

NEW RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DUBLIN, VIRGINIA

COURSE PLAN

Course Number and Title: ENG 278, Appalachian Literature (3 credits)

Prepared by: Ben E. Campbell Fall, 2009
(Instructor) (Date)

Approved by: _____ Fall, 2009
(Dean) (Date)

I. Course Description

ENG 278 examines selected works of outstanding authors of the Appalachian region. Involves critical reading and writing. Lecture 3hours per week. 3 credits.

II. Entry Level Requirements

ENG 112 or divisional approval.

III. Introduction

This course will aid students in learning about and processing the literature of the eight-state Southern Appalachian region. By examining fiction, poetry, and nonfiction from a wide variety of the region's authors, both past and present, students will become knowledgeable about the unique history and culture of the area, and explore many of the pressing issues contemporary Appalachia faces. Instruction will provide students with a foundation for understanding the development of Appalachian Literature into a field of individual study through an investigation of early regional writings, the travel writings of outsiders from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the development of a regional identity following WWII, omission from the canon of American Literature, and the Appalachian renaissance (a movement some believe is still in progress) that built upon the success of Appalachian authors from the 1920s and 30s. In addition, this course will prompt students to evaluate Appalachian writings in the context of culture: how the region's language, values, religious practices and other cultural factors have aided, alongside the mainstream media's misrepresentation of the area, in creating an "otherness" that is both abhorred and celebrated by writers and residents alike. Finally, this course will assist students in recognizing Appalachia's sub regions through distinguishing between ridge and valley, coal country, the back of beyond, and the modern urban city.

IV. Course Goals and Objectives

In this course students will:

- Evaluate Appalachian texts in literary terms
- Differentiate between the varying writing styles and subject matter of Appalachian authors
- Explore and express feelings regarding the label of Appalachia as “other”
- Discover different viewpoints through engaged classroom conversation
- Demonstrate an ability to write cohesive comparative essays
- Engage in cooperative learning by working in small groups
- Illustrate awareness of the region’s multicultural groups
- Create Appalachian literature in the form of a short story or series of poems
- Recognize the accomplishments of the region’s writers
- Examine the creation and implementation of regional stereotypes

And...

- Discuss the issues, both socially and environmentally, that the region faces now and in the future

V. Textbooks

Oral History by Lee Smith

The Dollmaker by Harriette Arnow

Deliverance by James Dickey

Saints at the River by Ron Rash

The Collected Stories of Breece D’J Pancake by Breece Pancake

In addition to these texts, I will be providing handouts on four separate occasions relating to the thematic units of Mountaineers As Others, Back of Beyond, Coal Country, and The New World. Make sure you obtain copies of these handouts even if you are not able to attend class the night I pass them out, preferably before we discuss them during the next class session.

The NRCC community values the pluralistic nature of our society. We recognize diversity that includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, social class, age, gender, sexual orientation and physical or mental capability. We respect the variety of ideas, experiences and practices that such diversity entails. It is our commitment to ensure equal opportunity and to sustain a climate of civility for all who work or study at NRCC.

VI. Instructional Procedures

- A. Faculty lecture
- B. Peer evaluation and group discussion
- C. Group presentations
- D. Text evaluation
- E. Utilization of various outside sources and materials

VII. Evaluation

A. Final grades will be determined through the following assignments:

Reading Logs (20%) Throughout the semester you will keep a running log of everything you read for the class. This log will essentially take the shape of a journal in that you will provide a personal response to each short story, poem, or novel extract you are prompted to study. Although these responses will contain personal thoughts and opinions (I liked or disliked this piece because...), you will also be expected to discuss the material in literary terms (The setting in this story was very realistic and played a crucial role in the protagonist's development. For example....or....The author's use of foreshadowing proved significant in moving the plot to a point of climax, etc.) Each response should be one half to one page long and legibly written. Each response should also be an honest representation of your opinion. You will never be judged or penalized for holding an opinion different from my own or the rest of the class, so please make sure you treat your reading logs just as you would a personal journal—with sincerity. I will be collecting these logs periodically throughout the semester, so make sure you stay up to date with the readings, as it is often tempting for students to wait until the night before a journal or reading log is due to complete the writing; however, I will be able to tell through your response whether you actually read the piece and will deduct points as appropriate for any contrived responses. Keep in mind also that these reading logs will serve as study guides for the class exams, so you will want to take each response seriously.

