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Q2S Enhanced Pedagogy FLC Syllabus Studies in Literature & Creativity

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Abstract: This syllabus was written in response to the FLC symposium led by Jessica Luck. It draws on elements I have previously used in teaching the large lecture 170—Studies in Literature—and adapts those elements to address the issues raised in Q2S Enhanced Pedagogy discussions, particularly to develop best practices, and to include a creative component for a new course offering which combines analysis with creative practice.

Pedagogic Overview: Studies in Literature might be thought of basically as a vocabulary course in the sense we need a common language to understand and discuss what literature is and how it accomplishes its ends. It names the tools a writer might draw on to create a piece of literature and shows how those tools are used in a variety of ways through a variety of genres, as well as naming the tools a reader might use for an enhanced appreciation of those same genres. The student of literature can use that knowledge both to talk about or analyze various works and also to produce her own work.

In reviewing the best practices of teaching large lecture classes and in assessing my own experience in teaching them, it is helpful to build a community of learners as soon as possible. I have often taught large lecture literature courses by beginning the term with a low-stakes presentation. Students receive full credit for doing a group presentation and reflecting on it. Each group chooses a short story out of the class anthology, and each member of the group picks a narrative element—setting/character/conflict/style/etc.—and analyzes that element for the class as it applies to the story. Each person builds an expertise in a certain element, but they learn from each other too, as they are all working on the same story.

As the term progresses those same elements are discussed in a variety of genres—the novel/theater/poetry/creative non-fiction. As the instructor, I can lead the class in presentations about the works under consideration, but by then students have gained enough expertise to share their own ideas on how the works are put together.

A longer semester format allows time for a “writers at work” block to discuss how various writers approach the production of a piece of literature. There is a lot of literature to draw from; it is a genre unto itself. And it is also an opportunity for the students to learn by doing. If they haven’t already begun their projects, they still have four weeks to work on them at the beginning of this segment.

The final two weeks of the course mirrors the opening. The students share and present their own work to the class as a whole, analyzing how the various elements of narrative work from the artist’s point of view.

Studies in Literature

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Texts: The Story and its Writer, by Anne Charters
 Disgrace by J.M. Coetzee.
 The Devil's Highway by Luis Alberto Urrea
 Hamlet by William Shakespeare
 How to Live on Bread and Music by Jennifer K. Sweeney

Objectives. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the study and production of literary genres—reading, writing and thinking about prose fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, and drama—and to provide you with a basic critical vocabulary for the analysis and production of literary works.

Course requirements.

Opening group presentations	200 points
Class participation	200 points
Collaborative creative work	200 points
Presentation of collaboration	200 points
Revision and reflection on collaboration	200 points

Opening group presentation. During the first weeks of the term, you will be assigned to a group. Your group will be responsible for choosing a short story out of Anne Charters anthology and presenting it to the class for their consideration. Each person in your group will be responsible for one of the key elements of narrative-- character, setting, structuring conflict, symbol, voice & style—and for explaining to the class how that element operates in your chosen work. For example, how does setting work in Kate Chopin's story, "The Storm." Feel free to use drawings, slides, costume, music, or other aids in your presentation. Your presentation should include discussion and exchange with the class. You will receive full credit for completing all the elements on the class prompt, including a reflection on what you learned from the process.

Class participation. Each day you will have the opportunity of writing a response a question-of-the day. Your response will receive full credit as long as it addresses the question. Please write your response on a 3 x 5 notecard. This makes it easier to organize and archive your participation.

Collaborative creative work. For your creative collaboration you may work on a retelling of your original story. You also have the option of writing a new work in response to the original work you presented. A third option is to pick another work of literature read by the class and either rework it in some way or create a new work it response to it.

Presentation of collaboration. While your work is still in process, you and your group will be presenting it to the class. After studying various writers at work, you'll have some good ideas on how to proceed and presenting it should give you the feedback you need for revision.

Revision and reflection of collaboration. Your final project is to revise your collaboration and write a reflection on what you have learned from the entire process.

Calendar (Subject to change)

Week 1	Course Intro; The Elements of Narrative; The Story and it's Writer as assigned
Weeks 2 & 3	Short Story Group presentations on the elements of narrative in short works
Weeks 4 & 5	The Novel (Disgrace) and longer narratives
Weeks 6 & 7	Creative non-fiction
Weeks 8 & 9	Drama/Hamlet
Weeks 10 & 11	Poetry
Weeks 12 & 13	The Creative Process/Writers at Work
Weeks 14 & 15	Group presentations of works in progress
Final	Reflection and group creative production