



New Hampshire Values
ENG 295D, Spring 2010

INSTRUCTOR: Charlie Bevis
E-MAIL: cbevis@rivier.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will explore literary interpretations of the distinctive values that shaped the identity of a state and the character of its citizens through the lens of novelist Russell Banks, poets Donald Hall and Robert Frost, playwright Thornton Wilder, and biographer Emily Toth.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are New Hampshire values and how have they changed over the years?
- How have writers incorporated New Hampshire values into literature?
- Why did writers choose their genres to convey their New Hampshire values?
- How does this literary theme permeate the broader spectrum of American society?

REQUIRED TEXTS

The Angel on the Roof: The Stories of Russell Banks, by Russell Banks

Our Town: A Play in Three Acts, by Thornton Wilder

The Road Not Taken: A Selection of Robert Frost's Poems, by Robert Frost

White Apples and the Taste of Stone, by Donald Hall

Inside Peyton Place: The Life of Grace Metalious, by Emily Toth

COURSE GOALS

Upon the successful completion of the course, students will:

- Read literary texts for meaning and interpret plot, theme, characters, and setting as well as connotations of figurative language and imagery.
- Write four literary essays that examine literary elements, six reflections that integrate literature with real-life issues, and produce a final project about a person, place, or issue that is reflective of New Hampshire values.
- Gain an appreciation for how this literary theme connects with history, religion, sociology, psychology, and other disciplines within Liberal Arts.

LEARNING TECHNIQUES

A wide variety of techniques will be used in this course, including reading and responding to texts, discussion in small and large groups, role-play scenario, and in-class exercises. Students will also engage in a sequence of writing activities, moving from pre-writing to drafting into revision, which balances a structured process, where the student is writing to communicate, and an exploratory process, where the student is writing to learn.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING WEIGHTS

- Class participation (15%)
- Reflections (15%)
- Mid-term exam (15%)
- Essays (25%)
- Final project (30%)

Reflections

A paragraph or two that reflects on one of the readings in each unit and its connection to the theme of this course, which should include:

- 1) author and title of the text
- 2) summary of the theme or “big idea”
- 3) one or two key phrases that the author uses to make his/her point
- 4) points you agree or disagree with and/or have questions about
- 5) real-life examples you’ve observed about the text’s underlying theme

Due dates and topic for each reflection are as follows:

Reflection #1 – Narrative essay on “my” New Hampshire values (due Jan. 25)

Reflection #2 – Banks readings (due Feb. 15)

Reflection #3 – Character in *Our Town* (due March 1)

Reflection #4 – Frost poem (due March 29)

Reflection #5 – Create a poem, with paragraph explaining meaning (due April 19)

Reflection #6 – New Hampshire value that is negative or of concern (due April 26)

Essays

A two-page essay that includes a thesis statement and two to three supporting arguments that use as evidence text references documented in MLA style.

Essay #1

Explore the significance of one facet of one of Banks’ short stories (due Feb. 8).

Essay #2

Compare how Wilder handles an element in his play with how Banks handles the same element in one of his short stories (due Feb. 22).

Essay #3

Explicate a word or phrase in a Frost poem to explain its hidden meaning (due March 22).

Essay #4

Examine the similarities and differences between a Frost poem and a Hall poem, neither of which was a reading assignment for the class (due April 12).

Final Project

A 5-7 page demonstration of how a person, place, or issue is reflective of a New Hampshire value. This paper can be a creative piece (short story, act of a stage play, or feature article) or an analytical one (research essay). Alternatively, a project using artistic expression may be pursued to develop the same goal (due May 5, the scheduled time for this class during final exam week).

COURSE POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. This is a discussion course, not a lecture course. Attendance is essential to student learning and to fulfill the course requirements. Class participation represents 15% of the grade weighting and missed class meetings cannot be made up. After three absences, a student's final grade will be lowered by a half-grade for each additional absence.

COLLEGE POLICIES

Attendance

The classroom is the heart of the educational experience at Rivier College because it provides, uniquely, a formal setting for the important exchanges among faculty and students. Regular and punctual attendance at all classes, essential for maximum academic achievement, is a major responsibility of Rivier College students. Failure to attend and contribute to the classroom environment significantly and demonstrably reduces the quality of the educational experience for everyone in the classroom. As a result, absences almost always impact the quality of performance.

As part of its commitment to a quality educational experience for all members of the Rivier community, the College formally requires specific attendance policies to be developed by its professors and reviewed by their Chair and Dean. Any form of attendance used by an individual professor as a criterion for evaluation must be specified in the course syllabus and presented to students during the first week of classes. These policies may include reasonable penalties and sanctions for excessive absences.

