

ENGLISH 1413.E1  
Dr. Richard Cunningham  
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Class meets Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11:30 to 12:30 in BAC 204.

Erin Patterson  
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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

### **Purpose**

If you are a student with a documented disability who anticipates needing accommodations in this course, please inform me after you meet with Jill or Suzanne in Disability/Access Services, in the Student Resource Centre, lower floor of the old SUB. jill.davies@acadiau.ca 585-1127 or suzanne.robicheau@acadiau.ca 585-1913.

The goals of this section, E1, of English 1413 are to expose students to literature in a variety of genres, which will entail acts of reading that require you to think, and to demand of you written work that will also make you think.

The writing you do will be connected to the reading you do.

### **Means**

In this course students will read a variety of poetry, drama, and fiction from the sixteenth to the twenty-first centuries. Students will also receive writing instruction based on formal rhetorical principles.

Attendance is a required component of the course (see Attendance); if that represents a problem for you, you should choose a different section of English 1413.

## TEXTS

### **Paper**

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.: 2006.

Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*. Random House, 2007.

Poetry

*Oedipus Rex*

### **Electronic**

Shakespeare, William. *Twelfth Night*. London: 1623. [First Folio.] Internet Shakespeare Edition. University of Victoria.

Middleton, Thomas. *The Changeling*.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Reading Tests**            throughout the term    15%

The title of this course is "Reading and Writing Critically," so it only makes sense that we devote a good portion of our time to reading. More specifically, we'll focus on learning to read critically.

To read critically you will have to devote yourself to the task of reading. Most people can sort-of read something while carrying on a conversation, watching a hockey game or a movie that only mildly interests them, or thinking about what they'll do when they meet their friends for an evening out. Whatever kind of reading we might call that, it does not meet the minimum requirement for critical reading. To read critically you must give all your attention to the task at hand: reading.

When you read critically, you read to critique, which may or may not include criticizing<sup>1</sup> in the sense in which we most often use the word "criticize." But reading critically involves doing much more than, and frequently other than, reading to find fault. You are critiquing a work when you say "it is well written" just as much as when you say it is poorly written. But neither of those judgements will take you far enough to be said to be genuinely reading critically. You must ask yourself, after you decide that something is well or poorly written, why you think that. Are the sentences well-formed, do they vary enough to keep your interest, is new information introduced in the context of familiar information so that you can understand everything you read? If so, you would probably conclude you've just read some good writing.

But even if something satisfies your criteria<sup>2</sup> for being well written, and you are able to explain<sup>3</sup> your reasons<sup>4</sup> for saying the piece is well written, you are still not done reading critically.

Aside from the stylistic qualities alluded to above, you want to consider what you have read in the context of your life and times. Is this poem, essay, short story, play, novel, newspaper article, journal article, etc. worth the time it takes to get through it? Why or why not? What did you learn? Is it worth knowing? Is it possible that the poem, essay, etc. would be worth someone else's time and effort even if you feel it was not worth yours? If you feel it was NOT worth your time and effort, why do you feel so? What makes the pay-off so insignificant that your time could have been better spent doing something else? Most authors write because they genuinely think they have something worth saying, that a careful reader will benefit from reading their work. It is an act most arrogant to assert that you are right and the author wrong, not because readers are less significant than writers--I don't believe that to be true--but because most of what you read (leaving aside the blogosphere, at least for the moment) has gone through a process wherein numerous professional readers have seen the piece before it was ever published, and have decided it is worth publishing, worth commemorating as an important human expression, and, usually, worth taking a financial risk on. Are you sure your judgement is more valid than the judgement of all those others? Be prepared to explain yourself.

As you can see from the preceding paragraphs, in this course we will take reading critically seriously. Perhaps the primary prerequisite for reading critically is reading, but not far behind that is paying attention while you read. In order to ensure you do so, you will be required to write several reading tests during the course of the term.

If you are not present for a reading test, your grade for that test will be 0. Reading tests will be administered at the start of class, and a set amount of time will be allowed. If you arrive late, you will be permitted to write until the end of that period of time only. You will not be given the same amount of time as those who arrived on time.

The reading tests will not be announced ahead of time. They will be designed first to ensure that you

have read the material, and second that you have given it sufficient time and energy to develop some understanding of it.

Nota bene: The reading tests help the professor determine whether or not you are doing and understanding the course readings; they help you develop good reading skills, good study habits, and prepare for the course's final exam.

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Notes

1. "To censure, find fault with" OED 2.b.
2. "A test, principle, rule, canon, or standard, by which anything is judged or estimated." OED, b.
3. "To make plain or intelligible; to clear of obscurity or difficulty." OED3.b; [and/or] "To assign a meaning to, state the meaning or import of; to interpret." 4.a.
4. "One of the premises in an argument" OED, 1.1.c. ""

**Attendance**    Every class    5%

You need to attend class because the rest of us need to hear from you. When you miss class, your ideas, your comments, your understanding and your misunderstanding are not available to the rest of the class, and as a result everyone's experience of the day's text(s) is diminished. Thus, it is crucial that you attend, and that you have done the reading, every day.

