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Th 5-6

ARLT 100g Section 35247
Fall 2014, MW 2-3:20 PM
Room: MRF 229
Office Hours: MW 3:30-4:30,

The Secret Life of the American Short Story

This class explores the formal qualities and aesthetic transformations of the short story in the United States over the past century and a bit. The stories we read will range from the respectable and canonical to the contemporary and experimental, and from the tiny fable to the novella. While we will resist the idea that the short story has improved over time, we will read these stories in the order of their publication to help us understand how the form has developed. Our class is unusual because we will read as much for narrative technique as for content, as much from the perspective of a craftsman who makes art as the perspective of a critic who analyzes it. The class therefore includes creative writing exercises to help students better develop and realize their personal taste and aesthetic. Students are meant to come to a greater understanding of their own narrative pleasure, and a craftsman's insight into how that pleasure is created.

The textbooks will be two anthologies, one classic and one contemporary, as well as a contemporary novella.

Required Texts

Ann Charters, ed., *The Story and Its Writer*, Compact 8th Ed. You must own this edition.
Laura Furman, ed. *The PEN/O. Henry Prize Stories 2011*. Jurors: A.M. Homes, Manuel Muñoz, Christine Schutt
Tao Lin, *Shoplifting from American Apparel*

Please note that computers are not allowed in class, so you will need physical copies of the texts. ISBNs are available on the schedule of classes. Some material will be available on Blackboard, and students should print out these texts.

Stories in Chronological Order

1846 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart"

Naturalism to Modernism: 1890-1940

1886 Sara Orne Jewett, "A White Heron"
1891 Ambrose Bierce, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"
1894 Kate Chopin, "The Story of an Hour"
1897 Stephen Crane, "The Open Boat"
1906 O. Henry, "The Gift of the Magi"
1909 Gertrude Stein, "Matisse"
1926 Zora Neal Hurston, "Sweat"

- 1927 Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"
1931 William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily"
1934 Edith Wharton, "Roman Fever"

Mid-Century: 1940-1965

- 1950 Ray Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains"
1955 Flannery O'Connor, "Good Country People"
1957 James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"
1961 John Updike, "A & P"
1961 Kurt Vonnegut, "Harrison Bergeron"
1964 John Cheever, "The Swimmer"

Postmodern 1966-2000

- 1966 Joyce Carol Oates, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"
1972 Art Spiegelman, "Prisoner on the Hell Planet: A Case History"
1974 Grace Paley, "A Conversation with My Father"
1978 Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl"
1983 Margaret Atwood, "Happy Endings"
1983 Raymond Carver, "A Small, Good Thing"
1985 Elizabeth Tallent, "No One's A Mystery"
1986 Tim O'Brien, "The Things They Carried"
1986 Ann Beattie, "Snow"
1989 Amy Tan, "Two Kinds"
1990 A.M. Homes, "A Real Doll" and "Adults Alone"
1996 Junot Diaz, "How To Date a Brown girl, Black girl, White girl, or Halfie"
1996 Christine Schutt, "You Drive"
1997 Annie Proulx, "Brokeback Mountain"
1998 Aimee Bender, "The Rememberer"
1999 Gish Jen, "Who's Irish"
1999 ZZ Packer, "Brownies"

Contemporary

- 2003 Manuel Muñoz, "Hombres," "Monkey, *Si*"
2003 Marjane Satrapi, "The Veil"
2006 Alison Bechdel, "Old Father, Old Artificer"
2007 David Foster Wallace, "Good People"
2009 Tao Lin, *Shoplifting from American Apparel*
2011 *The 2011 PEN/O. Henry Prize Stories*

Course Requirements

- Thoughtful reading of the material by the due date listed on the syllabus.
- Class attendance and participation.
- In-class midterm and final
- Group presentation
- A portfolio of writing exercises, a short story, and a final paper

Policies and Procedures

Assignments

Students will have three primary assignments: a portfolio of writing exercises, a short story, and a final paper. There will also be class presentations, a midterm, and a final. Writing exercises will be explained in class and due at the next class: If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find and complete the exercise. The portfolio is a compendium of all creative writing exercises due during the semester, as well as an introduction that details your observation on their merit and your progress. The portfolio must have page numbers and a table of contents. The short story will be a short story of no more than 4 pages and will be accompanied by at least a page discussing its technique. The final paper is an analysis of a short story that is included in the class textbooks but is not assigned for class. The paper should consider how the formal aspects of the story contribute to or detract from its overall effect, power, and theme, and should be at least six pages long. The exams will be a combination of identifications of class material and narrative assessments of new material.

All assignments should be double-spaced, with 12-pt Times New Roman font. MLA format is preferred, with in-text citations.

Attendance and Absence

Students are expected to attend all classes on time, and absences and tardiness will be factored into semester grades. Excessive lateness is equivalent to absence, as is consistently not bringing required books and texts to class. Absences due to religious holidays are excused if I am notified in advance. An exception will also be made for students who join the class late or otherwise miss the first class. Four or more absences, excused or not, will likely lead to failure.

