

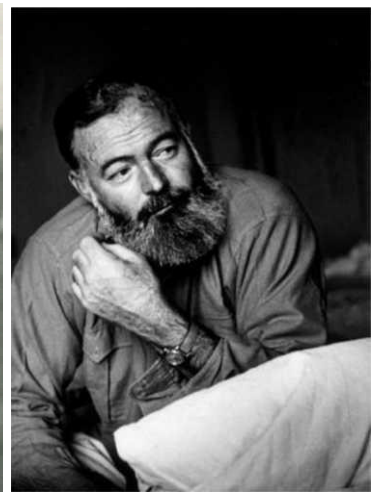
ENG 104Z: INTRO TO LITERATURE

A STUDY OF THE SHORT STORY

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4 Course Credits. No Prerequisite.



COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is a short story? The first thought that comes to mind is probably *a story that's short*. But many scholars disagree with this definition. E.M. Exjebaum, for example, emphasizes form over length, describing the short story as “a bomb dropped from an airplane” that strikes “its war-head full-force on the target.” For Exjebaum and other scholars, the short story is so much more than a story that's merely short. This course offers students a rigorous examination of the artform as it developed stylistically and formally over the past two centuries. Primary readings include stories by Edgar Allan Poe, Anton Chekhov, Virginia Woolf, Flannery O'Connor, Ernest Hemingway, Raymond Carver, and Jorge Luis Borges. Secondary readings include essays from Charles E. May's *The New Short Story Theories* (1994).

CONTENT NOTE/ TRIGGER WARNING

The study of literature is meant to be challenging. After all, authors write about life, and life can get pretty dark sometimes. This course engages topics like animal abuse, mental illness, suicide, murder, marital infidelity, classism, racism, sexism, and sexual abuse. The readings will be intellectually challenging and emotionally difficult at times. These are the hallmarks of great literature. I encourage you to lean into these difficulties as opportunities for growth, but if the topics listed above are too difficult for you to read about and discuss in a group setting, I recommend not taking this class.

Please note, as well, that Oregon State University protects [Free Expression and Academic Freedom](#), in accordance with federal law. Following these guidelines, my course embraces open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement to combat the spread of moral authoritarianism in higher education. For an explanation of these core tenets, continue reading below.

Open Inquiry refers to your ability to ask questions, share your ideas, and challenge cultural orthodoxies without the risk of censure. In an open environment, students can explore facts, opinions, and beliefs without penalty, allowing space for intellectual growth.

Viewpoint Diversity takes place when we approach topics from a range of perspectives, backgrounds, and personal experiences. When a community embraces intellectual humility, empathy, and curiosity, viewpoint diversity gives rise to respectful debate, constructive disagreement, and shared progress toward the truth.

Constructive Disagreement occurs when people have different perspectives on an issue but are nevertheless committed to exploring the issue collaboratively, learning from each other in the process. Rigorous, open, and responsible engagement across lines of difference is the foundation of healthy academic practice and essential to making good ideas better.

I am committed to creating a classroom environment that welcomes diverse people with diverse viewpoints, an environment that equips learners with the habits of heart and mind to engage that diversity with empathy, intellectual humility, and respect. If at any point during the term, you are unsettled by the course material, my comments, or comments made by your classmates, I request that you arrange a meeting with me to discuss the matter. Whenever possible, I will provide alternate assignments and/or accommodations to ensure your success in the class. If, however, you are not able to engage in open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement, I urge you not to take this class.

ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK POLICY

1. ATTENDANCE POLICY: I will not be keeping attendance, but every meeting will include a Participation Assignment that cannot be made up. **I REPEAT: IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION ASSIGNMENTS CANNOT BE MADE UP.** For this reason, every class you miss will result in a 5% reduction to your overall grade, as each Participation Assignment is worth 5%. See below for an explanation of how this looks in practice:

- 1 absence = 5%
- 2 absences = 10%
- 3 absences = 15%
- 4 absences = 20%

2. TARDINESS POLICY: You should be seated at your desk when class begins. Tardiness is not only disrespectful, it disrupts the lesson. For this reason, every 3 tardies will result in a 5% penalty to your grade in the class.

- 3 tardies = 5%
- 6 tardies = 10%
- 9 tardies = 15%

If you cannot make it to class on time regularly, due to a schedule conflict or any other reason, I recommend not taking this class, as the tardiness policy will be upheld regardless of your personal circumstances.

