

**Policy Statement and Syllabus**  
**English 5307**  
**Summer I 2016**

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### **Required Text**

- Charters, Ann. *The American Short Story and Its Writer*

### **Course Expectations**

This is an intensive, graduate-level reading and writing course that examines and discusses the advent of the short story in American letters. We will trace the development of the short story as it reflects and informs an also ever-developing American culture; in doing so, we will uncover the complexities inherent in this particularly American art form. To do so, we will determine how, indeed, authorship and its surrounding and informing culture developed a genre by carefully and historically tracing individual writers of short stories as they wrote their own world-views, thus helping us to develop our own.

English 5307 focuses on achieving key expectations including the following:

1. To improve writing using documented methodologies;
2. To apply documented methodologies to the critical examination of canonical literature;
3. To increase confidence in the students' abilities to teach literary analysis and writing in their professional lives.

### **Course Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to improve your knowledge of American literature through a close consideration of the history of the American short story genre. The course will help you to improve your literacy through close readings, and it will aid your abilities to analyze and discuss your ideas about what you read. The course will also help develop your abilities to write clearly and concisely about and/or in the vein of what you read, especially in terms of higher analytic

reactions. The course will help you to take part in a wider discussion of American letters, furthering your ability to also instruct future students in the advent of an American art form.

At the end of this course the students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the history of the American short story;
2. Describe how to use the writers' short story techniques to understand the significance of short literature;
3. Describe how to apply techniques and methodologies to create a successful class discussions and class writings;
4. Describe the foundations of the short story and identify several masters of the short story form;
5. Discuss how the masters' own discussion of the writing craft can serve as openings for thoughtful and successful composition and revisions;
6. Establish pedagogical approaches to the topic for future use in professional lives, particularly education.

## **Course Requirements**

Assignments require:

- substantial individual readings from the text;
- substantial writings in both journal form and long essay form;
- detailed discussion boards;
- subjective testing.

In addition to the reading and writing assignments, coursework will consist of in-class discussions via discussion boards based on your understanding of what we read. You will be expected to keep up with the reading assignments for each class and then to freely discuss the reading assignments with your instructor and peers. You must complete satisfactory work and actively participate in class to complete English 5307; therefore, consistent online attendance is required for you to pass this course. An online course is not an independent study—at your own pace. This course expects students to log onto the course and to participate daily in order to succeed. The entire course will only run smoothly if all students participate equally.

## **First Class and Beyond:**

By noon, 1<sup>st</sup> June, I will post opening/welcoming remarks and suggestions for getting started in the course. On subsequent days, please check announcements for instructions, lectures, and answers to class questions/clarifications to the course, which will also be posted by noon each class day (i.e. Monday-Friday). I will be “off-line” on the weekends, which will begin by 12 p.m. Fridays and continue until noon Mondays.

## Coursework:

**\*\*Please note that you should write attached assignments in Microsoft Word to ensure we may all utilize them. Work may be submitted in “.doc, .docx, or .rtf. Please contact Sandy Bogus at [sbogus@sulross.edu](mailto:sbogus@sulross.edu) (or 432.837.8523) if you have technical problems or questions. Blackboard only works best in **Firefox, Safari, or Chrome** (rather than Explorer). It is free to download.\*\***

**Major Assignments:** Students are responsible for all assignments in this course and must satisfactorily complete all major assignments in English 5307 to receive a passing grade.

Major Assignment	% of Final Grade
Journal	20%
Primary Source Analysis	20%
Research/Creative Assignment	30%
Final Examination	10%
Discussion Boards	20%
Total Points	100%

The vast majority of this course will be completed via the writing and “discussion” of both short fiction and theoretical readings. We will read and write about selections from the required text for the course. You are expected to participate fully in a completely engaged manner and will be held accountable for your participation, both in formal and informal forums, throughout the completion of the session’s work. All of your participation must be thoughtful, sincere, and tactful. In the pursuit of these goals, we will write one brief, primary-source analytic essay and one long-form researched essay. You will also complete a course notebook that will hold course materials generated this semester. The course notebook will consist of only assigned writings in the form of “elements.” You will participate in directed discussion boards, which will answer and/or bounce off discussion prompts as listed in the syllabus. These also serve as the class participation component of the course, as they mirror the reading schedule. Discussion boards will largely influence the course grade. Finally, you will turn in a final examination in essay form, which pulls together the work from the semester.

