

English 235-S1: The Experience of Fiction  
Summer I, 2003-2004

*"The I and the Not I"*

**the experience of fiction:**

**diversity**

**and difference—**

**explorations into creating**

**sustainable**

**inclusive**

**learning lives and communities**

“We are made for goodness. We are made for love. We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness. We are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know. We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders. All, all are welcome: black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, educated, male, female, gay, straight, all, all, all. We are meant all, all to belong to this family, this human family, God’s family.”

--Desmond M. Tutu  
Foreword, Forgiveness and Reconciliation, 2001

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.

--Mary Oliver  
“Wild Geese”

"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."

--Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1964

"In the beginning water covered the Earth and all creatures lived in the underworld below. People could talk, animals could talk, rocks could talk."

--Jicarilla Apache tradition

"For while objectively a social reality, the work of art is a projection of a deeply personal process, and any approach that ignores the personal at the expense of the social is necessarily incomplete."

--Ralph Ellison

Shadow and Act, 1964

The first function of a mythology  
--myths and mythic rituals,  
sacred songs  
and ceremonial dances--  
is to waken in the individual  
a sense of awe,  
wonder, and participation  
in the inscrutable mystery of being.

--Joseph Campbell

Myths, 1976

"We are contemporaries only so far as our understanding reaches. If we want to be at home on this earth, even at the price of being at home in this century, we must try to take part in the interminable dialogue with its essence."

--Hannah Arendt

"Understanding and Politics"

Partisan Review

vol. 20, no. 4, (July-Aug. 1953)

p. 392

"And only God,  
omnipotent indeed,  
knew they were mammals  
of a different breed."

--Mayakovsky

epigraph to Jerzy Kosinski's

The Painted Bird

"Does this mean that hope constitutes an answer to tragedy? No. There is no answer to the tragedy my generation has lived through. It remains a mystery. And hope is part of that

mystery."

--Elie Wiesel  
"Of Hope and the Abyss"  
New York Times  
Sunday, June 7, 1987

"I have walked with people whose eyes are full of light but who see nothing in sea or sky, nothing in city streets, nothing in books. It were far better to sail forever in the night of blindness with sense, and feeling, and mind, than to be content with the mere act of seeing. The only lightless dark is the night of darkness in ignorance and insensibility."

-- Helen Keller

"The essence of human mentality is . . . the power of seeing one thing in another."

--Susanne K. Langer

"The thing is to stalk your calling . . . to locate the most tender and live spot and plug into that pulse . . . to grasp your one inner necessity and not let it go, to dangle it limp wherever it takes you."

--Annie Dillard

"We must learn our common symbols . . . and share them with the world."

--Ntozake Shange

"The short story is a piece of work. The novel is a way of life."

--Toni Cade Bambara

"Literature is no one's private ground; literature is common ground. Let us trespass freely and fearlessly and find our way for ourselves. It is thus that English literature will survive if commoners and outsiders like ourselves make that country our own country, if we teach ourselves how to read and how to write, how to preserve, and how to create."

--Virginia Woolf

**"Reflection should be understood not simply as an act of thought, but rather as an attitude. It is privilege born of human freedom in contradistinction to the compulsion of natural law. As the word itself testifies reflection means literally bending back, reflection is a spiritual act that runs counter to the natural process; an act whereby we stop, call something to mind, form a picture, and take up a relation to and come to terms with what we have seen. It should, therefore, be understood as an act of becoming conscious."**

**--C.G. Jung**

"In our response to fictional character, there is often a deep fascination with the opaque. Struggling with the dark and difficult can link, even fuse our feelings about human existence

with our notions about literary art. Serious readers, quite as an article of faith, give themselves to complexities of person and personality, rich obscurities of the psyche, all-but-insuperable barriers to 'seeing' the other. This persuasion that whatever is difficult must be close to the truth draws upon a line of modern thought going back to Freud and Nietzsche; but it also has an esthetic dimension. We take pleasure in the struggle to make out a complex or obscure character: this constitutes part of the esthetics of form; it may also remind us of our experience in daily life. Modern sensibility favors open endings, incompleteness. We want an art upon which we can exercise interpretive skills, and indulge delusions of being quasi-artists too. We want to joust with alternative readings, perhaps even to relish our limitations as readers."

