays due in my office, 316A Muller, by 1:00 p.m.

**Mon. Nov. 16:** Readings: Chap. 10, "Post-Colonial Criticism" in *Beginning Theory* and the various handouts on post-colonial literary theory I'll provide.

**Wed. Nov. 18:** Readings: *Heart of Darkness*, Section I (pp. 3-31) and pp. 99-120 in the section "Imperialism and the Congo."

**Fri. Nov. 20:** Readings: *Heart of Darkness*, Section II (pp.31-54) and "The Congo Report" (pp. 131-160).

**Mon. Nov. 30:** Reading: *Heart of Darkness*, Section III (pp. 54-77).

**Wed. Dec. 2:** Groups:

Group 3: "An Image of Africa: Racism in *Heart of Darkness*" (pp. 336-349).

Group 4: "*Heart of Darkness* and Racism" (pp. 365-375).

Group 5: "Two Visions of *Heart of Darkness*" (pp. 422-423).

**Fri. Dec. 4:** Readings: "Primitivism and the African Woman in *Heart of Darkness*" (pp. 396-405); "The Women in *Heart of Darkness*" (pp. 405-415); and "Masculinity, Modernity, and Homosexual Desire" (pp. 455-462).

**Mon. Dec. 7:** TBA

**Wed. Dec. 9:** TBA

**Fri. Dec. 11:** TBA

