

Introduction to Literary Studies

Dr. Colin Beineke (Dr. B)

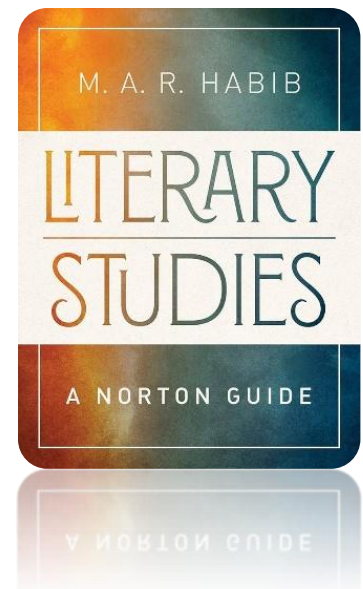
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Office Hours:

Tuesdays 10:00-2:00, Burris 115

M/W/F, 9:30-10:30, Elliot Office



This course invites you to explore genres of literature as dynamic, surprising, and worthy of serious consideration. We will read poetry, drama, novels, short stories, biographies, journals, diaries, essays, and other forms to discover how literary meaning is created through language, form, genre, and historical and cultural context. This course is designed as an engaging introduction to literary study that builds confidence, curiosity, and the skills needed for more advanced English courses.

We will analyze how different genres enable or constrain the expression of ideas and impact culture across historical time periods. Rather than searching for a single “right” answer, we will focus on noticing what stands out, asking compelling questions, and testing different interpretations. You will practice close reading, creative and analytical writing, and collaborative discussion while exploring how literature reflects, challenges, and reshapes culture.

Learning Outcomes

1. Apply close-reading strategies to analyze how theme, form, and context function in literary texts.
2. Recognize, describe, and analyze major literary genres, historical periods, texts, and writers.
3. Interpret literature by applying formal modes of literary criticism and theoretical lenses.

Office Hours

My office is a student-centered space where you can ask questions, work through challenges, take intellectual risks, and simply be heard. You are **always** welcome to stop by: you never need a “good” reason to come in. I genuinely care about your growth, your well-being, and your experience in this course and at the Academy. The door is open because **I want you to feel supported**—not just as a student, but as a person navigating a challenging academic environment.

Grading

Please see the Tasks Booklet for detailed information regarding the grading framework for this course, instructions for task completion, evaluation criteria, and extensions and resubmissions.

AI Use

Use of generative AI for any part of task completion will result in a failing grade for the course.

Attendance

Five unexcused absences and/or tardies in excess of five minutes will result in a failing grade for the course.

Reading Schedule

Week One: Welcome to Literary Studies (8/10-8/14)

Monday

During Class

- ❖ Welcome to Introduction to Literary Studies!

Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read Task Booklet (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Task Booklet Review and Grade Selection

Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Two, “The Nature and Scope of Literary Studies” (pp. 9-16)
- ❖ Read James Murphy’s “‘A thing so small’: The Nature of Meter in Robert Frost’s ‘Design’” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Analyzing a Literary Analysis

Week Two: Basic Reading, Critical Reading, and Theme-Form-Context (8/17-8/21)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Three, “Basic Reading” (pp. 19-24)
- ❖ Read George Saunders’ “Sticks” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Basic Reading of “Sticks”

Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Four, “Critical Reading” (pp. 25-37)
- ❖ Re-Read George Saunders’ “Sticks” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Critical Reading of “Sticks”
- ❖ **Academic Engagement Self-Evaluation #1**

Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Study for *Literary Studies* Quiz #1 (Chapters Two, Three, and Four)

During Class

- ❖ **Literary Studies Quiz #1 (Chapters Two, Three, and Four)**



Week Three: Literary Genres: Poetry, Drama, and Fiction (8/24-8/28)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Five, “Genre, Part I, Poetry” (pp. 41-49)
- ❖ Read Robert Frost’s “Dust of Snow” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Theme-Form-Context “Dust of Snow”

Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Five, “Genre, Part I, Drama” (pp. 49-53)
- ❖ Read David Ives’ “The Sure Thing” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Theme-Form-Context “The Sure Thing”

Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Five, “Genre, Part I, Fiction” (pp. 53-56)
- ❖ Read Alice Walker’s “Everyday Use” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Theme-Form-Context “Everyday Use”
- ❖ **Academic Engagement Self-Evaluation #2**

Week Four: Literary Language and Form: Figures of Speech (8/31-9/4)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Seven, “Literary Language and Form: Figures of Speech” (pp. 75-80)
- ❖ Read Carl Sandburg’s “The Harbor” (Available on Canvas)
- ❖ **Class Activity Reflection #1**

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Metaphor/Simile/Metonymy/Synecdoche “The Harbor”

Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Seven, “Literary Language and Form: Figures of Speech” (pp. 80-86)
- ❖ Read Kate Chopin’s “The Story of an Hour” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Irony/Hyperbole/Oxymoron “The Story of an Hour”



Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Seven, “Literary Language and Form: Figures of Speech” (pp. 86-91)
- ❖ Read Emily Dickinson’s “I like to see it lap the Miles–” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Personification/Onomatopoeia/Alliteration/Assonance/Anaphora/Epiphora ““I like to see it lap the Miles–”
- ❖ **Academic Engagement Self-Evaluation #3**

Week Five: Literary Language and Form: Prosody (9/7-9/11)

Monday

- ❖ **No Class**

Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Eight, “Literary Language and Form: Prosody” (pp. 93-100)
- ❖ Read Robert Frost’s “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Prosody “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”

Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Eight, “Literary Language and Form: Prosody” (pp. 100-106)
- ❖ Read Gwendolyn Brooks’ “the sonnet-ballad” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Scansion “the sonnet-ballad”
- ❖ **Academic Engagement Self-Evaluation #4**



Week Six: Historical Periods (9/14-9/18)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Study for *Literary Studies* Quiz #2 (Chapters Five, Six, and Seven)
- ❖ **Theme/Form/Context Exercise (Poem)**

During Class

- ❖ **Literary Studies Quiz #2 (Chapters Five, Six, and Seven)**

Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Nine, “The Ancient World through the Classical Era” (pp. 109-119)
- ❖ Read Plato’s “The Allegory of the Cave” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Plato’s Theory of Forms and “The Allegory of the Cave”



Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Ten, “The Middle Ages” (pp. 121-139)
- ❖ Read *Dream of the Rood* (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Historical Context and *Dream of the Rood*
- ❖ **Academic Engagement Self-Evaluation #5**

Week Seven: Historical Periods (9/21-9/25)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Eleven, “From the Early Modern Period to the Late Nineteenth Century” (pp. 141-157)
- ❖ Read John Donne’s “Death, be not proud” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: John Donne’s Metaphysics

Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Eleven, “From the Early Modern Period to the Late Nineteenth Century” (pp. 157-166)
- ❖ Read Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Poe and the Gothic

Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Eleven, “From the Early Modern Period to the Late Nineteenth Century” (pp. 166-171)
- ❖ Read Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick* Chapter One “Loomings” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Realism in *Moby Dick*
- ❖ **Academic Engagement Self-Evaluation #6**

Week Eight: Scholarly Article Analysis Show and Tell (9/28-10/2)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Study for *Literary Studies* Quiz #3 (Chapters Nine, Ten, and Eleven)
- ❖ **Class Activity Reflection #2**

During Class

- ❖ **Literary Studies Quiz #3 (Chapters Nine, Ten, and Eleven)**



Wednesday

Before Class

❖ **Scholarly Article Analysis**

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Scholarly Article Analysis Show and Tell

Friday

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Scholarly Article Analysis Show and Tell
- ❖ **Academic Engagement Self-Evaluation #7**

Week Nine: Historical Periods (10/5-10/9)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Twelve, “Modernism and Postmodernism” (pp. 173-179)
- ❖ Read E. E. Cummings’s “Anyone lived in a pretty how town” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Modernist Form and “Anyone lived in a pretty how town”

Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Twelve, “Modernism and Postmodernism” (pp. 179-183)
- ❖ Read Jorge Luis Borges’ “The Library of Babel” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Postmodern Libraries

Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Thirteen, “Contemporary Literature” (pp. 185-193)
- ❖ Read Lauren Groff’s “Ghosts and Empties” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Self-Conscious Realism in “Ghosts and Empties”
- ❖ **Academic Engagement Self-Evaluation #8**