--Irving Howe

A Critic's Notebook, pp. 70-71, 1994.

### Required Texts:

Anderson, Hans Christian. "The Little Sea Maid." [handout]

Barnaby, Karin. "Dreams as Literature." Quadrant XXIV (1): 75-81. [handout]

Chaiton, Sam and Terry Swinton. Lazarus and the Hurricane: The Freeing of Rubin Carter. New York: St. Martins, 1999.

Dahlerup, Pil. Coordinator. "Splash! Six views of 'The Little Mermaid.'" Scandinavian Studies n.d.: 140-163. [handout]

Dickens, Charles. Hard Times. New York: Bantam, 1981

Guterson, David. Snow Falling on Cedars. New York: Vintage, 1995.

Hazen, Mary Ann. "Learning How To Learn: An Experiment in Dialogue." The Organizational Behavior Teaching Review: Journal of the Organizational Behavior Teaching Society XII (2): 72-85. [handout]

Hurston, Zora Neale. Their Eyes Were Watching God. New York: Harper Perennial, 1990.

Morrison, Toni. The Bluest Eye. New York: Penguin, 2000.

Packer, Z.Z. Drinking Coffee Elsewhere. New York: Berkley Printing Group/Riverbend Books,

Walker, Margaret. Jubilee. New York: Bantam, 1966.

Selected folktales, stories, handouts, and videos:

"Cinderella"

"East of the Sun, West of the Moon"

"Anansi"

The Little Mermaid

Smoke Signals

Jimmy Boggs

**Course Goals:**

\*To deepen and broaden our experience of fiction and to enhance our awareness and enjoyment of that experience. Our particular focus for our work together this semester is on our appreciation of the difference and diversity that inhere in our rich multicultural heritage of literature--"the I and the not I."

\*To connect our academic learning with our broader human community by participating in our UDM Leadership Development Institute: Service Learning.

\*To create a sustainable teaching/learning community.

**Course Objectives:**

1. To enjoy the experience of fiction more deeply by developing skill, strength, and confidence in inquiring how literature is understood, produced, and assessed.
2. To increase our ability to ask questions that will illuminate the particular text under discussion: To define ways of knowing as well as objects of knowledge.
3. To realize the importance of stories as mirrors of human experience, reflecting human motives, conflicts, and values.
4. To view each story as the verbal issue of a spiritual struggle, the response of a gifted writer to certain provocations of a particular time and place, or possibly of life itself.
5. To identify with fictional characters in human situations as a means of relating to others; to gain greater insight into our own humanity through involvement with "the other" in fiction: race, gender, religion, class, culture, age, historical epoch.
6. To become more aware of significant writers representing diverse backgrounds and traditions in fiction.
7. To become more familiar with important works of fiction, both past and present.
8. To experience fiction as a way to appreciate the rhythms and beauty of our English language, thereby enhancing our aesthetic sensibilities.
9. \*To become more aware of your own natural, spontaneous responses as we give our studied attention to a story. To follow that response to a fuller context: BELS, brief entry leads, and extended journal amplifications are methods of exploring our own responses and opening out our meanings as we interact with a work of fiction and explore the art through which the work takes on its power.\* We will engage in individual reader response to surface our first images of a work and then build on our own first words through listening and recording the meanings that

our classmates bring to the small group and to community response. The reader response journal will be the record we will use for this work. **Please bring your reader response journal with you to each class meeting.**

10. To interpret, analyze, and explain the works of fiction and to share our responses orally and in writing.

**11. To broaden and deepen our own initial responses to fiction by incorporating the responses of our peers, both in small group process and in the whole community response: to listen attentively to other responses.**

**12. To experience integrated learning and to develop habits of reading and reflection that will inspire us to pursue the study of fiction in our maturing adult lives outside of school.**

13. To explore many approaches to the fiction that we are studying together this semester, so that we will develop a multifaceted way of responding to the multiplicity of meanings that inhere in a text.

