



National Taiwan University of Science and Technology

2020 Summer Program

ENG 115 How Literature Works

Course Outline

Term: June 01-July 03,2020

Course Code: ENG 115

Instructor: Dr. Joseph Bowling

Home Institution: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Office Hours: TBA

Email: jdbowling@wisc.edu

Credit: 4

Course Description:

Literary scholar Kenneth Burke defined literature as “equipment for living.” By this, Burke understood literature, whether lyric poetry or narrative prose, as a response to a social problem, a solution. In other words, literature *does something*: it creates community, prompts emotions and passions, generates ideas, provides opportunities for reflection and intellectual inquiry. But how? In this course, we will study different genres of literature, including poetry, short stories, a novella, a play, and graphic novels, and we will ask how each work uses language differently to tell a story that, as Burke describes, does something to and for us. We will ask foundational questions—What is literature? Why study it?—in order to tackle more advanced, sophisticated questions—How does literature represent the world? How does literature create visions of new and different world? How does literature respond to and shape history? How does literature help us understand ourselves and others? We will answer these questions by attending to the literary techniques and practices that make literature work, from the use of figurative language, to narrative structure, to character development, and beyond. In addition to learning how to analyze literature, we will study how to write about literature.

Required Textbooks:

Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*

Stephanie Burt, *The Poem Is You: 60 Contemporary American Poems and How to Read Them*



Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*
Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*
Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*
Jeff VanderMeer, *Annihilation*
David Beauchard, *Epileptic*
Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*

Grading & Evaluation:

Participation, attendance	10%
Informal writing	10%
Analytical essay	30%
Research Essay	30%
Final examination	20%

A 94-100 A- 90-93 B+ 87-89 B 84-86 B- 80-83 C+ 77-79 C 74-76 C- 70-73 D+ 67-69 D 64-66 D- 60-63
F 0-59

Course Schedule:

Week1

Read:

Culler, "What is literary theory?," "What is literature and does it matter?," "Language, meaning, and interpretation," and "Rhetoric, poetics, and poetry"; selected poems from Burt; short stories by Franz Kafka

Week2

Read:

Culler, "Narrative"; Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

Analytical paper 1 due

Week3

Culler, "Performative language"; Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*; Jeff VanderMeer, *Annihilation*

Analytical paper 2 due



Week4

Culler, “Identity, identification, and the subject” and “Ethics and aesthetics”; Beauchard, *Epileptic*; Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

Analytical paper 3 due

Week5

Frederic Jameson, “The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”; Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*

Analytical paper 4 due