3. LATE WORK POLICY: Every day that an assignment is late, it will receive a 10% grade reduction. As you can see below, this adds up rather quickly. For this reason, it is essential that you anticipate assignment due dates and plan accordingly. You will not be granted an extension unless you face truly extenuating circumstances, such as a major health crisis or death in the family.

- 1 day late = 10%
- 2 days late = 20%
- 3 days late = 30%
- 4 days late = 40%

REQUIRED TEXTS

Charles E. May, *The New Short Story Theories*

Edgar Allan Poe, *The Best Short Stories of Edgar Allan Poe*

Anton Chekhov, *Anton Chekhov's Short Stories*

Virginia Woolf, *The Complete Short Fiction of Virginia Woolf*

Ernest Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*

Flannery O'Connor, *The Complete Stories*

Raymond Carver, *Where I'm Calling From*

Jorge Luis Borges, *Collected Fictions*

Hyperlinks to online versions of the assigned short stories are included on the course schedule at the end of the syllabus, but several of these versions are low quality and difficult to read. Additionally, I have provided an electronic copy of *The New Short Story Theories* on Canvas. If you would like to purchase physical copies, texts are available at the [OSU Bookstore](#). But all required texts for this class are technically provided for free!

ASSIGNMENTS

Participation: 50%

Short Essay 1: 15%

Short Essay 2: 15%

Form Essay: 20%

Grade Scale

97-100	A+
94-96	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-68	D
60-63	D-
59 and below	F

Participation Assignments

Every class, there will be a participation assignment. During Weeks 1-8, this assignment will take the form of free-writing exercises. During Weeks 9 and 10, this assignment will take the form of group lesson plans. PARTICIPATION ASSIGNMENTS CANNOT BE MADE UP, SO IT IS ABSOLUTELY CRUCIAL THAT YOU ATTEND CLASS. Only in rare circumstances (such as a health crisis or death in the family) will you be able to make up these assignments. If this or a comparable situation applies to you, please see me during office hours. For more information on each assignment, see the descriptions below.

FREE-WRITING EXERCISE: Since the introduction of ChatGPT, the discussion segments of this class have suffered terribly. Discussions that used to last 5 minutes now last 1-2 minutes (on a good day). Likewise, while students used to have strong opinions and many things to say about the reading assignments, it would seem that they now have no opinions and virtually nothing to say. Whether this is due to the widespread use of ChatGPT or other factors, the problem has become obvious: a large percentage of students are no longer completing the reading assignments. This is unacceptable in a literature class, which should be driven by active discussion.

The free-writing assignment is designed to combat this problem. Here's how it works:

1. Before each class, you should complete the reading assignments. This typically includes 2-4 short stories per week.
2. During class, you will complete a free-writing exercise, answering a series of questions about the reading assignments. To receive credit, your answer to each question must be at least 4 complete sentences and accurately reflect the reading assignment. If your answers do not accurately reflect the reading assignment, or if they fall short of the 4-sentence minimum, you will not receive credit.
3. At the end of class, you will submit a PDF document of your answers to Canvas. Late submissions will not be accepted.

The purpose of this assignment is twofold. First, it's to ensure that you complete the reading assignments before class. This should go without saying, but if you plan not to read the assignments, I urge you not to take this class. If you do not complete the readings, it will be very difficult for you to answer the free-writing questions adequately.

As a result, you may find yourself in conflict with me throughout the term. By contrast, if you complete the readings, you should have no problem answering the questions.

The second purpose of this assignment is to ensure that you contribute meaningfully to class discussions. Every free-writing exercise will be followed by a small-group discussion which, in turn, will be followed by a class-wide discussion, all of which will be based on the same questions. In other words, every step has been taken to ensure that classroom discussions are robust, well-informed, and capable of lasting for at least 5 minutes. The free-writing exercise will prepare you for the small-group discussions, and the small-group discussions will prepare you for the class-wide discussions, providing an opportunity to flesh out your ideas before you share them with the entire class.

IF AT ANY POINT DURING THE TERM, I FIND THAT EITHER SMALL-GROUP OR CLASS-WIDE DISCUSSIONS ARE LACKING, I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO ALTER THIS ASSIGNMENT. I REPEAT, IF I FIND THAT DISCUSSIONS ARE LACKING AT ANY POINT DURING THE TERM, I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO ALTER THIS ASSIGNMENT. THIS MAY INCLUDE MORE CHALLENGING QUESTIONS, A HIGHER SENTENCE-COUNT REQUIREMENT, AN INCREASE IN POINT VALUE, AND/OR A DIFFERENT SOLUTION (FOR MORE ON THIS, SEE MY COMMENTS BELOW IN THE SECTION TITLED “ONLINE COMPONENT”).