In all cases, students are responsible for all missed work. I encourage you to exchange contact information with other students and if not, to seek it out through Blackboard.

Electronic Devices

Computers, phones, and other electronic devices may not be used in lecture. Class texts may not be read off of laptops or phones. This rule will be enforced. Those who require their computers due to disability should follow the university policies, outlined below.

Exams

There will be a midterm and final. For both, you will need to identify passages and write essays.

Extra Credit

There is none.

Grades

There are 1000 possible points that may be earned in this class, distributed as follows:

Short story and analysis: 200 points

Final paper: 200 points

Final: 200 points

Portfolio of Exercises: 100 points

In-Class Participation: 100 points

Group presentation: 50 points

Midterm: 50 points

Letter grades on papers and assignments will be converted as follows:

A+ = 99 A = 95 A- = 92 B+ = 89 B = 85 B- = 82 C+ = 79 C = 75 C- = 72 D+ = 69 D = 65 F = 0

These will be adjusted by the points possible for each assignment. For an assignment worth 100 points, a B will earn 85 points; for an assignment worth 200 points, 170 points.

Your final numerical scores will be converted to a letter equivalent thus:

A = 94 - 100 A- = 90 - 93.9 B+ = 87 - 89.9 B = 84 - 86.9

B- = 80 - 83.9 C+ = 77 - 79.9 C = 74 - 76.9 C- = 70 - 73.9

D+ = 67 - 69.9 D = 64 - 66.9 D- = 60 - 63.9 F = below 60

Office Hours

My office hours are posted on the first page of the course outline. I hope that you will come by with any general or particular questions about the class. Please feel free. You may make an appointment by email if you want to reserve a specific time, but this is not necessary. If your schedule conflicts with office hours, we will make other arrangements.

Participation

Class participation is included in your grade, and students should not expect to do well in class if they do not speak, regardless of the grade they receive on other assignments.

Students should expect to share at least one specific observation from the stories assigned for any particular day; on occasion, they will be asked to write the page number of their observation on the board before class.

If class participation fills you with dread, please come see me. I sympathize. Nonetheless, class participation is an essential skill, and I do require it.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the submission of any material under your own name that you did not create. Plagiarism is not only poor form but also academically criminal. Passing off someone else's words or ideas as your own is the theft of someone's intellectual property. These are the rules:

- You must give credit in your paper for ideas that are not your own—whether you directly quote or paraphrase—unless the information is considered common knowledge. Any direct quotes, paraphrases, or summaries, including those found on the internet, including Wikipedia, must be cited.
- A paper (or work of fiction) you have used for another class anywhere is not eligible for submission, even with minor revisions.

Plagiarism will result in automatic failure of the assignment and possible failure of the course.

Policies and Procedures for the University at Large

Academic Integrity: USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://scampus.usc.edu/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Student Behavior: Deportment that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.

Students with Disabilities: Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible.

Syllabus

There are 28 classes over 14 weeks. Students are required to bring all texts to class, which may entail printing out a PDF from Blackboard.

Please note that the following schedule may and probably will change. You are responsible for keeping track of these changes. If you miss class, make sure to ask a classmate if there have been any changes in schedule

The Story and Its Writer SW
O. Henry Prize Stories OH
 Download from Blackboard DB

Week 1

8.25 Course Outline
 Class Texts
 Elizabeth Tallent, "No One's A Mystery" (hand-out)

8.27 **Dramatization, Exposition, and Sensory Detail**
 DB A.M. Homes, "A Real Doll"
 Janet Burroway, *Writing Fiction*, 21-30 (hand-out)
 Dramatization exercise assigned. Call for volunteers to email me stories
 9.2.

Week 2 Plot

9.1 Labor Day: No Class

9.3 SW "The Elements of Fiction: Plot," 1082-1086
 Kate Chopin, "The Story of an Hour"
 Ambrose Bierce, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"
 Dramatization, Narration, and Sensory Detail exercise due. Bring 4
 copies: one for me, two for your peer editors, one for you. Trade
 exercises. Follow these directions for all future exercises.

Week 3 The Plot Thickens

9.8 Janet Burroway, *Writing Fiction*, 247-265 (hand-out)
 SW "The Elements of Fiction: Plot," 1082-1086
 DB Edith Wharton, "Roman Fever"
 DB O. Henry, "The Gift of the Magi"
 Dramatization exercise workshop

9.10 SW "The Elements of Fiction: Plot," 1082-1086
 Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery"
 Stephen Crane, "The Open Boat"
 Sara Orne Jewett, "A White Heron"
 Plot exercise assigned. Call for volunteers.