**\*\*I expect your coursework to mirror the time you would take with this course if it were an onsite course. Thus, you should spend approximately three hours a day working on this**

**course, with additional time for formal reading and writing assignments determined by your personal pace.**

### **Detailed Assignment Description:**

*Discussion Boards*—The discussion boards allow us to speak to one another. Think of the discussion boards as the “cyber” equivalent of sitting in a seminar room with one another and talking about our readings, writings, thoughts and reactions to the coursework. The first discussion boards will ask you to do just this. Please answer in detailed manners, using examples and analysis of the why and how of your answers. The posts must be approximately three to four hundred words. Responses to posts should be approximately two hundred words. The discussion boards will improve our teaching and practice of methodologies of fiction and theories on and about fiction through improved abilities to articulate your growing knowledge-base and expertise in the field of American literature.

*Readings*—The readings for the course involve two valuable types of writing: (1) short fiction by masters of American fiction writing and (2) theoretical and personal essays about fiction writing and the writing life by many of those same writers and/or scholars of those writers. Thus, we will be able to read great and varied examples of fiction as a way to model techniques while also glimpsing the craft of writing via those masters' “real” lives. This allows us to increase confidence in our writing and analytic abilities as a way into our writing and ultimate teaching of writing. Reading about writers alongside their writings also brings us closer to the world of the American short story. Writing never occurs in a vacuum; it informs and is informed by its surrounding cultures. The readings will highlight this crucial fact.

*Primary Source Analysis*—The primary source essay is simply a reader-response essay. It is an analysis or close reading of one short story from the first half of the session. The intent of the assignment is for you to develop your own approaches to what you read and to be able to fully communicate them in a detailed manner. The essay will be typed, in Times New Roman font, double-spaced, 3-5 pages in length, and utilize MLA style.

*Research Essay*—This assignment requires you to create your own analysis of fictions and/or concepts from the course readings and then research secondary sources to either concur, add to, or argue with your already-developed ideas. You may either write a primary/secondary research topic examining culture and its impact on, result of, or place within short fiction (from this session), taking off from the starting point of the previous essay, or you may begin anew with a fresh topic. Either choice will be formatted and utilize the MLA, be typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman, and be 10-15 pages in length (not counting Works Cited pages).

*Course Notebook*—The course notebook will consist of prompts which ask you to journal about what you read, analyze techniques authors use when writing short fiction, or to expand your own ideas for course writings. The goals of journal exercises are to facilitate clear understanding of the American short story as well as develop your abilities to write freely and with confidence. Obviously, the responses are as valuable as the effort put into them. Please feel free to use any

of the notebook exercises as inspirations for further, more formal assignments—they are meant to be such. **I will evaluate your effort on these exercises once, at the end of the course. It will be turned in as a single Word attachment.** But please write the exercises as they are due—this will maximize their success for your endeavors. Each entry should be a minimum of 300 to 500 words. The precise prompts are listed in the syllabus per selected class day.

*Final Examination*—The final examination will pull together the key ideas and aspects of the advent of the short story in American literature. That is, I will ask you to write fully-developed essays that explore key concepts and personal analyses of the session's work. The goal of this assignment is to apply our discussions and growing skills in analysis of the short story, the readings of such, and the cultural and historical impact of the short story in America. It will also measure your ability to pull together the session's significant ideas comprehensively and clearly.

**Late Work:** All major assignments and/or projects, etc. are due on the dates assigned by midnight, unless otherwise noted. You are responsible for all assignments in this course and must complete all required work in English 5307 to receive a passing grade.

**Late assignments** will receive a full letter grade deduction for being late. This means, if you turn in your assignment late and it receives a B, it automatically will be reduced to a C.