Week Ten: Historical Periods (10/19-10/23)

Monday

During Class

- ❖ Revisiting George Saunders’ “Sticks”



Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Fourteen, “World Literature” (pp. 195-208)
- ❖ Read Matsuo Bashō’s “Old Pond” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Literature and Translation

Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Fourteen, “World Literature” (pp. 208-217)
- ❖ Read Ama Ata Aidoo’s “Ghana” (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Form and History in “Ghana”

Week Eleven: Literary Criticism and Theory (10/26-10/30)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Study for *Literary Studies* Quiz #4 (Chapters Twelve, Thirteen, and Fourteen)
- ❖ **Theme/Form/Context Exercise (Short Story)**

During Class

- ❖ **Literary Studies Quiz #4 (Chapters Twelve, Thirteen, and Fourteen)**

Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read Susan Glaspell’s *Trifles* (Available on Canvas)
- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Fifteen, “Literary Criticism and Theory” (pp. 221-223)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: *Trifles* Discussion

Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Re-read Susan Glaspell’s *Trifles*

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Watching *Trifles*

Week Twelve: Literary Criticism and Theory (11/2-11/6)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Fifteen, “Literary Criticism and Theory” (pp. 224-227)
- ❖ Read “Formalism (literature)” on EBSCO (Available on Canvas)
- ❖ **Class Activity Reflection #3**

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Formalist Analysis of *Trifles*



Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Fifteen, “Literary Criticism and Theory” (pp. 227-230)
- ❖ Read “Karl Marx” on EBSCO (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Marxist Criticism of *Trifles*

Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Fifteen, “Literary Criticism and Theory” (pp. 230-232)
- ❖ Read “Feminism Reflected in Literature” on EBSCO (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Feminist Criticism of *Trifles*

Week Thirteen: Literary Criticism and Theory (11/9-11/13)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Sixteen, “Literary Criticism and Theory” (pp. 233-235)
- ❖ Read “Structuralist and Poststructuralist Criticism” on EBSCO (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Structuralist Analysis of *Trifles*

Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Sixteen, “Literary Criticism and Theory” (pp. 235-238)
- ❖ Read “Structuralist and Poststructuralist Criticism” on EBSCO (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Poststructuralist Analysis of *Trifles*

Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Sixteen, “Literary Criticism and Theory” (pp. 238-239)
- ❖ Read “New historicism” on EBSCO (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: New Historicist Criticism of *Trifles*

Week Fourteen: Literary Criticism and Theory (11/16-11/20)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Sixteen, “Literary Criticism and Theory” (pp. 239-240)
- ❖ Read “Reader Response Methods” on EBSCO (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Reader Response Criticism of *Trifles*

Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Sixteen, “Literary Criticism and Theory” (pp. 240-241)
- ❖ Read “Cultural Studies Research” on EBSCO (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Cultural Studies and *Trifles*

Friday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Sixteen, “Literary Criticism and Theory” (pp. 243-245)
- ❖ Read “Postcolonial Theory” on EBSCO (Available on Canvas)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: Postcolonial Theory and *Trifles*

Week Fifteen: Literary Criticism and Theory (11/23-11/27)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Study for *Literary Studies* Quiz #5
- ❖ **Theme/Form/Context Exercise (Play)**
- ❖ **Class Activity Reflection #4**

During Class

- ❖ **Literary Studies Quiz #5 (Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen)**

Wednesday

- ❖ **No Class**

Friday

- ❖ **No Class**

Week Sixteen: Genre: Film (11/30-12/4)

Monday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, Chapter Six, “Genre” (pp. 57-60)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: *Spirited Away* Screening

Wednesday

Before Class

- ❖ Read *Literary Studies*, “Chapter Sixteen” (pp. 241-243)

During Class

- ❖ Activity: *Spirited Away* Screening



Friday

During Class

❖ Activity: *Spirited Away* Screening

Week Seventeen: Creative Reading Response Show and Tell (12/7-12/11)

Monday

Before Class

❖ **Creative Reading Response**

During Class

❖ Activity: Creative Reading Response Show and Tell

Wednesday

During Class

❖ Activity: Creative Reading Response Show and Tell

Friday

During Class

❖ Activity: Creative Reading Response Show and Tell