Week 4

Point of View

9.15

SW The Elements of Fiction: "Point of View," 1090-1094

Edgar Allan Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart"

Junot Diaz, "How To Date a Brown girl, Black girl, White girl, or Halfie"

Plot assignment due. Bring 4 copies: one for me, two for your peer editors, one for you. Trade exercises. Follow these directions for all future exercises.

Point-of-view exercise assigned. Call for volunteers.

9.17

SW Zora Neale Hurston, "Sweat"

William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily"

Plot exercise workshop. Workshop catch-up.

Week 5

1890-1930 Overview—and a discussion of the problems with such overviews

9.22

SW "A Brief History of the Short Story," 1098-1105

Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"

DB Gertrude Stein, "Henri Matisse"

Point-of-view exercise due. Bring 3 copies.

9.24

Structure

SW Ray Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains"

Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl"

Aimee Bender, "The Rememberer"

Point-of-view exercise workshop

Week 6

Character

9.29

SW "The Elements of Fiction: Character," 1086-1088

Flannery O'Connor, "Good Country People"

Kurt Vonnegut, "Harrison Bergeron"

Character exercise assigned

10.1

SW James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"

Week 6	
10.6	1930-2000 Overview SW "A Brief History of the Short Story," 1105-1107 Joyce Carol Oates, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" John Updike, "A & P" Character exercise due
10.8	SW John Cheever, "The Swimmer" You will probably need to read this story twice. Character exercise workshop Portfolio of exercises discussed
Week 7	
10.13	Midterm Prep SW Ann Beattie, "Snow" Tim O'Brien, "The Things They Carried" Student Presentations discussed and assigned
10.15	SW Gish Jen, "Who's Irish" Group 1 presents ZZ Packer, "Brownies" Group 2 presents
Week 8	
10.20	Midterm Portfolio of exercises due with introduction
10.22	Politics and the Marketplace SW Amy Tan, "Two Kinds" Group 3 Amy Tan, "In the Canon, for All the Wrong Reasons" James Baldwin, "Autobiographical Notes" DB Annie Proulx, "Brokeback Mountain" Group 4 Short story and analysis discussed.
Week 9	
10.27	Case Study: Raymond Carver SW Raymond Carver, "A Small, Good Thing" Group 5 Raymond Carver, "Creative Writing 101" Raymond Carver, "On Writing"
10.29	Metafiction SW Grace Paley, "A Conversation with My Father" Group 6 Margaret Atwood, "Happy Endings" Group 7 OH "Introduction" Draft of short story due/workshop

Week 10		
Sensibility: Juror I		
11.3	DB	A. M. Homes, "Adults Alone" Group 8
	OH	A. M. Homes on "Sunshine"
		Lynn Freed, "Sunshine" Group 9
Short story and analysis due		
Final paper discussed		
11.5	Graphic Fiction (comics)	
	SW	Alison Bechdel, "Old Father, Old Artificer"
		Marjane Satrapi, "The Veil"
		Art Spiegelman, "Prisoner on the Hell Planet: A Case History"
		We may also have a Chris Ware hand-out
		Alison Bechdel, "What the Little Old Ladies Feel," 1056-8
		Scott McCloud, from <i>Understanding Comics</i> , 1062
Students are expected to attend the following event. Please sign in. Those who do not attend will need to type up a one-page response to a story in the anthology that is not assigned for class.		
11.7 (Friday)	Drawing Out of Order: An Evening with Marjane Satrapi and Chris Ware	
	Friday, November 7, 2014 : 7:00pm	
	Join us for an evening with award-winning graphic novelists Marjane Satrapi (<i>Persepolis</i>) and Chris Ware (<i>Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth</i>), two artists whose difficult, beautiful storytelling combines visual pleasure with subject matter of the highest seriousness.	
Week 12		
Sensibility: Juror II and III		
11.10	DB	Manuel Muñoz, "Hombres," "Monkey, Si" Group 10
	OH	Manuel Muñoz on "Something You Can't Live Without"
		Matthew Neill Null, "Something You Can't Live Without" Group 11
11.12	DB	Christine Schutt, "You Drive" Group 12
	OH	Christine Schutt on "Your Fate Hurdles Down at You"
		Jim Shepard, "Your Fate Hurdles Down at You" Group 13
Week 13		
11.17	OH	Helen Simpson, "Diary of an Interesting Year" Group 14
		Chris Adrian, "The Black Square" Group 15
		Judy Doenges, "Melinda"
11.19	OH	Kenneth Calhoun, "Nightblooming"
		Brian Evenson, "Windeve"

Week 14

11.24 *Shoplifting from American Apparel*
Final Paper workshop

11.26 **Thanksgiving Vacation**

Week 15

12.1 OH Jane Delury, "Nothing of Consequence"
 Adam Foulds, "The Rules Are the Rules"
 Lily Tuck, "How To Leave Hialeah"

12.3 OH Leslie Parry, "The Vanishing American"
 Elizabeth Tallent, "Never Come Back"
 Discussion of Final
Final Paper due

Final Exam Friday, December 12 2-4 p.m.