**14. To engage in "literary conversation" that bridges and connects our primary life experience in the world of actuality with our secondary imaginative experiences in the world of ideality. We will work together to explore the possibilities that our individual readings open up.**

#### **Foreword to Our Study:**

**"Present in every human being are two desires, a desire to know the truth about the primary world, the given world outside ourselves in which we are born, live, love, hate and die, and the desire to make new secondary worlds of our own or, if we cannot make them ourselves, to share in the secondary worlds of those who can . . . . When we say that the primary world is the objective world outside ourselves, we mean that it is a social and public world. The criterion by which we judge outsiders is social agreement. We believe that something is there outside our minds because our accounts of our individual sensory experiences agree. The primary world contains everything that has not been made by man, including himself, and, also, whatever of man's historical past is still on hand as reified in a humanly fabricated world of languages, mythologies, legends, creeds, tools, works-of-art, etc. Though made by man, his past is no longer in his power to alter.**

**". . . if he did not experience such feelings of awe, wonder, enchantment, in the primary world, I very much doubt if the Poet would desire or believe it possible to create secondary worlds. Being a man, not God, a poet cannot create ex nihilo. If our desire to create secondary worlds arises at least in part from our dissatisfaction with the primary world, the latter must first be there before we can be dissatisfied with it. What in fact, then, are some of our principal grievances?**

**1. We are born into it and by death disappear from it without our consent. But the secondary worlds we make, since they are embodied in verbal or visual or auditory objects,**

come into being because we choose to make them and they are not subject to natural death.

2. Our freedom of action, whether as individuals or societies is very limited. In the secondary worlds we make, we are omnipotent, with absolute freedom to say what they shall contain and what shall happen in them.

3. Our knowledge and understanding are very limited. In a secondary world, we are omniscient, aware of everything which exists and happens in it, and understanding exactly why.

4. Too many of our experiences are profane, unimportant, boring. From a secondary world, we can exclude everything except what we find sacred, important, enchanting.

5. Evil and suffering are an insoluble problem. We can, if we wish, create arcadian secondary worlds from which evil and suffering are excluded, but since, however unpleasant evil and suffering may be, nothing interests us more, most of the secondary worlds we create include them, but in a simplified more comprehensible form.

"For instance, in fairy-tales, instead of encountering as we do in the primary world, human beings who are potentially good or evil and, except when under a spell, we cannot mistake one for the other, since the good are beautiful and speak finely, and the evil ugly and coarse of speech. Further, while in the primary world, evil so often appears to triumph over good, in the fairy-tale, good is always ultimately victorious; the nice guys are rewarded, the bad guys punished.

". . . It is necessary that we know about the evil in the world, about past evil that we may know what man is capable of, and be on the watch for it in ourselves, and about present evil so that we may take political action to eradicate it. This knowledge is one of the duties of the historian to impart. But the poet cannot get into this business without defiling himself and his audience. To write a play, that is to construct a secondary world, about Auschwitz, for example, is wicked: author and audience may try to pretend that they are morally horrified, but in fact they are passing an entertaining evening together, in the aesthetic enjoyment of horrors.

"There are certain art-forms which, by their intrinsic nature, are defended against this kind of decadence and can, therefore only continue to exist so long as people exist to whom the concepts of the sacred, the heroic, freedom, personal freedom and responsibility have real meaning. . . ."

--W.H. Auden, Secondary Worlds

### **Course Description:**

The course of study involves an exploration of the symbolic languages in which humankind has expressed the search for meaning and reality from the mythic prehistoric past to our own post-modern, post-technological present through the construction of "secondary worlds"

that bridge and connect the human realms of actuality and ideality.