In the event of prolonged illness, accident, or similar emergency, it is the responsibility of the student to notify both the instructor and the Office of the Academic Dean. Students

must remember that it is always their responsibility to make up the work they may have missed during an absence from class. Students are directed to confer with their instructors when their absences jeopardize satisfactory progress. Whenever an instructor is absent without notification, students are expected to wait 15 minutes before leaving and to sign an Attendance List, which a class member delivers to the Office of the Academic Dean.

For more information, see the Specialized Student Services section of the Rivier College web site at www.rivier.edu.

Course Calendar

(subject to change)

Wednesday, Jan. 20

Introduction & elements of fiction

Monday, Jan. 25

Due: Reflection #1

Elements of a literary essay

Discussion of assigned reading from *The Angel on the Roof*:

- “By Way of Introduction” (p. xi-xix)
- “Firewood” (p. 93-108)
- “Defenseman” (p. 23-33)

Wednesday, Jan. 27

Discussion of assigned reading from *The Angel on the Roof*:

- “Black Man and White Woman in Dark Green Rowboat” (p. 355-364)
- “Burden” (p. 203-218)

Monday, Feb. 1

Due: Reflection #2

Discussion of assigned reading from *The Angel on the Roof*:

- “With Che in New Hampshire” (p. 313-322)
- “The Lie” (p. 121-128)
- “The Visit” (p. 469-480)

Wednesday, Feb. 3

Discussion of assigned reading from *The Angel on the Roof*:

- “Fisherman” (p. 43-91)

Monday, Feb. 8

Due: Essay #1

Discussion of assigned reading from *The Angel on the Roof*:

- “Sarah Cole: A Type of Love Story” (p. 149-175)

Wednesday, Feb. 10

Discussion of assigned reading from *The Angel on the Roof*:

- “The Moor” (p. 341-348)
- “Queen for a Day” (p. 441-468)

Monday, Feb. 15

Video of Banks reading “The Moor”

Elements of playwriting

Wednesday, Feb. 17

Discussion of assigned reading:

- *Our Town*, Act 1

Monday, Feb. 22

Due: Essay #2

Discussion of assigned reading:

- *Our Town*, Act 2

Wednesday, Feb. 24

Discussion of assigned reading:

- *Our Town*, Act 3

Monday, March 1

Due: Reflection #3

Discussion of Afterword in *Our Town* and video of scene from *Our Town*

Wednesday, March 3

Mid-term exam

March 8 to 12 – No Classes, Spring Break

Monday, March 15

Elements of poetry

In-class reading of Frost poems, “New Hampshire” and “The Road Not Taken”

Wednesday, March 17

Discussion of assigned reading from *The Road Not Taken*:

- “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” (p. 183)
- “Birches” et al (p. 107-120)

Monday, March 22

Due: Essay #3

Discussion of assigned reading from *The Road Not Taken*:

- “Snow” (p. 58-73)

Wednesday, March 24

Discussion of assigned reading from *The Road Not Taken*:

- “The Death of a Hired Man” (p. 148-155)

Monday, March 29

Due: Reflection #4

Discussion of assigned reading:

- *White Apples and the Taste of Stone*, chapters 2 & 3 (p. 29-72)

Wednesday, March 31

Discussion of assigned reading:

- *White Apples and the Taste of Stone*, chapters 4 & 11 (p. 75-100, 295-316)

April 1 to 5 – No Classes, Easter Break

Wednesday, April 7

Due: Proposal for Final Project

Video of Hall interview

Discussion of assigned reading:

- *White Apples and the Taste of Stone*, chapter 7 (p. 181-208)

Monday, April 12

Due: Essay #4

Discussion of assigned reading:

- *White Apples and the Taste of Stone*, chapters 8 & 10 (p. 217-237, 273-284)

Wednesday, April 14

Elements of biography

Discussion of assigned reading:

- *Inside Peyton Place*, Part I

Monday, April 19

Due: Reflection #5

Discussion of assigned reading:

- *Inside Peyton Place*, Part II

Wednesday, April 21

Discussion of assigned reading:

- *Inside Peyton Place*, Part III

Monday, April 26

Due: Reflection #6

Discussion of assigned reading:

- *Inside Peyton Place*, Part IV

Wednesday, April 28

Discussion of assigned reading:

- *Inside Peyton Place*, Part V

Monday, May 3

Video of PBS show about Grace Metalious

Wednesday, May 5, 2:00 – Final Exam Week

Final Project due with reflective essay