

**ENGLISH 112
READING FICTION**

Winter 2015
MW 12:30-2:40

Jeffery White
R230 Q (425) 564-3084
jwhite@bellevuecollege.edu

Office Hour: 8:30-9:20
(Also available by appointment)

Required Texts: *The Story and Its Writer*, (Compact Eighth Edition) Ann Charters
Oryx and Crake, Margaret Atwood

Course Description

Storytelling represents a way of making sense of experience while trying to reveal to the audience (and, often, the teller as well) the significance of some aspect of existence. As with science and religion, storytelling, at its best, seeks to articulate a type of "truth." This course will introduce you to the basic tools of literary analysis as a means to determine what truth an author of a work of fiction might be trying to convey, the relationship of that story to your world, and finally, what value fiction holds for you.

This course will be an introduction to the careful and critical reading of fiction. As we learn how to read fiction (and determine the characteristics that distinguish it from other types of prose), we will also learn how to offer thoughtful responses to the stories we have read.

This work will be conducted in an informal workshop atmosphere. We will work in both small groups and as a whole class, using discussion and various peer response strategies to become insightful readers of fiction. By quarter's end, you will have a more intimate understanding of what fiction is made of and what it's good for.

Course Policies

Your basic responsibilities are similar to those given you in the professional world. You are expected to be engaged and committed to your work, courteous and helpful to those you work with, and regular and prompt in your attendance.

Third, this is not a "Warm Body" class -- one of those classes which you attend in varying states of consciousness, take the occasional note and leave. Expect to contribute regularly, expect to labor to develop your understanding of the material, expect to be challenged and prodded on a daily basis. You will need to come to class prepared and ready to share with others. You will spend a majority of your class time doing "hands-on" activities and group work both seeking and giving assistance. If you, for whatever reason, aren't prepared or able to be an *active, responsible* member of this learning community, then another class may more suit your needs. What follows are our course policies.

Late Assignments

As in the professional world, all assignments are due in class on the specified date. Seminar papers are due in-class on the date specified. To receive credit for seminar papers, you must present a hard copy in-person on the due date. If you are absent or without a hard copy on the due date, you will receive NO CREDIT for that assignment. No exceptions, so please don't ask.

Tardiness

Our class begins at 12:30. Because, quite often, the first five to ten minutes of class are crucial to work that follows; and because groups need your prompt attendance to function properly, let's begin class on time with all members present. You're late if you walk into class more than 5 minutes after its scheduled starting time. Walk into class late 10 times, and you'll receive **no credit** for the course. I'm certain, however, that out of consideration for your peers, you will do whatever possible to see that we make the most of our daily meetings.

Absences:

Should you miss more than half of a class period (60 minutes), you'll receive an absence for that class meeting.

1. Miss the first week of class: no credit for the course.
2. Attendance is part of your preparedness and participation grade. Three or fewer absences should not negatively affect your overall grade in the course. Should you acquire **5 absences** (10 sixty-minute periods), you will have missed 25% of our class meetings and failed to meet minimum attendance requirements. You will receive **no credit** for the course.
3. If circumstances prevent you from meeting these guidelines, discuss them with me before they impact your work so that we might explore acceptable options

Communicating with your instructor

I will address you by your first name unless requested to do otherwise. When addressing me in person, you are invited to call me Jeffery, Mr. White or Professor White--which ever you are the most comfortable with. "Dude," "Yo," "Hey," etc. are not effective terms of address.

When communicating with me via email, I will expect the following format: an opening salutation, followed by the content of your message and concluding with your name and course number. I will not respond to written communication that does not follow these conventions. Should you send me an assignment via email, request an acknowledgement to insure its arrival in my mailbox.

Plagiarism

Should you use another's words or ideas and represent them as your own, you are plagiarizing. Should you get help with your writing to such a degree that it, in any part, is no longer your own; then, too, are you plagiarizing. Please be advised that BCC contracts with a plagiarism detecting service. Should your work be suspected of plagiarism, it will be referred to that service. Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course and possibly for dismissal from school.

