Reading for Genre: Form, History, Theory
English 201, Spring 2013

Prof. Stephanie Kuduk Weiner
Office hours: Mon. 3:00-5:00, Wed. 3:00-4:00, Th. 3:00-4:00

Course Description: In this course we will explore the three major genres of literature: poetry, drama, and prose narrative. We will examine their building blocks or basic elements and seek to understand how individual works of literature exemplify, reveal, and experiment with them. We will attend to formal and theoretical matters ranging from the operation of words to the patterns that structure poems, plays, and plots. We will ask how literary texts respond to, represent, and capture both literary history and their historical moments by depicting their time and place and by participating in debates about art and society. Throughout, our emphasis will be on the rigors and pleasures of close reading, sustained and detailed textual analysis. We will strive to cultivate the lively, generous, nourishing, and ennobling engagement that S. T. Coleridge had in mind when he said nearly two hundred years ago that “the poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity.”

Course Requirements: class participation (10%); reading exercises (5% total); four essay drafts (5% each); grammar and style revisions (5% total); six essays (10% each).

Policies:
• No computers are allowed in class.
• Please prepare carefully for class. “Preparation” is not an abstract ideal but a series of concrete steps. Mark up your books—jot notes in the margin of the text, circle key words, scan interesting lines, brainstorm connections and questions. Read actively, generating ideas for class discussion and your next essay. Adequate preparation means you can describe the situation, speaker, and basic poetic argument of any poem on the syllabus for that day’s class; the basic plot events and thematic developments in that day’s segment of a novel or play; and/or the argument of a work of literary criticism or theory.
• No extensions will be granted except in cases of medical emergency. Late papers will be penalized three points per day beginning the day they are due.
• If you require accommodations in this class, please see me before the end of the second week of the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.
• You are not expected to do outside research for this course. Your essays are an opportunity for you to explore the texts and issues in the class, and your writing should center on your own insights and ideas. If in your written work you use any materials that do not appear on the syllabus, you must cite those sources in a footnote or endnote. It constitutes academic dishonesty to present as your own any ideas or insights you have gained from others. If you consult works that you do not end up using directly, you must nevertheless list them in a “Works Consulted” page. If you have any questions about plagiarism and academic dishonesty, please see me or consult the discussion in the student handbook at www.wesleyan.edu/studenthandbook/plagiarism.html.
• Please save copies of your graded papers with my comments on them. Should you ever ask me to write a letter of recommendation for you, I will need to see them.

Course Outline
Tu. Jan. 24 Introductions
LYRIC POETRY

Tu. Jan. 29  
*Words and sounds*  
Shakespeare, sonnets 1-32, focusing on 5, 12, 18, 30  
Keats, “Lines on the Mermaid Tavern,” “La belle dame sans merci,” “If by dull rhymes our English must be chain’d”  
Pinsky, “Introduction,” “Theory,” and chapter 4 of *The Sounds of Poetry*  
**DUE: OED exercise** (all assignments are described on our course moodle page)

Th. Jan. 31  
*Metaphor, image, and symbol*  
Shakespeare, sonnets 33-73, focusing on 33, 45, 64, 65, 71, 73  
Keats, “On seeing the Elgin Marbles,” “The Eve of St. Agnes”  
William Empson, from *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (course reader on moodle [CR])  
**DUE: DRAFT OF ESSAY 1**

Tu. Feb. 5  
*Accent and duration*  
*The Sounds of Poetry*, chapters 1 and 3  
Shakespeare, sonnets 74-103, focusing on 76, 77, 84, 85, 94, 100  
Keats, “Ode on Melancholy,” “This living hand, now warm and capable”  
**DUE: scansion exercise**

Th. Feb. 7  
*Syntax and line*  
*The Sounds of Poetry*, chapter 2  
Shakespeare, sonnets 104-126, focusing on 107, 110, 118, 124  
Keats, “Ode to Psyche,” lines 1-80 from “The Fall of Hyperion” (stanzas 1-2)  
*Elements of Style*, Part I: Elementary Rules of Usage, Part IV: Words and Expressions Commonly Misused  
**DUE: ESSAY 1**

Tu. Feb. 12  
*Form and poetic argument—the sonnet*  
Table of sonnet forms from *Norton Anthology of Poetry* (moodle)  
Shakespeare, sonnets 29, 55, 73, 106, 116, 127-154, rereading/focusing on 29, 55, 73, 106, 116, 123, 129, 130, 138, 146  
Keats, “On First Looking into Chapman's Homer,” “On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Once Again,” “When I have fears that I may cease to be,” “Read me a Lesson muse, and speak it loud,” “Why did I laugh tonight? No voice will tell,” “Bright Star, would I were stedfast as thou art”  
**DUE: sonnet diagram**

Th. Feb. 14  
*Form and poetic argument—meditative lyric*  
Keats, “Ode to a Nightingale,” “Ode on a Grecian Urn”  
*Elements of Style*, Part II: Elementary Principles of Composition  
**DUE: DRAFT OF ESSAY 2**