How do you prevent this from happening? It’s incredibly simple: complete the reading assignments and come to class ready to discuss them. It pains me to frame the assignment this way, but I would not have to take these measures if students simply did the work. If you are unwilling to engage your peers in robust conversation and plan not to contribute comments during class-wide discussions, I urge you not to take this class.

GROUP LESSON PLANS: During Weeks 9 and 10, you will be assigned to a small group of 4 and tasked with creating a shared lesson plan. These lessons will be based on reading assignments from *The New Short Story Theories* and delivered to another small group of 4 during the class period. The purpose of this “active learning” assignment is threefold: 1) it will increase your retention of the reading assignments; 2) it will develop your skills as a thinker and speaker; and finally 3) it will help you prepare content for the Form Essay, which is due during Finals Week. After completing the exercise, you will submit a Google Doc to Canvas under the appropriate category. In order to receive credit, you must be present in class, participate actively in the exercise, and complete your portion of the work. Specific instructions will be provided on the pertinent days.

Online Component

ENG104Z is a hybrid course, consisting of a classroom component as well as an online component. Your instructions for completing the online component are simple. Every week before class, you should read one scholarly essay related to the topic of discussion. For example, we discuss Edgar Allan Poe in Week 2, so before class that week, you should read a scholarly essay about Poe or his short stories. During Weeks 9 and 10, we discuss essays from *The New Short Story Theories*, so before class each of those weeks, you should read a scholarly essay about the short story as a form of literature. The purpose of this assignment is to develop your understanding of the discussion topic before class, enhancing your ability to contribute meaningfully to classroom discussions.

What scholarly essay you read is entirely your choice, but you must locate it through the OSU library. Follow these instructions to find scholarly essays:

- Go to the library search page: <https://library.oregonstate.edu/>
- Enter your search terms. This can be anything like “Edgar Allan Poe,” “Murders in the Rue Morgue,” “The Tell-Tale Heart,” etc. Honestly, it’s not that different from a Google search; experiment with different phrases to yield various results.
- Under the right column titled “Refine my results,” check the boxes for “Full Text Online,” “Articles,” “Magazine Articles,” and “Book chapters.” This will limit your search to shorter texts that are immediately available online.
- From here, look for intriguing titles and read their abstracts. If the abstract seems promising, commit to reading the entire article.

You can expect your search to last between 15 and 30 minutes. Once you decide on an essay, you should be able to read it in 1-2 hours, depending on its length. After reading the essay, you will have a fuller, more nuanced understanding of the topic. You should make use of this knowledge to enhance our classroom discussions.

You do not need to report your work or document what essay you read. This assignment was created for your personal benefit and will not be graded. BEAR IN MIND, HOWEVER, THAT IF OUR CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS FALTER AND I AM FORCED TO REVISE THE PARTICIPATION ASSIGNMENT AS A RESULT, THE ONLINE COMPONENT WILL BE REVISED AS WELL. THIS MAY INCLUDE DOCUMENTED PROOF OF THE ESSAY YOU READ, A SUMMARY OF THE ESSAY, AND A CRITICAL RESPONSE. BUT I REPEAT, THESE CHANGES WILL ONLY TAKE PLACE IF OUR IN-CLASS DISCUSSIONS FALTER.

Short Essays

You will write 2 Short Essays this term. Essays should make a logical argument, be organized around a thesis statement, demonstrate an accurate understanding of the reading assignment, and be 2-3 pages in length (AN ESSAY SHORTER THAN TWO FULL PAGES WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT). Use Times New Roman, 12-point font, one-inch margins, double spaces, and MLA format. Works Cited page not required. See specific instructions for each Short Essay below.

SHORT ESSAY 1: In this Short Essay, you can address any of the stories from this class by Edgar Allan Poe, Anton Chekhov, or Raymond Carver. Your thesis statement should propose a specific interpretation of the story's themes. Your argument should be supported by textual evidence and close reading.

Due Date: Friday of Week 4

SHORT ESSAY 2: In this Short Essay, you can address any of the stories from this class by Virginia Woolf, Ernest Hemingway, Flannery O'Connor, or Jorge Luis Borges. Your thesis statement should propose a specific interpretation of the story's themes. Your argument should be supported by textual evidence and close reading.

Due Date: Friday of Week 8

You are encouraged to email me with your questions or concerns. If you would like help brainstorming a topic, you should arrange to meet with me during office hours at least one week in advance.