**Attendance:** As this is a web-format literature course, consistent participation is absolutely necessary. Remaining current with the course schedule and taking part during the expected due dates will not only keep you personally engaged, but also will ensure that other participants of the course can benefit from your thoughts, ideas, and reactions toward the reading and writing assignments. *If you miss due dates, I will not expect others in the class to consider your work in arrears. Late work will result in an automatic ten points being taken off your grade; thus, if you received a B on an assignment, it will be reduced to a C. I do not accept any late work for this course after the final exam period has ended.*

**\*\*Please note that this course is an online format which necessitates that students complete discussion boards and major assignments on the day on which the assignments are made. Thus, discussion boards must be posted by midnight on Tuesdays and responses be posted by midnight on Wednesday, and the same with Thursday posts by midnight with a Friday midnight response. This will ensure that the course's discussions move forward timely and with minimum inconvenience to your fellow students. After I have graded each discussion board, you may not redo or make it up. Thus, if you miss the assignment, you will not be able to make it up and will lose the credit.**

## **Grading Scale:**

Percentages and Grade Equivalents:

A= 90-100% B=80-89% C=70-79% D=60-69% F=59% or below

**Disabilities Statement:** Persons with disabilities that may warrant academic accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that we may make arrangements to ensure the most hospitable and enhancing (cyber) learning environment as possible.

**Academic Ethics:** It is the responsibility of students and instructors to help maintain scholastic integrity at the University by refusing to participate in or tolerate scholastic dishonesty. Any student who represents someone else's work as his or her own will automatically receive a zero for that assignment, which will likely result in a failure for the course. Plagiarism can be purposeful or inadvertent, but either results in an unacceptable and unethical academic performance. Plagiarism will most likely result in a failure for the course.

***A Writer's Reference:*** I strongly recommend all students and instructors of writing and literature own and utilize Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*. It is a sound, credible, and particularly usable stylebook.

## Syllabus

Date	Assignment	Comments
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Wed., 1st June                      \*\*Read Course Introduction

*Consider setting up a webpage within our course!! If you haven't taken a Blackboard course, take the practice tutorial and exam; it's a great idea even if you've taken one before.*

**Discussion board 1: Introduce yourself to the class--discuss your professional life, your reading and writing life, your personal bio. Respond to 2 posts!**

*The American Short Story and Its Writer: read Introduction: "Some Precursors of the American Short Story" and "Early 19th Century, 1819-1860."*

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

Thurs., 2<sup>nd</sup> June                      Read Lecture 1

*The American Short Story and Its Writer: read author introductions*

\*Irving: "Rip Van Winkle"

\*Hawthorne: "The Minister's Back Veil"

\*Poe: "The Fall of the House of Usher"

"Review of Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales*"

*Journal element 1: Discuss the techniques and features which Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe share in their short fiction. What aspects of these stories are tale-inspired? What aspects forecast the modern short story form, which will develop from tales?*

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

Fri., 3<sup>rd</sup> June

Discussion board 2: In his career, Poe (along with Hawthorne, Irving, Twain, etc.) sought to create the American literary tradition as unique from European via fiction and criticism. Discuss how writers we have read thus far indeed move from a modeling after their European counterparts to create an entirely American literature. Respond to 2 posts!

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

"Late Nineteenth Century: 1861-1899"

Melville: "Bartleby, the Scrivener"

Twain: "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of  
Calaveras County"

"How to Tell a Story"

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Mon., 6<sup>th</sup> June

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

\*Harte: "The Luck of Roaring Camp"

"The Rise of the Short Story"

\*Cable: "Belles Demoiselles Plantation"

\*Gilman: "The Yellow Wallpaper"

"Undergoing the Cure for Nervous  
Prostration"

*Journal element 2*: Apply what Gilman and Harte had to say about their writing lives to their own fictional writings--look for clues, either experiential or technical to their development of short fiction via their critical (i.e. essay) writings.

\*\*Check Announcements!!



Tues., 7<sup>th</sup> June

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

\*Jewett: "The Queen's Twin"

\*Chopin: "Athénaïse"

"On Certain Brisk, Bright Days"

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Wed. 8<sup>th</sup> June

Discussion board 3: Discuss the rise of the female voice in the American short story via the women we have read thus far. Do you find these voices and techniques unique from their male counterparts? How or how not? Respond to 2 posts!

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introduction

\*Chesnutt: "The Wife of His Youth"

\*Crane: "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky"

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Thurs., 9<sup>th</sup> June

Read Lecture 2: Techniques of the Short Story, Close Reading,  
Explicating, and Analysis

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

"Early Twentieth Century: 1900-1940"

\*Henry: "The Duplicity of Hargraves"

\*Cather: "A Wagner Matinée"

"Miss Jewett"

*Journal element 3*: Discuss (explicate) one story we have read in terms of each of the techniques of fiction discussed in lecture 2.