Creative work (10%) As a resident or visitor to Appalachia you have most likely been moved by the magic of the mountains at various times, whether that "magic" manifested itself in the sheer beauty of the physical landscape, the language of the locals, Appalachian art, or exposure to a cultural event unique to the region. Many writers from our area have managed to capture these moments and express them eloquently in their own words. Now you will do the same in the short story or poem form. Understandably, not everyone has the same natural gift for writing that these professionals hold and not everyone is comfortable with sharing his or her work with another individual, which in this case is me, your instructor (and only me, unless otherwise requested). However, I believe that each student possesses the ability to tap into his or her creative muse and complete the assignment with success. You have a choice between penning a short story between 5-10 pages long, completing one long poem of five pages, or writing five separate poems. There are no restrictions pertaining to style, genre or subject matter (though I do ask you keep it as clean as possible—no pornographic or overly gruesome material, please). The only guideline for this assignment is that the work must relate in some way to Southern Appalachia. There are many ways you can interpret this requirement, all of which we will discuss further in class.

Exams (30%) There will be two exams containing a mixture of multiple choice and short essay questions, one at the midterm and the final exam at the end of the semester. A review period will be provided for each.

Class Participation (10%) Your thoughts, opinions, and beliefs about the literature we read this semester is important to me and to the progression of intellectual discourse in our classroom. Therefore, it is expected of you to contribute to class discussion on a regular basis. Don't be shy! Literature's subjective nature allows for a wide variety of readings and interpretations, which is why you should never worry about being wrong in your verbal response to a discussion topic. You can only help move a debate forward when you add to the conversation.

Essays (20%) You will write two comparative essays of three to five pages each in length, one for Oral History and The Dollmaker and another for Deliverance and Saints at the River. I will provide you with more specific details prior to due dates.

Group Presentations (10%) Groups of three or four students will be assigned a short story each from The Collected Stories of Breece D'J Pancake and asked to provide a ten to fifteen minute presentation to the class. You will have total creative freedom in your approach to this assignment, as well as allotted class time to work with fellow group members. I will also provide you with examples of how students have handled presentations in the past.

- B. The following grading scale will be used:
- A = 90-100
 - B = 80- 89
 - C = 70- 79
 - D = 60- 69
 - F = 0- 59

NOTE: Evaluation and attendance policies will vary according to individual instructors. These policies will be distributed in each class at the beginning of the semester.

VIII. Withdrawal Policy

Student Initiated Withdrawal Policy

A student may drop or withdraw from a class without academic penalty during the first 60 percent of a session. For purposes of enrollment reporting, the following procedures apply:

- a. If a student withdraws from a class prior to the termination of the add/drop period for the session, the student will be removed from the class roll and no grade will be awarded.
- b. After the add/drop period, but prior to completion of 60 percent of a session, a student who withdraws from a class will be assigned a grade of "W." A grade of "W" implies that the student was making satisfactory progress in the class at the time of withdrawal, that the withdrawal was

- officially made before the deadline published in the college calendar, or that the student was administratively transferred to a different program.
- c. After that time, if a student withdraws from a class, a grade of “F” or “U” will be assigned. Exceptions to this policy may be made under documented mitigating circumstances if the student was passing the course at the last date of attendance.

A retroactive grade of “W” may be awarded only if the student would have been eligible under the previously stated policy to receive a “W” on the last date of class attendance. The last date of attendance for a distance education course will be the last date that work was submitted.

Late withdrawal appeals will be reviewed and a decision made by the Director of Student Services.

No-Show Policy

A student must either attend face-to-face courses or demonstrate participation in distance learning courses by the last date to drop for a refund. A student who does not meet this deadline will be reported to the Admissions and Records Office and will be withdrawn as a no-show student. No refund will be applicable, and the student will not be allowed to attend/participate in the class or submit assignments. Failure to attend or participate in a course will adversely impact a student’s financial aid award.

Instructor Initiated Withdrawal

A student who adds a class or registers after the first day of class is counted absent from all class meetings missed. Each instructor is responsible for keeping a record of student attendance (face-to-face classes) or performance/participation (DE classes) in each class throughout the semester.

When a student’s absences equal twice the number of weekly meetings of a class (equivalent amount of time for summer session), the student may be dropped for unsatisfactory attendance in the class by the instructor.

Since attendance is not a valid measurement for Distance Education (DE) courses, a student may be withdrawn due to non-performance. A student should refer to his/her DE course plan for the instructor’s policy.

In accordance with the No-Show Policy, a student who has not attended class or requested/accessed distance learning materials by the last day to drop the class and receive a refund must be withdrawn by the instructor during the following week. No refund will be applicable.