The central metaphor of this semester's work will be our search/quest for relationship to the "I" and the "Not I" as it presents itself to us in the imaginative expressions of humanness across culture and across time as we encounter them during the semester. From our literary conversations together about our readings, we will gather and examine how images of otherness in the "secondary worlds" relate to our own contemporary "primary world", issues such as violence, good/evil, marriage, sexuality, quest for role models, parent/child relationships, male/female relationships, values sorting and clarifying work, and alternative lifestyles. We will consciously focus on the implications that the struggles enacted in the "secondary worlds" of the writers' imaginations have for us in our own time.

To enhance our experience of re-membering the "secondary worlds," we will engage in conversation, questioning, exploring, and written response journal work, individually and collectively, in class and outside of class. We will take to heart Virginia Woolf's invitation "to trespass freely and fearlessly" the "common ground" of literature. We will make "that country our own country" by teaching ourselves "how to read and how to write, how to preserve, and how to create."

#### **Course Method:**

**The course requires a rigorous schedule of reading and is a writing intensive work, designed to enable students to use their own readings and written first words to surface their responses and to identify their beginning images of a work, those "feelings of awe, wonder, and enchantment," that are evoked by the story itself. These are the responses that Auden tells us "are felt to be sacred, enchanting, valuable in themselves." Then students will follow and develop those images and responses to a work, grounded on their own perceptions and observations, and amplify and develop their own responses by listening, attending to, and recording the responses of their classmates. Together we will then attempt to shape and articulate an integrative, inclusive communal response that bridges both the "primary" and "secondary" worlds of the text, the individual student, and the whole class. It is desirable for students selecting this course to love reading and to be able to read fairly fast. We will engage in a "whole language" way of developing and deepening our responses to the works to which we are giving our "studied attention" by listening, speaking, reading and writing.**

**Following initial positioning by the instructor, the classroom method will be interactive: in-class focused raw-writing to prime the pump for discussion, small group, pupil/team, and open conversation, ultimately seeking answers to the issues that each work itself raises in the mind and heart of each reader. Students are expected to be prepared for class: to have read the assigned material, to have studied it, to have recorded their initial responses and questions in their journals, and to have identified areas that need classroom exploration. Collaborative presentations of specific works will be assigned as the course of our work progresses.**

#### **Course Requirements:**

All assigned reading and writing are to be completed before the beginning of the class for which it is due. Occasionally, additional materials chosen by the instructor or students may be assigned as these become appropriate through the unfolding of the course. **None of the works listed will be excluded from your course requirements. If a work is not discussed in class, it may still appear on your midterm or final examination.** It is a holy and wholesome idea to read and journal ahead of our class discussion. As you engage in the process of giving the texts your "studied attention," make careful written note of questions that surface or attract you. We will explore these seeded questions together in class. There is no question too stupid or too trivial to be asked.

**Because this section of English 235: The Experience of Fiction is a writing intensive course, the core of your work will center on your reader response journal and reflection. Your reader response journal will include at least 3 pages of single spaced entries per week, in-class written reflection, in-class focused written free expression, and notes that you take during class or in small group discussion to develop your own understanding of a work or theme.**

Other writing includes a midterm, a final examination, and two short papers on collaborative presentations that you will choose, or that will choose you, as you become engaged in your own responses and reflections on our work together: reading, observing, viewing, listening, and discussing the texts we are reading. We will mutually agree on your group presentations after you have focused them out of your own journal work and reflections on your own study. Note well those aspects that draw you, either negatively or positively, and these key images or seed-topics may cluster into subjects of your journal entries or essays. You may also use your journal, but not your texts, for writing your midterm and final examinations. We will negotiate the due dates on your journal reflection papers and your group presentation.

#### **Attendance Policy:**

**NOTE TO STUDENTS: It is important to remember that there are only seven summer weekend classes this term. Each class is the equivalent of one week of regular class during other terms. Attendance at all class meetings is imperative for efficient learning.**

**I will make every effort to attend each class and to be well prepared; I expect you to do the same. If you must miss more than one class, please make an appointment with me. Excessive absence may prevent your successful completion of the course. Thus, I expect you to attend every class session and to arrive on time unless there is serious reason for absence or lateness. If you are late, please join the group, but take a seat near the door so that you do not interrupt or disturb the work of your classmates.**

It is a good idea, especially during this intensive summer class, to exchange telephone numbers with a classmate, so that you can stay apprised of changes in the schedule of readings or other items on the course calendar. Your partner might also pick up any material handed out in class and give it to you. Please give me the name of your partner today and your group members.