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Fri., 10<sup>th</sup> June

Discussion board 4: As short fiction moves into the 20th Century, what sensibilities and/or artistic aspects change, shift, or develop in the pieces we are reading? Respond to 2 posts!

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

\*James: "The Jolly Corner"

\*Anderson: "Hands"

"Form, Not Plot, in the Short Story"

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Mon. 13<sup>th</sup> June

*The American Short Story and Its Writer:* read author introductions

\*Glaspell: "A Jury of Her Peers"

\*Fitzgerald: "Winter Dreams"

\*Toomer: "Blood-Burning Moon"

\*Parker: "You Were Perfectly Fine"

"The Short Story, through a Couple of the Ages"

*Journal element 4:* Dorothy Parker writes a criticism in "The Short Story Through a Couple of the Ages," which first appeared in *The New Yorker* in 1927. Pick a story we have read thus far (perhaps one you enjoyed less than others) and write a New Yorker-style review of it, taking care to closely analyze and provide discussion and examples.

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Tues., 14<sup>th</sup> June

Read Primary-source Analysis Essay Assignment

*The American Short Story and Its Writer:* read author introductions

\*Hemingway: "Soldier's Home"

\*Porter: "He"

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Wed., 15<sup>th</sup> June

Discussion board 5: Discuss the differences between analysis and summary in criticism. Discuss your own chosen subject for the primary-source analysis essay, why you chose it, what you hope to uncover. Respond to 2 posts!

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

\*Faulkner: "Spotted Horses"

\*Hurstun: "The Gilded Six-Bits"

"What White Publishers Won't Print"

\*Welty: "The Sense of Place in Faulkner's 'Spotted Horses'"

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Thurs., 16<sup>th</sup> June

Read Lecture 3

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

\*Steinbeck: "The Snake"

\*Wright: "The Man Who Was Almost a Man"

*Journal element 5*: Explore your analysis in a freewrite; outline the essay; write first draft; comment on ideas for revisions.

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Fri., 17<sup>th</sup> June

**\*\*Primary Source Analysis Essay due!!**

Discussion board 6: Zora Neale Hurston and Richard Wright approached the African-American experience from vastly different angles, and both are considered integral pre-Civil Rights Movement voices. Discuss each writer's approach and how they serve as important cultural criticisms and agents for change--in tandem and despite one another. Respond to 2 posts!

*The American Short Story and Its Writer:* read author introductions

"Mid-Twentieth Century: 1941-1965"

\*McCullers: "A Tree. A Rock. A Cloud."

\*Thurber: "A Catbird Seat"

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

Mon., 20<sup>th</sup> June

Read Assignment for Research/Creative Project

*The American Short Story and Its Writer:* read author introductions

\*Brookes: "We're the only colored people here"

\*Cheever: "The Enormous Radio"

\*Gordon: "The Petrified Woman"

\*Baldwin: "Sonny's Blues"

"Autobiographical Notes"

*Journal element 6:* Explore your ideas for the research/creative project, discussing the critical or creative approach, the works which will be examined and/or modeled in great detail. Make a calendar plan for completion.

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

Tue., 21<sup>st</sup> June

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

\*Jackson: "The Lottery"

"The Morning of June 28, 1948, and

"The Lottery"

\*Olsen: "I Stand Here Ironing"

\*Vonnegut: "Harrison Bergeron"

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Wed., 22<sup>nd</sup> June

Discussion board 7: Discuss the shift to a more contemporary world-view in the stories we have been lately reading. How are the short stories beginning to deconstruct our notion of the golden age of American post-WWII exuberance? Respond to 2 posts!

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

\*Taylor: "Promise of Rain"

\*O'Connor: "Everything That Rises Must  
Converge"

"Some Aspects of the Grotesque in  
Southern Fiction"

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Thurs., 23<sup>rd</sup> June

Read Lecture 4

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

"Late Twentieth Century: 1966-Present"

\*Welty: "Where Is the Voice Coming From?"

\*Gass: "In the Heart of the Heart of the Country"

"From the Preface to 'In the Heart of the Heart of the Country'"

*Journal element 7*: The grotesque character is not a technique created by O'Connor; in fact, Sherwood Anderson coined the term, "grotesque" decades before her seminal article. Of course, we can easily argue that the grotesque character has always existed in literature. Explore the grotesque character--its meaning and significance--citing any of the short stories we have read. Explore at least three characters, their effects on the thematic meanings of the stories and the techniques writers utilize in creating them.

