## I. ASCRC General Education Form

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<th>Group</th>
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<td>Course Title</td>
<td>Introduction to Critical Interpretation</td>
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<td>Prerequisite</td>
<td>ENEX/WTS 101</td>
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<td>Credits</td>
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## II. Endorsement/Approvals

Complete the form and obtain signatures before submitting to Faculty Senate Office

| Instructor | Alternating Faculty (Coordinator: Mark Medvetz) |
| Phone / Email | 7904/mark.medvetz@umontana.edu |
| Program Chair | Cathy Corr |
| Dean | Barry Good |
| Signature | Date | 18 Sept 08 |

## III. Description and purpose of the course:

General Education courses must be introductory and foundational. They must emphasize breadth, context, and connectedness; and relate course content to students’ future lives: See Preamble: [http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/gened/GEPreamble_final.htm](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/gened/GEPreamble_final.htm)

WTS 120L introduces students to the study of how readers make meaning of texts and how texts influence readers. This course focuses specifically on developing strategies essential to interpreting literary texts from a range of genres: poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction. Through informal and formal writing assignments, students will begin to practice these various strategies, including the cross-curricular skills of critical reading: summary, analysis, and synthesis. Writing assignments will include one argument that illuminates and enriches the student’s understanding of literary and cultural representation.

In general, this exploration of a wide-range of genres will introduce students to significant literary styles and works by reading from canonical texts to graphic novels. By way of a sampling of international writers, students will discuss ideas about a global community and the human relations that compose it.

By way of class discussions, students will build their own local community of strong listeners and responsible communicators. Among other topics, the class will look at storytelling as a way to work through the many human and ethical problems facing the world today. Finally, each student will be asked, “…to take a stand and to articulate your own unique viewpoint in written work, and to graft the stories we read onto the lives you lead, the people you are becoming, and the world you are stepping into.”

## IV. Criteria:

Briefly explain how this course meets the criteria for the group. See: [http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCsx/Adocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCsx/Adocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm)
Courses cover a number of works in one or more of the various forms of artistic representation; they also establish a framework and context for analysis of the structure and significance of these works. In addition, these courses provide mechanisms for students 1) to receive instruction on the methods of analysis and criticism, 2) to develop arguments about the works from differing critical perspectives.

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| V. Student Learning Goals: Briefly explain how this course will meet the applicable learning goals. See: [http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCx/Adocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/ASCRCx/Adocuments/GE_Criteria5-1-08.htm) |  |
Upon completion of this perspective, students will be able to:

1. analyze works of art with respect to structure and significance within literary and artistic traditions, including emergent movements and forms; and

2. develop coherent arguments that critique these works from a variety of approaches, such as historical, aesthetic, cultural, psychological, political, and philosophical

Because WTS 120L is an introductory course with the first-year student as the primary audience, students will be offered a modest but essential set of tools to begin a critical reading and analysis of a variety of texts representing multiple genres: fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction. Within a specific genre, students will learn to employ basic vocabulary of literary analysis such as narrative, character, symbol, and irony.

WTS 120L offers students the opportunity to begin responding critically to a variety of literary texts representing multiple genres. While reading a text, students will examine its literary components, both universal and genre-specific. For example, while reading a play, students will begin to examine dialogue as it reveals a character’s growth or flaws. In poetry, students will consider elements specific to poetry—line and meter—and how they contribute to a poem’s construction and worth.

For closer readings and analyses, students might read contemporary poets responding to issues of American involvement in current wars, specifically examining how sound is employed to emphasize a poem’s central claim.

To introduce students to the work of a particular group of writers, the course might read a substantial sampling of non-fiction work by contemporary women writers who locate themselves in the geography and places of the West. Because work by Judy Blunt, Mary Clearman Blew, Kim Barnes, and Claire Davis present issues of place, the shaping of identity, and gender, students will have the opportunity to identify how writers employ craft and literary devices to (re)present geographical and social issues. Students will have the additional opportunity to begin to understand how and to what end regional writers (re)create familiar geographies and landscapes.
### Outcomes
An outcomes statement lists proficiencies that students should attempt to develop and/or improve during the semester. Although the list below is tailored for WTS 120L, it reflects UM standards for general-education perspectives and the lower-division writing requirement.

- develop a variety of strategies to read, analyze, and comprehend a diverse selection of literary texts representing multiple genres
- examine the use of general and genre-specific literary components and techniques
- approach and appreciate a literary text that reflects a particular intellectual or literary tradition
- approach and appreciate a literary text that presents and/or reflects an author’s literary concerns as well as others such as the political and the social
- write a responsive paper after reading a literary text
- construct and support a critical interpretive response to a literary text

WTS 120L is a W course, and students will be expected to meet the following general writing criteria:

- build a repertoire of strategies for generating multiple drafts
- develop strategies for generating effective development and support of ideas
- demonstrate a working knowledge of rhetorical choices appropriate to the writing situation
- recognize the essential nature of audience in the rhetorical process
- understand the recursive nature of writing
- develop and define their own writing process
- demonstrate control of general writing conventions, including punctuation, syntax and grammar.
VII. Syllabus: Paste syllabus below or attach and send digital copy with form. The syllabus should clearly describe how the above criteria are satisfied. For assistance on syllabus preparation see: http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/syllabus.html

Syllabus

WTS 120L: Introduction to Critical Interpretation

WTS 120
M W 2:00PM-3:30PM
HD 01
appointment
Instructor: Clare Sutton

Find out what you really like if you can. Find out what is really important to you. Then sing your song. You will have something to sing about and your whole heart will be in the singing.

When a man is full up with what he is talking about he handles such language as he has with a mastery unusual to him, and it is at such times that he learns language.

–Robert Henri, The Art Spirit

Shelley, Mary. Frankenstein.
Gray, Alasdair. Poor Things.