DRAMA

Tu. Feb. 19  
*Opening scenes*  
*Twelfth Night*, Act I-II
Th. Feb. 21  
*Shakespeare’s Language*

Twelfth Night, Act III  
Kermode, from *Shakespeare’s Language* (CR)  
**DUE: one-minute reading**  
**DUE: ESSAY 2**

Tu. Feb. 26  
*Soliloquy, song, dialogue*

Twelfth Night, Act IV-V

Th. Feb. 28  
*Fantasy, fancy, and disguise*

Twelfth Night  
*Elements of Style*, Part III: A Few Matters of Form  
**DUE: DRAFT OF ESSAY 3**

Tu. Mar. 5  
*Comedy and artificiality*

The Importance of Being Earnest, Act I-II  
Wilde, from “The Decay of Lying” (CR)  
**DUE: free-write**

Th. Mar. 7  
*Comedy and the play of power*

The Importance of Being Earnest, Act III  
Meredith, from “An Essay on Comedy” (CR)  
**DUE: ESSAY #3**

**PROSE NARRATIVE**

Tu. Mar. 26  
*Realism and verisimilitude*

Pride and Prejudice, I.i-xii (ch. 1-12)

Th. Mar. 28  
*The chapter*

Pride and Prejudice, I.xiii-xxiii (ch. 13-23)  
**DUE: diagram, chart, or map**

Tu. April 2  
*The free-indirect style*

Pride and Prejudice, II.i-II.xiii (ch. 24-37)  
*Elements of Style*, Part V: An Approach to Style  
**DUE: one page close reading**

Th. April 4  
*The country house*

Pride and Prejudice, II.xiv-III.xi (ch. 38-54)  
Paintings of country houses (moodle)

Tu. April 9  
*Comedy and the novel of manners*

Pride and Prejudice, III.xii-end (ch. 55-61)  
Frye, “The Mythos of Spring: Comedy” (CR)  
Twelfth Night  
The Importance of Being Earnest

Th. April 11  
*Initial situation/change/resolution; antagonist/protagonist/witness; patterns*

Under Western Eyes, part one  
**DUE: DRAFT OF ESSAY 4**
Tu. April 16  Events/plot/narration; focalization  
Under Western Eyes, part two  
**DUE:** chart, diagram, or map and free-write

Th. April 18  The free-indirect style in Conrad  
Under Western Eyes, part three  
**DUE:** ESSAY 4

Tu. April 23  Layers of narrative  
Under Western Eyes, part four and Author’s Note  
**DUE:** one-page close reading

**GENERIC INTERSECTIONS**

Th. April 25  Painting, music, and the lyric turn in the novel  
Under Western Eyes  
Dickinson, poems 312 (“I can wade grief”), 320 (“There’s a certain Slant of light”), 343 (“When we stand on the tops of Things”), 355 (“It was not Death, for I stood up”), 372 (“After great pain, a formal feeling comes”), 401 (“Dare you see a Soul at the ’White Heat’?”), 446 (“This was a Poet”), 867 (“I felt a Cleaving in my Mind”)

Tu. April 30  No class—snow date/workshops  
**DUE:** ESSAY 5 (if no class, deliver a hard copy to my box or office by 3:00 p.m.)

Th. May 2  Lyric time  
Shakespeare, sonnets 96-97  
Keats, “To Autumn”  
Dickinson, poems 207 (“I taste a liquor never brewed”), 208 (Pine Bough), 409 (“The Soul selects her own Society”), 466 (“I dwell in Possibility”), 743 (“Behind Me – dips Eternity”), 865 (“Expectation – is Contentment”), 882 (“The Truth – is stirless”), 890 (“A Coffin – is a small Domain”), 891 (“I learned – at least – what Home could be”), 899 (“Experience is the Angled Road”), 962 (“A Light exists in Spring”), 968 (“Fame is the tint that Scholars leave”), 971 (“Peace is a fiction of our Faith”), 973 (“Death is a Dialogue between”), 978 (“Faith – is the Pierless Bridge”), 1263 (“Tell all the truth but tell it slant”), 1347 (“Wonder – is not precisely knowing”)

Tu. May 7  Narrative and dramatic situations in lyric  
Shakespeare, sonnet #120 and Burrow’s discussion of it on p. 135-38 (“What makes the sequence permanently valuable . . . a desire to hurt back.”)  
Dickinson, poems 340 (“I felt a Funeral, in my Brain”), 344 (“‘Twas just this time, last year, I died”), 353 (“I’m ceded – I’ve stopped being Their’s”), 423 (“The first Day’s Night had come”), 445 (“They shut me up in Prose”), 448 (“I died for Beauty – but was scarce”), 473 (“I was the slightest in the House –”), 479 (“Because I could not stop for Death”), 504 (“The Birds begun at Four o’clock”), 656 (“I started Early – Took my Dog –”), 1096 (“A narrow Fellow in the Grass”), 1773 (“My life closed twice before it’s close”)  
**DUE:** one-page close reading

**ESSAY 6 DUE** at time of scheduled final exam