

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: **The Storyteller's Art I: Introduction to Narrative. Loss and Tragedy**

Course Number and Section

ENGLISH

1027F 550

Instructor Name(s): Scott Schofield

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL Brightspace is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

We tell stories to make sense of what it means to be human. In fact, even the most outrageous and imaginative narratives are often inspired by human desires, fears and the rich array of emotions that define us. Put another way, when we read, watch and/or listen to stories we come to better understand ourselves and those who are different from us. To study a story, then, is also to engage with the practices and beliefs of various cultures, past, present, and future.

But stories are also constructions that have been carefully shaped and ordered in particular ways. Plays are often told over five acts; novels are regularly divided into chapters; and certain poems, such as sonnets, come with fixed line lengths.

This course invites you to engage with a wide range of stories as told in novels, poems, plays and film relating to the theme of tragedy and loss. Why do we read, view and listen to stories of loss? How does the study of tragedy equip us to better understand the human condition? How are stories of suffering used to engage with and expose major cultural concerns surrounding racial discrimination and gender-based violence? These are just three of the overarching questions that we will explore in this iteration of the Storyteller's Art I, a course that includes the drama of Sophocles and Shakespeare, the novels of Mary Shelley, the poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, W.H. Auden, and Maya Angelou, the films of Francis Ford Coppola, and more.

Learning Outcomes: one outcome per entry

- Improve critical reading and writing in ways that will enable success in a wide variety of University courses
- Further appreciation of diverse cultural productions and practices
- Develop an interdisciplinary perspective on a variety of narrative media: for example, the poem, the novel and the film
- Become capable of identifying, analyzing and interpreting basic narrative elements, such as plot, character, point of view, theme, setting, imagery, diction, tone, figures of speech, and tropes
- Explore a wide range of forms of creative expression

- Write logically and persuasively in fluent, standard English using the appropriate conventions for scholarly-critical writing
- Design strong thesis statements and structured arguments in persuasive essays
- Learn to document essays using MLA format
- Evaluate the relevance, reliability, and usefulness of research sources, including those obtained through the Internet
- Integrate outside research materials and references to the original text into an essay through use of quotations and paraphrases

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet. Oxford 9780192866363 \$7.15. Paperback. Required

Shelley, Frankenstein Ed. Macdonald. 3rd Edition. Broadview (paperback) \$15.85. Required

All other readings will take the form of PDFs or links.

Methods of Evaluation: one assignment per entry

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Attendance and Participation	Ongoing	10
Close Reading Assignment	08/29/26	10
Chapter Analysis	09/23/26	15
Class Essay	11/20/26	15
Group Project	Different due dates	20
Final Exam	TBA	35

Friday, August 14, 2026

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For Textbooks and Course Materials (below), you are required to include the cost of each textbook or other learning material.

Note whether there are any restrictions that would prevent a student from using a second-hand copy. Here is some suggested text:

- Required textbook: [author, title, edition, publisher, date]. Cost: [insert amount].
 - Or include the weblink of the textbook's publisher site that includes the cost information.
- Students need to purchase this edition. Second-hand or older editions will not be sufficient.
- OR Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.
- This course has an optional field trip that costs [insert amount].
- This course has a required field component that costs [insert amount].

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.