Form Essay

This essay must describe what the short story is as a form (or type of literature). Some questions you might consider when writing this essay include:

1. What characteristics make the short story recognizable as a form?
2. In what important ways does the short story differ from other forms, such as the novel, poem, or sketch?
3. Is the short story at odds with itself, appearing in multiple forms? Has the form changed over time?

These are all questions your essay ***might*** answer as you develop a response to the question your essay ***must*** answer: namely, what is a short story?

Structure your paper like an argument essay, utilizing a thesis, main points, and supporting evidence. You must cite at least 3 essays from *The New Short Story Theories* to build your case. You are also free to reference the short stories we've read in class, but this is not required. Essays will be graded on their formatting, their organization, the quality of your prose, and the logical rigor of your argument. See the model essays on Canvas under "Home" for concrete examples of what an A-paper looks like and familiarize yourself with the grading rubric.

Essays must be at least 4 full pages in length (this number does not include your Works Cited page, which should be included as well). Formatting must align with the [MLA Sample Paper](#) on Owl Purdue, including in-text citations and the Works Cited page. For specific instructions on how to format a Works Cited page in this class, see the section titled "How to Cite Your Sources" below.

How to Cite Your Sources

In this class, you will cite scholarly articles, book chapters, or essay collections (like *The New Short Story Theories*) in your papers. For your convenience, I have provided instructions on how to cite these sources below.

How to cite a work from an essay collection in MLA format:

Last name, First name. "Title of Essay." *Title of Collection*, edited by Editor's Name(s), Publisher, Year, Page range of entry.

Concrete examples of how to cite a work from an essay collection in MLA format:

Pasco, Allan H. "On Defining Short Stories." *The New Short Story Theories*, edited by Charles E. May, Ohio University Press, 1994, pp. 14-130.

Poe, Edgar Allan. "Poe on Short Fiction." *The New Short Story Theories*, edited by Charles E. May, Ohio University Press, 1994, pp. 59-72.

How to cite a scholarly article in MLA format:

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, Volume, Issue, Year, pages.

Concrete examples of how to cite a scholarly article in MLA format:

Bagchi, Alaknanda. "Conflicting Nationalisms: The Voice of the Subaltern in Mahasweta Devi's *Bashai Tudu*." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1996, pp. 41-50.

Duvall, John N. "The (Super)Marketplace of Images: Television as Unmediated Mediation in DeLillo's *White Noise*." *Arizona Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 3, 1994, pp. 127-53.

How to cite a book in MLA format:

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. City of Publication, Publisher, Publication Date.

Concrete examples of how to cite a book in MLA format:

Gleick, James. *Chaos: Making a New Science*. Penguin, 1987.

Henley, Patricia. *The Hummingbird House*. MacMurray, 1999.

For additional instruction, follow this link to the [MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#) provided by Owl Purdue. Follow this link for the Owl Purdue [MLA Sample Paper](#).

Extra Credit Opportunities

I need a total of 6 volunteer readers. On the day that we discuss Ernest Hemingway's "A Clean Well-Lighted Place" and "The Sea Change," volunteers will read lines at the front of the class alongside myself and the other volunteers. There are only 6 parts available, so it's urgent that you sign up as soon as possible. The parts will be given to the first 6 students to volunteer.

Volunteers will receive 5% extra credit on their Form Essay.

RESOURCES

Academic Calendar: All students are subject to the registration and refund deadlines as stated in the Academic

Calendar: <https://registrar.oregonstate.edu/osu-academic-calendar>

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities: Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at <http://ds.oregonstate.edu>. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations."

Student Conduct Expectations link: <https://beav.es/codeofconduct>

Reach Out for Success: University students encounter setbacks from time to time. If you encounter difficulties and need assistance, it's important to reach out. Consider discussing the situation with an instructor or academic advisor. Learn about resources that assist with wellness and academic success at oregonstate.edu/ReachOut. If you are in immediate crisis, please contact the Crisis Text Line by texting OREGON to 741-741 or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Academic Honesty: Cheating, in any form, is not tolerated at Oregon State University. Any plagiarism – that is, using ideas, information, words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from someone else's essay, book, article, website, etc. without giving full accurate credit to the original source – and this includes forgetting to put quote marks on copy-paste – has serious consequences, up to an F for the class and/or a written report to Student Conduct for further disciplinary action. See <http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/offenses-0> for further information. Recycling your own work from other classes is considered self-plagiarism and is not allowed without prior written approval from me.

