ENGS 5 What is Literature?
Teaching Advising Program First Year Seminar 3 credit hours
CAS distribution requirement: Literature
Fall 2016 T/R 1:15-2:30

Professor Helen Scott
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Office Hours: Monday 1-3; Thursday 2:45-4:45; and by appointment

Course Summary
While the category ‘literature’ may seem self evident, it is both historically new and remarkably hard
to define. This seminar explores the origins and development of the modern concept of a distinct
realm of ‘literary’ writing before turning to examples of the major genres—poetry, drama, novel and
short story—by writers in English. Our primary texts address various aspects of the immigrant
experience in the USA. We shall engage with debates about literary interpretation and value while
practicing close reading and contextualization of our selected works.

Goals
Introducing the major literary genres and the vocabulary and practice of literary criticism: close
reading and analysis of form; understanding texts in their historical and social contexts.

Evaluation
Seminar participation, including discussion and collaborative work 20%. Class log 20%. Mid term.exam 20%. Final exam 20%. Final essay 20%. All assignments must be completed in order to pass the
course.

Course Learning Objectives
• Understanding of the definitions and characteristics of the major literary genres: poetry,
drama, novel, short story
• Familiarity with the historical development of the concept of Literature
• Engagement with the immigrant experience as represented in works of fiction

Foundational competency in the following areas:
• Rhetorical discernment
• Critical Reading
• Analytical writing and substantive revision
• Information literacy

Classroom Environment Expectations
Classes will include lecture, discussion, in-class writing workshops, and collaborative small group
work. You are expected to come to each class meeting having completed the assigned readings and
ready to participate in discussion and class activities. Lectures and class discussions constitute an
important element of the course so you should be attentive and take notes. Please maintain a civil
and collaborative attitude to other members of the seminar.

Required Texts / Materials
Three primary texts are available in the University Bookstore. If you buy them elsewhere be sure to
secure the same edition.

Colm Toibin, Brooklyn
Jhumpa Lahiri, Interpreter of Maladies
Cherrie Moraga, Heroes and Saints
All other readings will all be posted on Blackboard. Please inform me if you are unable to access/download any of the readings.

**Schedule**

**Week One**
Tues 8/30: Introduction: What is Literature?
Thurs 9/1 Reading: Class syllabus. Code of Ethics.

**Week Two**
Tues 9/6 Reading: Helen Vendler ‘About Poets and Poetry’.
Thurs 9/8 Class guest: Bailey Howe research librarian.

**Week Three POETRY**
Tues 9/13 Reading: Vendler, ‘Exploring a Poem’; Selected poems BLACKBOARD.
Thurs 9/15 Selected poems BLACKBOARD.
Assignment #1: lecture and reading notes: Cornell note taking system

**Week Four**
Tues 9/20 Reading: Selected Poems BLACKBOARD.
Thurs 9/22 In class: response to lyric poems as *life: event, time and place*.

**Week Five**
Tues 9/27 Class Guest: Alison Prine.
Thurs 9/29 In class: response to lyric poems as *arranged form: analytic and poetic shape*.
Assignment #2: close reading: poems

**Week Six DRAMA**
Tues 10/4 READING: Origins of drama BLACKBOARD
Thurs 10/6 Lecture: Literary context: Pesticide poisoning, grape picking, and Chicano/a struggles in the 1980s.

**Week Seven**
Tues 10/11 Reading: Cherrie Moraga, *Heroes and Saints*.
Thurs 10/13 In class: dramatic reading of *Heroes and Saints*.
Assignment #3: locating and documenting sources: annotated bibliography MLA style

**Week Eight**
Tues 10/18 Class Guest: Gregory Ramos.
Thurs 10/20 MID TERM EXAM: poetry and drama

**Week Nine THE NOVEL**
Reading: Maria Mackay ‘Why the Novel Matters’ BLACKBOARD.
Tues 10/25 In class: Aspects of the novel.
Thurs 10/27 Lecture: Literary context: Irish immigration to New York City
Assignment #4: article summary

**Week Ten**
Tues 11/1 Colm Toibin, *Brooklyn*
Thurs 11/3 In class: response to novel: narration, character, plot.

**Week Eleven**
Tues 11/8 Class Guest: Philip Baruth.
Thurs 11/10 Colm Toibin, *Brooklyn*. In class: response to novel: setting, time and finitude.
Week Twelve THE SHORT STORY
Thurs 11/17 In class: writing workshop
Assignment #5: Critical Analysis of Brooklyn draft

Week Thirteen THANKSGIVING BREAK Nov 21-25

Week Fourteen
Reading: Jhumpa Lahiri, The Interpreter of Maladies.
Tues 11/29 In class: writing workshop.
Thurs 12/1 Jhumpa Lahiri, The Interpreter of Maladies.