Course Description:

In this introductory course in the study of literature and the discourse of interpretation, we will examine, explore, and challenge various literary terms, concepts and genres. Additionally, we will strive to develop a practical and critical reading vocabulary—a skill that will enable rigorous engagement with the literary texts of our syllabus and in the literary texts you encounter after you’ve completed not only our course but also your degree.

With Satrapi’s and Mukherjee’s texts, we will discuss our global community and the human relations that compose it. In class discussions, we will build our own local community of strong listeners and responsible communicators. We will think of literature in Kenneth Burke words, as “equipment for living.” We will look at storytelling as a way to work through the many human and ethical problems we face in our world today. We will explore the background of a text and seek out the historical knowledge it asks us to
acquire. In the case of *Persepolis* and Swift’s “A Modest Proposal,” we will have to work to fill in the gaps in our historical knowledge to full step into the world of each text.

Perhaps most importantly, each of you will be asked to take a stand, to articulate your own unique viewpoint in written work, and to graft the stories we read onto the lives you lead, the people you are becoming, and the world you are stepping into. In this way, the classroom community will help to foster a better world community. When you leave our course, I hope you will feel more confident in offering your views in the various communities of which you are a part.

More specifically, one of the tasks of the course will be to ask and attempt to answer such compelling and complex questions as “Why study literature?” “How has literature changed throughout time?” “What is the value of literature today?” “Can a reader simultaneously examine the political and aesthetic implications of texts?”

In addition to talking about and learning how to talk about literary texts, another task of the course will involve learning how to formalize interpretive responses through the activity of writing. We will learn how to assert and support analytic claims in well-crafted, grammatically tight essays. In short, since this course is a “Writing Course for General Education,” you can expect to do a good deal of writing this semester.

**Coursework:** Final grades will be determined by your performance in five separate categories of coursework:

1. quizzes 10%
2. midterm 20%
3. final 20%
4. 3 critical meditations @ 10 pts each 30%
5. 1 final essay 20%

I will be happy to discuss grades with you during my office hours. However, please give yourself twenty-four hours after receiving your grade before coming to see me.

**Reading Quizzes:** Over the course of the semester you will take a number of quizzes designed to ensure that you have read and thought about the readings for that day. I will administer these short quizzes at the beginning of the class, and there will be no make up quizzes held for those who are absent or late on the day when they are administered. You are responsible for the task of completing your reading every day. (N.B.: Reading Quizzes will include questions on ALL materials you read to prepare for class.)

**Critical Meditations:** While this class is primarily engaged in the development of critical and interpretive skills in a discussion format, you will also spend a significant amount of time working to individualize and formalize your responses to literary texts. To that end, you will write and submit 3 two page responses to the texts we will read this semester. Because of their formal nature your critical meditations must be well crafted, to length, supported with brief textual citation, and free of mechanical and syntactical errors. I will hand out a more detailed explanation of these exercises as the semester progresses. The specific due dates for these mini-essays are as follows: Monday, Sept. 13; Friday, Oct. 1; Monday, Oct 25.
Final Essay: This last written essay will involve your selection of one of the three Critical Meditations and subsequent revision of it into a 5-7 page essay. The due date for this essay is Monday, Nov. 22. Again, we will discuss the precise details of the assignment later in the semester.

Midterm: You will take your midterm on Friday, October 15. The exam will consist of questions from the following categories:
1. short answer
2. identification
3. explication of text/essay questions
Prior to the exam, we will spend class time discussing the precise nature of these three categories.

Final Exam: You will take your final exam on the day scheduled by the University for that purpose. Like your midterm, this exam will consist of questions from the following categories:
1. short answer
2. identification
3. explication of text/essay questions

Attendance: Attendance is required and will be recorded: four or more unexcused absences are grounds for failure of the course itself. Late arrivals and early departures will, if they occur frequently, count as absences. If you do arrive late you will be responsible for letting me know after class that you were present for the day.

Schedule

Week One
M 8-25   Overview of assignments, reading list, and course policy.

Week Two:
M 9-1 HOLIDAY

The Immigrant Experience

Week Three
M 9-8   Culture as Context and first-person, limited narration. Mukherjee, “A Wife’s Story” and “Orbiting.”
W 9-10  Magical realism. Garcia Marquez, “A Very Old Man with Wings.”

Terror and Revolution

Week Four
M 9-15  Critical Meditation #1 Due. Memoir and humor. Satrapi, Persepolis,

Week Five
M 9-22 Film. Persepolis, and discussion of first paper submissions.

American Gothic

Week Six:
W 10-1 Characterization. O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find.”

The Victorian Gothic

Week Seven
M 10-6 The gothic novel. Shelley, Frankenstein, 5-58.
W 10-8 Shelley, Frankenstein, 59-91.

Week Eight
M 10-13 Shelley, Frankenstein, 91-120.
W 10-15 Shelley, Frankenstein, 120-156.

Week Nine
M 10-20 Midterm.

A Postmodern Version of the Gothic

Week Ten
W 10-29 Gray, Poor Things, 43-98—chapters 7-12.

Week Eleven

Week Twelve
W 11-12 Gray, Poor Things, 251-317—Victoria McCandless’s letter and Notes.

Week Thirteen
W 11-19 Essay Due. Mamet, Oleanna. (In class viewing)

Week Fourteen
M 11-24  Hemingway, “The Short, Happy Life of Francis Macomber.”
W 11-26  HOLIDAY

Week Fifteen
M 12-1   Critical Meditation #3 Due. Poems—T.B.A.
W 12-3   Poems—T.B.A.

Week Sixteen
Final Exam.

*Please note: As an instructor of a general education course, you will be expected to provide sample assessment items and corresponding responses to the Assessment Advisory Committee.