Student Evaluation of Courses: During Fall, Winter, and Spring term the online Student Evaluation of Teaching system opens to students the Wednesday of week 8 and closes the Sunday before Finals Week. Students will receive notification, instructions and the link through their ONID email. They may also log into the system via Online Services. Course evaluation results are extremely important and used to help improve courses and

the learning experience of future students. Responses are anonymous (unless a student chooses to “sign” their comments, agreeing to relinquish anonymity) and unavailable to instructors until after grades have been posted. The results of scaled questions and signed comments go to both the instructor and their unit head/supervisor. Anonymous (unsigned) comments go to the instructor only.

Bacc Core Learning Outcomes, Criteria and Rationale

Student Learning Outcomes

Students in Literature and the Arts courses shall:

- Recognize literary and artistic forms/styles, techniques, and the cultural/historical contexts in which they evolve.
- Analyze how literature/the arts reflect, shape, and influence culture.
- Reflect critically on the characteristics and effects of literary and artistic works.

Criteria for Course Approval and Continuation

Literature and the Arts courses shall:

- Be at least three credits and accessible to both lower and upper division students. Prerequisites or class-level restrictions for Perspectives courses must not create unreasonable barriers for students seeking to fulfill these categories;
- Emphasize elements of critical thinking;
- Place the subject(s) in historical context;
- Demonstrate interrelationships or connections with other subject areas;
- Focus primarily on literature or the arts;
- Actively engage students in significant works of literature or art;
- Explore the conventions and techniques of the form(s) under consideration;
- Address the role of literature or art in society; and
- Encourage appreciation and understanding of the form(s) under consideration.

Rationale

Literature and the other arts provide examples of ways individuals find pattern and meaning in their experience. Study of these art forms gives students expertise and sophistication not only in recognizing the methods by which pattern and meaning are found, but also in critiquing those methods. Through literature and the arts, students engage their own and other cultures, examine their values, and discover sources of lifelong pleasure.

COURSE SCHEDULE



WEEK 1

Reading assignments from *The New Short Story Theories*:

- Edgar Allan Poe, "Poe on Short Fiction" (To find this essay, see the table of contents page in *The New Short Story Theories*)
- Robert F. Marler, "From Tale to Short Story: The Emergence of a New Genre in the 1850's" (To find this essay, see the table of contents page in *The New Short Story Theories*)

Classroom activities:

- Syllabus review
- Free-writing assignment
- Class discussion
- Name game

WEEK 2

Reading assignments by Edgar Allan Poe:

- ["The Tell-Tale Heart,"](#)
- ["The Black Cat"](#)
- ["Murders in the Rue Morgue"](#)

Classroom activities:

- Free-writing assignment
- Class discussion

WEEK 3

Reading assignments by Anton Chekhov

- ["A Lady with the Dog"](#)
- ["The Man in a Case"](#)

Classroom activities:

- Free-writing assignment
- Class discussion

WEEK 4

Reading assignments by Raymond Carver:

- [Fat](#)
- [What We Talk About When We Talk About Love](#)
- [Why Don't You Dance?](#)

Classroom activities:

- Free-writing assignment
- Class discussion

DUE ON FRIDAY: SHORT ESSAY 1

WEEK 5

Reading assignments by Virginia Woolf

- [The Mark on the Wall](#)
- [Moments of Being: 'Slater's Pins Have No Points'](#)

Classroom activities:

- Free-writing assignment
- Class discussion

WEEK 6

Reading assignments by Ernest Hemingway

- [A Clean, Well-Lighted Place](#)
- [The Sea Change](#)
- [Indian Camp](#)

Classroom activities:

- Free-writing assignment
- Class discussion

WEEK 7

Reading assignments by Flannery O'Connor

- [A Good Man Is Hard to Find](#)
- [Revelation](#)

Classroom activities:

- Free-writing assignment
- Class discussion

WEEK 8

Reading assignments by Jorge Luis Borges

- [The Library of Babel](#)
- [Funes the Memorious](#)
- [The Writing of the God](#)

Classroom activities:

- Free-writing assignment
- Class discussion

DUE ON FRIDAY: SHORT ESSAY 2

WEEK 9

Reading assignments from *The New Short Story Theories*

- Brander Matthews, "The Philosophy of the Short-Story" (NSST)
- Charles E. May, "Chekhov and the Modern Short Story" (NSST)

Classroom activities:

- Class discussion
- Create and deliver Group Lessons

WEEK 10

Reading assignments from *The New Short Story Theories*

- Allan H. Pasco, "On Defining Short Stories" (NSST)
- B.M. Ejxenbaum's "O. Henry and the Theory of the Short Story" (NSST)

Classroom activities:

- Class discussion
- Create and deliver Group Lessons

FINALS WEEK

DUE ON MONDAY: FORM ESSAY