University of Puerto Rico

Rio Piedras Campus

College of Humanities

English Department

**Course Title:** Writing About Literature Prof. Pedro Pérez Osorio

**Code Number:** ENGL 3291 Office: Pereira Basement Office #12

Credit Hours: 45 hours / 3 credit hours Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 9:00-11:00

by appointment

**Prerequisites:** None. Course approved for General Education literature requirement.

**Course Description:** This is the first semester of a year-long introductory writing course on literary criticism and critical theory. Students read, analyze, and respond in writing to short stories and poems. Students respond by writing well-organized essays with a clear thesis statement and well-defined supporting arguments. En this part of the course documented sources are kept to a minimum.

**Objectives:**

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Acquire, develop, and hone critical reading, writing, and thinking skills

2. Understand the writing process as one in which "Good writing is rewriting."

3. Familiarize themselves with a variety of critical approaches that comprise the field of

literary studies

4. Seek understanding, and then support, with carefully analyzed evidence, claims

made within their writing

5. Improve grammar skills

6. Understand apply revision and editing conventions to their writing work

**Course Outline:** This is a tentative outline

**Week 1** Introduction to the course

**(Weeks 2-4)** Text: "The Cast of Amontillado" by Edgar Alan Poe. Writing about setting. The writing process. Exploring ideas through note-taking, close reading, free-writing, and classroom discussions. Writing the "throw-way draft." Analyzing the structure of the Five-Paragraph Essay. Self-editing check list. Students hand in their Five-paragraph essay.

**(Weeks 5-6)** Editing workshops.

**(Weeks 7-9)** **Writing about Character:** Text: "Miss Brill" by Jane Mansfield. How authors disclose character in literature. Charater traits (handout)

**(Weeks of 10-11)** Student workshop in which they create a first draft for their paper.

**(Weeks 12-14)** **Writing about an Idea or a Theme**: The Meaning and Message in literature. Examples of ideas that can be written about are: *right*, *good, love*, *piety*, *wilderness*, and *causation*. Ideas and Values. The place of ideas in literature. How to find ideas in a story.

**(Weeks of 15-16)** **Writing an Essay of Comparison and Contrast**: Learning by Seeing Literary Works Together.

**(Weeks 11-13)** **Writing about Metaphor, Simile, Symbolism and Allegory:** Keys to Extended Meaning. Metaphor, Simile, Symbolism and allegory as modes that expand meaning in poetry and narrative. Precriptive grammar focus

**(Weeks 14- 15)** Writing about setting. Three types of settings: (1) Private homes, Public buildings, and various possessions. (2) outdoor places (3) cultural and historical circumstances.

**(Week 16-18)** Final revisions and evaluations.

**Teaching Strategies**

This course will include lectures, group discussions, in-class writing, presentations, and on-line collaborations. Students are expected to do classroom reports. Students will participate in the class wiki. There is a heavy reading schedule and students are expected to come to class prepared, that is, having read all texts, answered any questions assigned, as well as having notes, questions or comments to share with the class (reading log). The class will also include independent short story and poetry reading. The strategies used will be directed towards increasing students’ ability to critically engage with literary texts, relate them to one’s personal experiences and / or social context, and make literary analysis using established terms and approaches.

When needed, we may cover up to 11.25 hours of the 45 hour course with alternative methods of instruction.

Cumplimiento con Ley 51\*

*Los estudiantes que reciban servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con el profesor/a al inicio del semestre para planifica el acomodo razonable y equipo de apoyo necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Asuntos para las Personas con Impedimentos (OAPI) del Decanato de Estudiantes. También aquellos estudiantes con necesidades espaciales que requieren de algún tipo de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse con el /la profesor/a.*

**Evaluation Method**

The final grade will consist of the following criteria:

Grammar exams 100

4 Essays 400

Class Participation & Attendance 100

Class Presentation\* 100

Grading System: A, B, C, D, F.\*\*

\* For students who need a grade to complete the criteria above.

\*\* Evaluación diferenciada para estudiantes con necesidades especiales.

**Bibliography**

Roberts, Edgar V. *Writing about Literature*. Ninth Edition. New Jersey: Prentice hall, 1999.

Trimmer, Joseph F. and C. Wade Jennings. *Fictions*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jonanovich, 1985.