Your mark for attendance is worth 5% of your final grade. It will be calculated according to this simple formula:

If you miss two or fewer classes during the entire term, you will get 5 of the possible 5 marks for attendance.

If you miss three classes during the term, you will get 3 of the 5 marks.

If you miss more than 3 classes, you will get 0 of the 5 possible marks for attendance.

In cases of catastrophic illness, the professor reserves the right to hold these rules in abeyance.

If you know you will need to miss classes for a sporting, family, or cultural event, plan in advance and refrain from missing classes at other times during the term.

**Poetry Essay**    Sept. 29    7%

This is to be a VERY short paper, of only two pages in length.

**Mid-term Exams**    Oct. 3    10%

**Compare & Contrast Essay**    Oct. 27    13%

For this essay you will compare the similarities and contrast the differences of the two plays we will read for 1413.E1.

How is Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* like Middleton's *The Changeling*? How do the two plays differ from each other?

Comparison and contrast is one of the most powerful forms of the academic essay, or indeed of any essay style.

Again, the expectation is that this will be a brief piece of work. I want it to end on page 4. You will be penalized for going long, or for ending before p. 4. Use no title page. Center your title and your name at the top of p. 1. Left justify the rest of your text. Have a 1" margin top, bottom, and both sides of every page, and use Times New Roman, 12 point font.

**Research Essay**      Nov. 17      25%

On a topic of your choice, to be developed through consultation with Erin Patterson.

**Final Exam**    TBA    25%

The final exam will be based in largest part on Mark Haddon's novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, which we will read for and discuss in the final days of the course. You will also be expected to use a compare & contrast format to discuss the ethical dilemma posed by *Gone, Baby, Gone*. And you can expect a section of the exam to demand you demonstrate some familiarity with and understanding of the essays, short stories, and electronic literature we read for the course.

The best preparation for this exam will be the reading tests and regular attendance in class during the term.

## SEPTEMBER

Wed., Sept. 3: Course, professors, & website introduction. For Sept. 5, purchase Graff & Birkenstein's *They Say, I Say*, and bring it to class.

Fri., September 5: University-level research.

Mon., September 8: Period & other specializations in the discipline of English.

What we write about in English. Argumentation. Read Graff & Birkenstein, pp. 1-14.

Wed., September 10: What does it mean "to read"? Reading poetry. Wyatt Howard

Fri., September 12: Shakespeare

Mon., September 15: Amilia Lanyer, "Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum," ll. 745 - 832.

Wed., September 17: John Donne, "The Flea," "The Canonization," "The Sun Rising."

Fri., September 19: The academic essay

Mon., September 22: S.T. Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

Wed., September 24: W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming," "All Things can tempt me"

Fri., September 26: Use this class time to finish your Poetry essay, due Monday.

Mon., September 29: Poetry essay due at start of class. T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Wed., October 1: Definition: Aristotle's *Poetics*.

## OCTOBER

Wed. October 1: Definition: Aristotle's *Poetics*.

Fri. Oct. 3: Mid-term Exam

Mon. Oct. 6: *Oedipus Rex*.

Wed. Oct. 8: Library and Writing Instruction.

Fri. Oct. 10: *Twelfth Night*.

Mon. Oct. 13: Thanksgiving -- no class

Wed. Oct. 15: *Twelfth Night*.

Fri. Oct. 17: Library and Writing Instruction.

Mon. Oct. 20: Finish *Twelfth Night*. Start *The Changeling*.

Wed. Oct. 22: *The Changeling*.

Fri. Oct. 24: *The Changeling*.

Mon. Oct. 27: Compare and Contrast essay due at start of class. The Essay: Montaigne's "Of Experience"; Bacon's "Of Studies"

Wed. Oct. 29: The Atlantic, "Is Google Making Us Stoopid?"

Fri. Oct. 31: The Dialogue: Plato's *Phaedrus*.

## NOVEMBER

Mon. Nov. 3: Reading Fiction [Scroll to the appropriate place, and read.]

Wed. Nov. 5: Edgar Allan Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher"

Fri. Nov. 7: Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour"

Mon. Nov. 10: *Gone, Baby, Gone*

Wed. Nov. 12: *Gone, Baby, Gone*

Fri. Nov. 14: *Gone, Baby, Gone* Homework: Read selections from V.1 of the Electronic Literature Collection and come prepared to argue for a favourite.

Mon. Nov. 17: Research Essay Due at start of class. Electronic Literature

Wed. Nov. 19: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*.

Fri. Nov. 21: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*.

Mon. Nov. 24: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*.

Wed. Nov. 26: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*.

Fri. Nov. 28: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*.

## DECEMBER

Mon. Dec. 1: Exam Preview