When an instructor withdraws a student for unsatisfactory attendance (face-to-face class) or non-performance (DE class), the last date of attendance/participation will be documented. Withdrawal must be completed within five days of a student's meeting the withdrawal criteria. A grade of "W" will be recorded during the first sixty percent (60%) period of a course. A student withdrawn after the sixty percent (60%) period will receive a grade of "F" or "U" except under documented mitigating circumstances when a letter of appeal has been submitted by the student. A copy of this documentation must be placed in the student's academic file.

The student will be notified of the withdrawal by the Admissions and Records Office. An appeal of reinstatement into the class may be approved only by the instructor.

IX. Cheating Policy

Clearing includes:

1. Living or receiving information pertaining to tests; and
2. Plagiarizing, which is defined as taking and using as one's own the writing or ideas of another. (Definition adapted from the American Heritage Dictionary.)

X. Emergency Exits

Students should be aware of the emergency exit routes map posted near the classroom door.

XI. Guidelines for Submitting Written Work

- A. Always use paper of a standard size--usually 8½ by 11 inches. This paper should always be white.
- B. Double-space the lines if you are typing.
- C. When writing a paper, always use pens with blue or black ink.
- D. Make certain that you have a margin on all sides of the paper. This margin should be at least one inch.
- E. Put your name, the name of the course, the name of the teacher, and the date at the top of the first page.
- F. Number all pages at the top, either in the center or at the right-hand side.
- G. Use a paper clip or staple to fasten all pages securely.

XII. Attendance

Students are expected to attend classes regularly and are responsible for making up any work missed. Penalties will occur for excessive absences in either the form of point deduction from the student's final grade or instructor-initiated withdrawal from the class (view the above withdrawal policy for specific details). Since this class meets only once a week, students will be expected to keep absences at a minimum, meaning no more than one excused absence for the semester. I understand that life often presents many unexpected situations that require our immediate attention and that is why each student will be granted an excused absence for reasonable causes such as illness, illness within the family, death of a family member, transportation troubles, severe weather, babysitting issues, work demands, and so forth. If an issue arises, contact me at your earliest convenience via email or phone and we will make arrangements to excuse your absence and keep you in line with the class. Absences will not be excused for matters such as attending a concert, taking a roadtrip, celebrating an event, etc. One or more unexcused absences will result in a lowering of one's final grade by a letter grade for each absence. For example, if a student has a 'B' average at the end of the semester but has two unexcused absences on his record, then that student will be issued a final grade of 'D'. Students will also be penalized for missing portions of classes.

An Additional Note About Classroom Behavior

As already stated, it is expected of you as a mature, fully grown adult to conduct yourself appropriately in the classroom at all times. There are no exceptions to this agreement. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated in the slightest by this instructor. Should you make the unfortunate mistake of disregarding this agreement, then be aware that a wide range of consequences are certain to follow. The types of behaviors that will **not** be tolerated in my classroom include : surfing the internet while I am lecturing, speaking on cell phones or "« texting »" during designated class hours, chatting with classmates (because remember, folks, we are no longer in high school), throwing objects, making faces at another classmate or myself, completing course work for an assignment related to another class (don't use my time as a study hall session), making noises, and generally disruptive actions.

So what happens then, you must be wondering, when one engages in inappropriate behavior in my classroom? The first time that it happens you will be given a verbal warning in front of your classmates. Personally, as an adult, I would find it embarrassing to be publicly chastised by my college instructor, and would do everything that is expected of me in order to avoid such humiliation. Unfortunately, this isn't the case for all people. Some folks could care less about public perception and are apt to continue conducting themselves inappropriately even after having been warned. In such case, I will then ask a student to leave the room for the remainder of that class session. Basically, you will be « kicked out » if I have to call upon you twice during the same day. If for some reason this happens, you are expected to gather your belongings quietly and exit the room in an appropriate manner. Any student who wishes to cause further disturbance by lingering or verbally confronting me in front of others will be escorted by campus security from my classroom. Two instances of being asked to leave the class will result in an administrative withdrawal from the course (this means you will have to take the class over at another date in the future, resulting in a loss of money and time).

I feel it is a tragedy that I should have to include such guidelines in a college course syllabus, but the current state of the world requires me to address these matters. Simply do what is expected of you, in a manner that is respectful to me and your peers, and you should have great success in this course. Act like an uncivilized juvenile, then prepare to become someone's else's problem. I am only willing to work with those who take their education seriously.