**I will pass around an attendance sheet during each meeting. It is your responsibility to make sure that you sign the class attendance sheet.**

### **Evaluation Criteria:**

Your course grade will be determined by:

- \* Class participation: 20% > regular, punctual attendance is a requisite for participation. And in-class written reflections may not be made up.
- \* Journal entries/bi-weekly reflections: 25%
- \* Critical essays/collaborative presentations: 25%
- \* Midterm: 10%
- \* Final examination: 10%
- \* “I and Not I” Personal reflection: 10%

**You may revise all your work to achieve whatever grade you desire. You have 50% of the control over your final grade. I have the other 50%.**

### **Manuscript Preparation:**

On your out of class written essays/other genres, you are expected to follow the manuscript guidelines outlined in the Scott Foresman Handbook or whatever college handbook you used in your composition class. With the release draft of all essays, please hand in all the materials you used in your writing process. Failure to include notes, drafts, outlines, journals, reader feedback, or other parts of your work will result in your receiving no credit. I expect your grapholect to conform to that of edited written English, the register of our academic cultures. Please arrange your time so that you allow ample space for copyediting and proofreading. For your out of class written work, you will work in a pupil/team or small group. Each of you will sign the release copy, noting that each of you has copyedited and proofread the release draft.

**Nota bene: Your release copy of your team or small group response to this component of the course may be in any form/genre that you choose or that chooses you: an essay, an impression, a poem, a letter to an author or character, a dialogue with an author or character, a narrative, a story, a play, a sketch, a feature story for a popular audience, a collage of images and symbols gathered from your experience of and reflection on what is evoked by the texts we study together. Only in-class writing may be handed in without being enclosed in a manilla folder. All other written work, together with the process, must be handed in inside of an 8 1/2 by 11 manilla folder with your name on it.**

Late work may be subjected to a reduced grade.

If you wish to know your course grade before your official transcript arrives, please

enclose an index card in a self-addressed stamped envelope in the manilla folder with your final examination, and I will mail your grade to you.

**JoAnne Isbey**

234 Briggs

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and by appointment.

(Revised 3/04)

**Tentative Class Schedule: To be edited together**

**[DRAFT #1: MAY 1, 2004]**

English 235-S1: The Experience of Fiction  
Course Calendar/ Summer I, 2003-2004  
Briggs 10  
Saturday Mornings: 8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Meeting #1:  
(May 1)

Introduction to Course/Syllabus  
Service Learning Component  
In-class response journal #1:  
    individual/group/communal process  
Discussion: Sister Christian's paradigm of creative process and feeling  
maps/pink and blue  
Select Learning Partner  
Sign up for Group Presentation  
Assign: Self-Study Assignment  
Select Story to Present  
Select Learning Partner

"The First Storytellers": Film  
The Power of Myth Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell  
Group: 1.  
    2.  
    3.  
    4.  
    5.  
    6.

Meeting #2  
(May 8)

Group: 1  
    2.  
    3.  
    4.  
    5.  
    6.

Meeting #3



**PLEASE BE SURE TO SIGN THE ATTENDANCE  
REGISTER *EACH CLASS PERIOD!***

*The Experience of Fiction:  
the "I" and the "Not I"*

*Creating sustainable inclusive learning lives and communities.*

*JoAnne Isbey  
English 235-S1  
Summer I, 2003-2004*

English 235 - S1 The Experience of Fiction

Summer I, 2003 - 2004

Briggs 10

Saturday Mornings: 8:00 - 12:30 p.m.

Exploring "The I and the Not I"

Name:

Address:

Email:

Telephone number:

My learning partner is \_\_\_\_\_

My learning partner's telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_

My working team members are:

Name:

Telephone number/email

1. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

(May 1, 2004)