Week Fifteen
Tues 12/6 Class Guest: Nancy Welch.
Thurs 12/8 Jhumpa Lahiri, The Interpreter of Maladies.

Final assignment: Critical analysis of Brooklyn

Final exam: novel and short story.

Grading Criteria
http://www.uvm.edu/~rgweb/?Page=gradesandtranscripts/g_grades.html&SM=g_menu.html

A range (3.67-4.0) Excellent
  Attends all classes. Consistently demonstrates evidence of thorough engagement with the concerns and activities of the course; shows careful, thorough, critical reading of the required and recommended readings; takes a leading role in discussion with astute and insightful comments. Completes all assignments according to the specified requirements and with originality, insight, and individual creativity.

B range (2.67-3.33) Good
  Attends all classes. Shows evidence of careful engagement with required reading materials. Engages in class activities and materials. Consistently participates in discussion with pertinent and relevant comments. Completes all assignments with competence and in conformance with specified requirements.

C range (1.67-2.33) Fair
  Attends all classes. Shows some evidence of engagement with required reading materials. Participates in discussion sometimes. Completes all assignments in conformance with specified requirements.

D range (0.67-1.33) Poor
  Several absences, and/or shows lack of engagement with class concerns and materials. Participation in discussion or other class activity is infrequent. Submits all assignments but without adequately meeting the specified requirements.

F Failure (0)
  Chronic absence and/or failure to complete all assignments.

XF Failure resulting from academic dishonesty

Seminar Policies
Attendance is mandatory; More than two absences will lead to grade penalties.
If you have a serious personal issue such as a family crisis or an extended illness that keeps you from attending class you should contact the Dean of Students.
If you are absent from class, check Blackboard and your UVM email for updates, consult a fellow student or come to my next office hours.
Cell phone and other mobile devices should be turned off and put away during class; computers should only be used for specified in-class writing assignments. Assigned deadlines on all written work are serious, and extensions will not be granted on a last-minute basis.

**University Policies**
For general information about university policies:
http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/academicinfo/

**Academic Integrity and Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities:**
http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/academicinfo/rightsandresponsibilities/

**FERPA Rights Disclosure:** The purpose of this policy is to communicate the rights of students regarding access to, and privacy of their student educational records as provided for in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.
http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/academicinfo/ferparightsdisclosure/

**Religious Holidays:** Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. *If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes.* You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time.

**Student Learning Accommodations:** In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact ACCESS, the office of Disability Services on campus. ACCESS works with students to create reasonable and appropriate accommodations via an accommodation letter to their professors as early as possible each semester.

**University Resources**

**ACCESS**: A170 Living/Learning Center; 802-656-7753; access@uvm.edu; www.uvm.edu/access

**Bailey/Howe Library** http://library.uvm.edu

**Learning Coop** http://www.uvm.edu/learnco/
The Learning Coop offers tutoring in different areas: Learning Skills, English Language Learning, and Subject Area Tutoring. To schedule an appointment call 656-4075 or visit the Learning Cooperative, 244 Commons L/L.

**Software Archive** https://www.uvm.edu/software/
With your UVM network ID and password (which you use to access your UVM e-mail) you can download recommended software like the Firefox web browser and Adobe Acrobat Reader to view pdf files.

http://www.uvm.edu/ctl/?Page=blackboard/index.php&SM=m_blackboard.html
We will rely on Blackboard, so check the list of supported browsers to ensure that you are using one. Make sure you monitor and maintain your UVM email account so you do not miss important Blackboard announcements.

**Writing Center** http://www.uvm.edu/wid/writingcenter/
For support and feedback at any point in the writing process, consult with a tutor at the Writing Center. To make an appointment, call 656.4075.

**Center for Health and Wellbeing** http://www.uvm.edu/~chwb/
Counseling & Psychiatry Services (CAPS) http://www.uvm.edu/~chwb/psych/
Phone: (802) 656-3340
Dean of Students Office (802-656-3380) http://www.uvm.edu/~dos/