Your Work and How It Will Be Evaluated

Grading

Participation/Preparedness- 50%

Attendance: 15%

10 Seminar Papers: 20%

Contributions to discussions: 15%

- Mid-term** (take home) - 25%
Final (in-class) essays - 25%

Those of you who miss few or no classes, display obvious commitment to our work and who regularly offer outstanding and original insights that consistently advance/deepen our understanding and appreciation of the reading may receive an "A." Those of you who meet the above criterion on a less regular basis and display a sincere commitment to our work (as reflected in your class participation) may earn a "B," (above average but not exceptional work). "C" work represents a satisfactory understanding of the material with few original or notable contributions to our work. Please remember that it's not uncommon to see the most intense, sincere and exhaustive effort producing satisfactory but average work. I suggest that you forget the grade; rather, cultivate your understanding of the material, take some risks, be original, enjoy yourself.

Preparedness/Participation: This is primarily a discussion class. Your goal is to offer other members in the class insights that lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the stories under consideration. With few exceptions, this period will consist of you voicing your thoughts on the material at hand. Therefore, the quality of this class depends upon how prepared you are (reading material in hand and open?) and the degree to which you participate. 50% of your overall grade depends on it. An important element of your participation grade will be seminar papers. You are expected to submit no fewer than ten seminar papers on the fiction of your choice. Should you elect to submit more than ten seminar papers, I will award credit for the ten papers with the highest grades.

Mid-term and Final (50% of Final Grade): Details to be outlined in class.

Student Code

You will be expected to abide by the BC "Student Code" outlined in brief in the paragraph below. Please be aware that I take the expectations for attendance, tardiness (explained above) and mobile phone usage very seriously. **Phones must be silenced and remain out of sight during class time.** Should you need to record information, I suggest you do so on paper and transfer to your phone after class. Should you fail to adhere to this expectation, I will give you one verbal warning followed by a written warning. After that you will be dismissed from class until you have met to discuss the matter with the Dean of Students. I am willing to discuss individual exceptions to the above should your circumstances require.

Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Vice President of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Vice President of Student Services.

The Student Code, Policy 2050, in its entirety, is located at:
<http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/policies/id-2050/>

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact the DRC as soon as possible. If you are a student with a documented autism spectrum disorder, there is a program of support available to you. If you are a person who requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter.

The DRC office is in B132 or you can call their reception desk at 425.564.2498. Deaf students can reach us by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. . . . Please visit their website for application information into our program and other helpful links at www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc

Affirmation of Inclusion

Bellevue College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination.

We value our different backgrounds at Bellevue College, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

<http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/policies/id-4000/>

A FINAL NOTE: There are no formulas for understanding stories, no facts to memorize. While some things may seem closer to truth than others, no one, especially me, is the keeper of correct answers. I invite spirited discussion about the stories we read. Quite often this comes through the questioning the claims and analysis of others, and through active support of your own positions. I encourage everyone to take some chances, say some potentially ridiculous things. There are no bad or wasted ideas. True growth comes from risk and discovery, from making mistakes.

Your responsibilities are outlined above. My responsibilities are to guide and evaluate your work. Outside of the classroom, my schedule permitting, I'll assist you in any way I can. If you're having difficulty, speak to me about it, and I'll see what I can do to help. If something suddenly interferes (or threatens to interfere) in some substantial way with your responsibilities to this class, let me know as soon as you can. It will make a difference. If you show me that you're concerned with meeting your commitments and doing good work in this class, I'll do what I can to help you around the obstacles. Communication is the key here. Keep me informed of your circumstances, and you should do fine. Talk to me after things fall apart, and there will be little more that I can offer than my sympathy. It will also benefit you the read the Arts and Humanities "Student Procedures and Expectations" page located here:

<http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/artshum/student-information/>