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Fri., 24<sup>th</sup> June

Discussion board 8: In her fiction, Eudora Welty makes us uncomfortable by the very real voice she creates in "Where Is this Voice Coming From?" Discuss the importance of using voice or other techniques in short fiction to not only entertain but, also, to potentially make crucial socio-cultural points. What is the responsibility of the fiction writer to do more than simply entertain? What is the difference between narrative voice and authorial voice? Respond to 2 posts!

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

\*Barth: "Title"

"It's a Short Story"

\*Barthelme: "The Police Band"

\*\*Check Announcements!

Mon., 27<sup>th</sup> June

*The American Short Story and Its Writer:* read author introductions

\*Oates: "How I Contemplated the World from the  
Detroit House of Corrections and  
Began My Life Over Again"

\*Carver: "Are These Actual Miles?"  
"Creative Writing 101"

\*Walker: "Everyday Use"  
"Zora Neale Hurston: A Cautionary Tale  
and a Partisan View"

*Journal element 8:* Discuss how writers "writing on writing" illuminates short fiction reading and/or writing (either critical or creative), heightens the appreciation of the art form--or how it fails to accomplish this.

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Tues., 28<sup>th</sup> June

*The American Short Story and Its Writer:* read author introductions

\*Silko: "Yellow Woman"

\*Updike: "Separating"

"Twisted Apples: On Winesburg, Ohio"

\*Mukherjee: "The Tenant"

\*\*Check Announcements!!



Wed., 29<sup>th</sup> June

**\*\*Research Project Due**

Discussion board 9: What techniques and/or aspects of fiction "show up" (i.e. develop, manifest) in contemporary short fiction--as different and new from their precursors. Discuss why you feel new ground is broken, either culturally, technically, artistically. Where do you feel short fiction is moving now? Feel free to cite your own personal readings outside the course, if you are an avid reader of contemporary short fiction. Or, do you agree with those critics who claim the short story is "dying?" Respond to 2 posts!

*The American Short Story and Its Writer:* read author introductions

\*Mason: "Big Bertha Stories"

"On Tim O'Brien's 'The Things They Carried'"

\*O'Brien: "The Things They Carried"

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

Thurs., 30<sup>th</sup> June

Lecture 5

*The American Short Story and Its Writer:* read

\*Beattie: "Second Question"

"Where Characters Come From"

\*Wideman: "newborn thrown in trash and dies"

*Journal element 9:* An annotated bibliography is simply a bibliographical entry with a following either summary or critical rendering of the source's meaning. Take either one of the articles we read from the text or one of the articles you utilized in the research project and write a summary annotation of it (the summary annotation means that you only summarize the main focus, the points, the approaches of the article; the critical annotation would then assess the success of the article and presupposes our expertise in the field). Use the MLA as your style for the bibliographic entry.

**\*\*Check Announcements!!**

Fri., 1<sup>st</sup> July

Read Final Examination Assignment

Discussion board 10: For our last discussion board, discuss which chronological movement (e.g. the late Twentieth Century) you enjoyed the most this summer. Why? Talk about the movements' effects on you, their artistic techniques, the writers, the socio-cultural impacts and/or influences. Respond to 2 posts!

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

\*Alexie: "The Only Traffic Signal on the  
Reservation Doesn't Flash Red  
Anymore"

\*Moore: "Four Calling Birds, Three French Hens"

\*Viramontes: "Miss Clairol"

\*\*Check Announcements!!

Mon., 4<sup>th</sup> July

Happy Birthday America!!

*The American Short Story and Its Writer*: read author introductions

\*Baxter: "Saul and Patsy Are in Labor"

\*Proulx: "The Bunchgrass Edge of the World"

\*Chang: "Water Names"

*Journal element 10*: Many stories come directly from the personal experiences of the writers. Think about a memory which has always stayed with you for some reason. With the short fiction we've read in mind, explore the memory by rendering it as a short short story--attempt full scenes, objectify yourself to the memory, fictionalize your own experience. This needn't be more than a scene.

Tues., 5<sup>th</sup> July

**\*\* Final Examination Due**  
**\*\*Journal Due**

+6+