

**WEBSTER UNIVERSITY**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS**

COMM 5900.01  
COURSE NUMBER/SECTION

Dr. Ken Holmes  
INSTRUCTOR

Reading Seminars: National Literature Project  
COURSE TITLE

FALL 2002  
(Aug 5-23, 2002)

50  
SITE

**1. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Using a seminar/workshop format, we will encounter texts as adult readers, reading texts not usually found in anthologized collections. (Material will be presented in handouts.)

To that end, it is anticipated that participants will

- become familiar with current literary theory/theories and the implications for pedagogy;
- learn new literary theory/critical methods as participants in a collegial community where the participant's expertise as a practitioner will be valued the same as that of any staff/visiting scholar;
- find the experience rewarding, affirming, and transforming for their teaching of literature;
- build a collegial community through talking and writing about literature that will be personally and professionally nourishing;
- small-group work will become effective

**2. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

**A. Individual Presentation**

All participants will prepare and deliver a 30 minute (minimum) lesson using a text of their choice. The lesson will demonstrate a particular strategy grounded in sound literary theory. The presenter is encouraged to make the lesson as interactive as possible. Handouts are encouraged. (40%)

**B. Individual Inventories**

Each participant will write a profile of him/herself as a reader and will compile a personal reading inventory. (20%)

**C. Log**

The last 20 minutes of each class will be spent in writing reactions/responses to what has happened in the class. These logs are to be turned in prior to leaving for the evening (20%).

## **D. In-class Activities**

Almost daily there will be classroom activities, some in writing and to be handed in; others will be discussed. (10%)

## **E Participation**

Since this is a graduate seminar, each participant is expected to read the material assigned and enter into discussion freely and willingly. Further, it is expected that the participant will be prepared for whatever the assignment calls for. It goes without saying that attendance (physical) is imperative. Since the class meets only 12 times, even one absence can jeopardize the final evaluation. (10%).

## **3. Schedule of readings, class preparations, presentations, and assignments.** **Primarily, the daily schedule**

### **Week One**

#### **Day 1 Monday August 5, 2002**

Introductions and overview of the Project

Expectations; daily assignments; projected use of the two fiction texts (literature circles); assignment of participants projects; Personal Reading Inventory; Personal Reading List; discussion of Reading Theory

#### **Day 2 Tuesday, August 6, 2002**

Literary Criticism/Theory. Emphasis on Reader Response Theory

Prior Knowledge: what is it? what activates it? how can teachers tap into it?

#### **Day 3 Wednesday August 7, 2002**

Discussion and implications of Rosenblatt and her Transactional Theory

**Guest: Robert E. Probst**

#### **Day 4 Thursday August 8, 2002**

**Guest: Robert E. Probst**

Discussion of a trio of short stories by Kate Chopin: "Desiree's Baby," "The Storm," and "Story of an Hour." Strategies: response booklet

### **Week Two**

#### **Day 5 Monday August 12, 2002**

Creating an Envisionment-Building classroom: the theory of Judith Langer

Scaffolding as a means for eliciting response: the theory of Carol Lee

in-class reading of "The Gilded Six-Bits" Zora Neal Hurston

The Syncretic Model: a process approach to elicit responses through reading and writing: the theory of Ken Holmes

in-class reading: "On the Road" Langston Hughes  
in-class reading of "The Velveteen Rabbit:

Active/passive reading: running-entry journal

**Day 6 Tuesday August 13, 2002**

Discussion of a trio by Louise Erdrich: "Snares," "A Wedge of Shade," and "Fleur"  
Strategy: running entry journal

**Day 7 Wednesday August 14, 2002**

Multiple Intelligences: Gardner's theory; Smagorinsky's principles

Developing strategies ala Gardner's theory:

"The Other Wife" "No One's a Mystery" "Cat in the Rain" "The Notebook"

**Day 8 Thursday August 15, 2002**

Responding to filmed text: "Hills Like White Elephants" and "The Yellow Wallpaper"

**Week 3**

**Day 9 Monday August 19, 2002**

Poetry: responses to and strategies for teaching

**Day 10 Tuesday August 20, 2002**

Discussion of *Fallen Angels* through Literature Circles

Individual Presentations

**Day 11 Wednesday August 21**

Discussion of *In Country* through Literature Circles

Individual Presentations

**Day 12 Thursday August 22**

Individual Presentations

Wrap-up

If time permits, on this last day we will make a tour of "Literary St. Louis." More about this later.

**4. Resources**

Required Texts:

Response and Analysis: Teaching Literature in Junior High and Senior High. Robert E. Probst. Boynton Cook, 1988.

Literature as Exploration. Louise Rosenblatt. 5th ed. MLA; 1995.

Fallen Angels. Walter Dean Myers.

In Country. Bobbie Ann Mason

**This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**