

Introduction to Prose Fiction

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Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
First semester, 2024

Course # 132-1-217
Monday 10:15-11:45, Building 72, Room 217

Teaching Assistants (TAs):

TAs are here to help you with your work for this course; email a TA to schedule a meeting:

Eden Ashkenazi edenash@post.bgu.ac.il ; Dayana Dyachenko dyacheda@post.bgu.ac.il

Yuval Koren yuvalkor@post.bgu.ac.il ; Nir Ben Atiya benanir@post.bgu.ac.il

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If you need to discuss any other issue, email Yael: yaelbz@bgu.ac.il

😊 **SUPPORT: please contact Yael with any need:** yaelbz@bgu.ac.il 😊

Course description

This course will introduce you to the study of prose fiction texts by providing a vocabulary that will help you read such texts analytically. We will consider how meaning is produced as people read texts with diverse modes of narration and points of view, and we will encourage you to explore your interests in order to make your analyses of the texts you read meaningful to you. This course and the Academic Writing Workshop are connected, so these two courses must be taken together.

This course has a Student's Guide (on Moodle)

Read and use it as you study with us

Texts (available on Moodle)

- Various short stories
- F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925)

Requirements and grade distribution (for both semesters)

- Attendance: regular attendance in class is crucial for your learning process. You may not miss more than 4 classes throughout the year
 - Reading each text at least twice and taking notes will help you develop your analytical skills
 - Working on your interests with the Student's Guide will help you analyze the texts you read
 - Active participation in class: 10%
 - 10 short responses to reading questions (pass/no pass): 10% (**first two times: required**)
 - 2 papers: 40% total plus comments (first paper 15%; second paper 25%)
 - Final paper: 40% plus comments
- To continue to the second year in literature, you will need a grade of 70 or more in each required first-year course, and a passing grade in the Academic Writing Workshop and the English Language Skills course

Fall Semester Schedule

This year-long course will continue in the second semester
The second-semester schedule will be available later

- 1/1 Introduction: Expectations, Directions, Framework**
Literature, prose, fiction; what is a text? What is meaning?
How to read texts, take notes, and respond to reading questions
- **For next class:** read **Jane Delury's "Astronomy 101"** (on Moodle)
 - Read the text at least twice, and write down anything you find interesting in it
 - Bring your text and notes to class (no need to submit notes)
 - **You must answer a reading question (on Moodle)**
- 8/1 Jane Delury, "Astronomy 101" (1993)**
What are texts made of?
- **For next class:** read **Edward Barnfield's "Dog Years" and Mike Miner's "Ordinary Time"**
 - Read the text at least twice and take notes
 - Bring your text and notes to class (no need to submit notes)
 - **You must answer a reading question (on Moodle)**
 - **Do the "Exploring Your Interests: Part I" exercise in the Student's Guide**
- 15/1 Introducing Close Reading; Edward Barnfield, "Dog Years" and Mike Miner, "Ordinary Time"**
Visual images, working with language, contexts and meanings
Description vs. analysis; plot vs. theme
- **Do the "Exploring Your Interests: Part II" exercise in the Student's Guide**
- 22/1 Why are we here and what does it mean for each one of us?**
- Why am I here?
 - Exploring Interests
 - Dialogue and working with TAs
 - Comments on assignments: what they are good for, and how to respond
 - Why students plagiarize and what you can do instead
- **For next class:** read **Sylvia Heike's "Quantum Love"**
 - Read the text at least twice and take notes
 - Bring your text and notes to class (no need to submit notes)
 - You may answer a reading question (on Moodle)
- 29/1 Sylvia Heike, "Quantum Love"**
Narration and point of view
- **For next class:** read **Heather Truett's "Downfall"**
 - Read the text at least twice and take notes
 - Bring your text and notes to class (no need to submit notes)
 - You may answer a reading question (on Moodle)

5/2 Heather Truett, “Downfall”
Narration and point of view; intertextuality

- **For next class:** read **E. M. Linden’s “When the Forest Comes to You”**
 - Read each of the texts at least twice and take notes
 - Bring your text and notes to class (no need to submit notes)
 - You may answer a reading question (on Moodle)

12/2 E. M. Linden, “When the Forest Comes to You”
Narration and point of view; setting; chronology; intertextuality

- **For next class:** read **Hugh Behm-Steinberg’s “Taylor Swift”**
 - Read the text at least twice and take notes
 - Bring your text and notes to class (no need to submit notes)
 - You may answer a reading question (on Moodle)

19/2 Hugh Behm-Steinberg, “Taylor Swift”
Narration and point of view; themes

- **For next class:** read **N. K. Jemisin’s “Emergency Skin”**
 - Please note that Jemisin’s story is longer than the other texts we’ve read this semester, so you should allow yourself ample time to read it
 - Read the text at least twice and take notes
 - Bring your text and notes to class (no need to submit notes)
 - You may answer a reading question (on Moodle)

26/2 N. K. Jemisin, “Emergency Skin”
Point of view; narrative voices; narrative gaps

- **For next class:** read **Jemisin’s “Emergency Skin” again and watch the [WHO video “Cervical Cancer: the Legacy of Henrietta Lacks”](#)**
 - See what you notice for the first time in the text and take notes
 - Consider how the story engages with the real-world events discussed in the video
 - You may answer a reading question (on Moodle)

4/3 Jemisin, “Emergency Skin”
Speculative fiction; fiction, reality, and literary analysis

- **For next class:** read **Sarah Grey’s “The Social Phobic’s Guide to Interior Design”**
 - Read the text at least twice and take notes
 - Bring your text and notes to class (no need to submit notes)
 - You may answer a reading question (on Moodle)

11/3 Sarah Grey, “The Social Phobic’s Guide to Interior Design”
Narration and point of view; setting

- **16/4: first paper due** on one of the stories for the first paper (on Moodle). 3 pages, 15%. Submit your paper on Moodle
- During the semester break, read **F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*** (on Moodle) at least twice: take notes and look for anything that interests you in this novel