

## *Fall/Winter 2017-2018*

**AP/EN 2120 6.0A (Y)**

### ***Prose Narrative***

**Course Director:**

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**Delivery Format:**

Lecture + Tutorial

**Time:**

Lecture: Tuesdays, 12:30pm - 2:30pm  
Tutorial 1: Tuesdays, 2:30pm - 3:30pm  
Tutorial 2: Tuesdays, 3:30pm - 4:30pm  
Tutorial 3: Tuesdays, 2:30pm - 3:30pm

**Description:**

Prose is language free from the metrical and rhyming structure of verse. Narrative tells a story. Within the categories of fiction or nonfiction, narrative is further subdivided into genres such as travel narrative, slave narrative, gothic narrative, detective fiction, memoir, narrative essay, and narrative journalism, all of which encompass the readings for this course. Our study, however, shall be less concerned with classifications and divisions, and more with the unifying possibilities of narrative and its key principles (plot, characterization, reader engagement, thematic emphasis etc.) to bring together texts of seemingly disparate identities without allowing these principles to dictate narrative “rules” that cannot be broken in thought-provoking ways. We shall be guided by E.L. Doctorow’s intriguing assertion that “there is no more fiction or nonfiction – only narrative.” Indeed, within the scope of this course, the gulf between fiction and nonfiction, while impossible to disregard, is not strictly impassible when narrative bridges the divide; when one considers, for example, the ways in which a travel narrative morphs into science fiction, a memoir incorporates magic realism, or a piece of narrative journalism deploys exaggerated characterizations, time jumps, and stylistic flourishes as part of its rhetorical strategy.

Narrative tells a story, and for every narrative we read we shall ask: how and why is the story told? The “how” prompts us to look closely at the prose itself, the structure, pacing, linearity, and language that lends itself to the telling of the story in question. Asking “how” also leads us to consider the constructions of narrative voice and reader. Who is telling the story and to whom is it being told? How much does the narrator know and can they be trusted? As for why a story is told, we shall discuss not only why it is told in certain ways, but, importantly, why it is told at all. With this last query we must widen our field of vision, to include narrative context. For every text we tackle, from the chronicle of a former slave to the casebook of Sherlock Holmes to an exposé of 9/11 narrated from a neighbour’s couch, from the pens of British and North American writers spanning several time periods, we must familiarize ourselves with the socio-cultural, national, political, and literary arenas out of which each narrative emerges and ask whether it works against or alongside the prevailing ideas of its time. This course shall be of interest to students seeking to expand their knowledge of the formal elements of prose in concert with ever-changing ideas of narrative across five centuries of story-telling.

**Category:**

B

**Area:**

6

**Period:**

NA

**Historical Requirement:**

Period I (pre-1700) 3 credits, Period II (1700-1900) 3 credits

**Requirements:**

Close Reading Passage Analysis (3 pages) – 10%  
Fall Term Essay: Single Text Focus (5 pages) – 20%  
Fall Term Test (in-class) – 10%  
Winter Term Essay Outline/Proposal (1-2 pages) – 5%  
Winter Term Essay: Comparative (with research component) (8-10 pages) – 30%  
Final Test (in-class) – 15%  
Active and Informed Tutorial Participation – 10%

**Reading List:**

Francis Godwin, *The Man in the Moone: or a Discourse of a Voyage Thither* (Broadview)  
Selections from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (Broadview)  
Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (Broadview)  
Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Broadview)  
Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre* (Penguin)  
Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (Oxford)  
Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Penguin)  
Michael Ondaatje, *Running in the Family* (Vintage)  
Mark Haddon, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Anchor-Penguin)

Course Kit: containing selections of shorter prose by Arthur Conan Doyle, Edgar Allan Poe, Zora Neale Hurston, Martha Gellhorn, Kurt Vonnegut, Jhumpa Lahiri, Thomas King, and others.

(Other short works available online via course Moodle links.)

**Open To:**

Yr2 & Yr3