

Dr. Evelyn Pezzulich

Office: 339 Tillinghast Hall

Office Hours: Mon. 10:30-11:30

Tues. 1:30-2:30

Wed. 1:30-2:30

Voice Mail: 531-1200 x2433

E-mail: epezzulich@bridgew.edu

Selected course materials available on CourseInfo
Fall 2000

Age is opportunity no less
Than youth itself, though in another dress,
And as the evening twilight fades away
The sky is filled with stars invisible by day.

Longfellow

EN 494 – Youth and Aging in Literature

Nature of the Course:

This seminar will provide a juncture for literary studies and age studies through an exploration of the Reifungsroman, or novel of ripening. Against the background of the Bildungsroman, we will examine the major characteristics of the Reifungsroman in six texts. The first two deal with middle age (40-59), the next two with what is currently called “young old age” (60-74), and the last two with old age (75+). These novels will be studied in relation to both our contemporary cultural context which privileges youth and the historical cultural context which has helped foster this relatively new genre. In addition, we will examine several works from the visual arts.

Outcomes:

During this course, you will:

1. define the characteristics of the Reifungsroman, or novel of ripening
2. analyze texts in themselves and in relation to each other
3. employ feminist criticism in developing your interpretation of texts
4. assess contemporary and historical cultural contexts as they relate to the Reifungsroman
5. compare works from the visual arts to literary texts
6. synthesize your knowledge about both literary studies and age studies in the process of writing critical papers

Required Texts:

Doris Lessing, *The Summer Before the Dark*
Doris Lessing, *The Diaries of Jane Somers*
Robert C.S. Downs, *The Fifth Season*
May Sarton, *As We Are Now*
Paule Marshall, *Praisesong for the Widow*
Margaret Laurence, *The Stone Angel*
Supplementary handouts

Requirements:

Reading response journal: A one page typed, double spaced journal entry on a specified topic will be required before the discussion of each novel to be studied in class. The purpose of these entries are threefold: 1) to verify reading of texts, 2) to initiate class discussions, and 3) to aid students in writing the final, long seminar paper. The journal will be your “ticket” to allow entry into those classes set aside for discussion of each new novel; therefore, on those weeks don’t leave home without it! These journals cannot be made up if a student is absent from class. The lowest journal grade will be dropped, however, before all journal grades are averaged together.

Short paper: There will be a five page paper due at the end of the first third of the course dealing with *The Summer Before the Dark*, *The Diaries of Jane Somers*, and middle age. Research will be required. Please note that late papers will be accepted only if an extension has been agreed upon prior to the assignment due date.

Group presentation: The class will be divided into groups to provide research on various aspects of aging related to novels studied in the second third of the course. Groups will be responsible for distributing materials to the class whether in the form of a group report or secondary texts such as a relevant article, chapter or pamphlet. Students will receive a group grade except in the case of an unauthorized absence from a group presentation for which the missing student would receive a failing grade.

Long paper: There will be a longer fifteen page paper due at the end of the semester which, while focusing on the novels in the final third of the course, will serve to synthesize the knowledge gained throughout the semester. This will be done by

relating texts to one another and to various materials, including films and presentation as they relate to the cultural issue of aging. Again, note that late papers will be accepted only if an extension has been agreed upon prior to the assignment due date.

Grading:

Reading response journal: 20% (lowest grade of six will be dropped before averaging)
Short paper: 20%
Presentations: 20%
Long paper: 40%

Attendance:

Since a college seminar is a group of students involved in advanced study, attendance is crucial in fostering the type of intellectual dialogue and debate that should ensue from this type of inquiry. For this reason and because of the length of each class, only one absence is acceptable without penalty. A second absence will lower your final grade by one half letter. After three absences you must either withdraw, if that is still an option, or fail the course.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is scholarly theft, stealing someone else's ideas and/or words. All research must be properly documented so that credit may be given to the appropriate source. This is the scholar's code of honor. Failure to abide by it will result not only in an F for the course but subject you to other penalties as described in the Student Handbook.

Accessibility Statement:

In accordance with Bridgewater State College policy, I am available to discuss appropriate accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Requests for accommodations should be made during the drop/add period so that proper arrangements can be made. Students should register with the Disability Resources Office in Boyden Hall for disability verification and determination of reasonable academic accommodations.

CourseInfo:

We will be using CourseInfo this semester primarily for group communication. If you are not already familiar with CourseInfo, you are expected to either attend one of the training sessions offered this September or complete VC002-01, CourseInfo Tutorial. Handouts will be given in class to supply further information about these two options.

Conferences:

I have noted my office hours above. Please feel free to see me to discuss any concerns you may have regarding the course. As I am serving as Acting Chair of the English Department this year, it may be best to arrange an appointment with me beforehand whenever possible, especially during the busy drop/add period. If my hours are not convenient, we can arrange another time. Do try to see me before any problems have a chance to develop.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Note: Texts should already have been read by the designated due date. Because handouts are both numerous and varied, and I would like to use them flexibly, they will be given out and assigned during class rather than listed below. A series of short film clips, likewise, will be introduced in class.

9/11 - Introduction/ writing sample/ *Stealing Time: Episode 1 Quest for Immortality* (video)

9/18 - *The Summer Before the Dark* (247 pgs.)

9/25 - Discussion of short paper assignment; presentation by Dr. Ruth Hannon on psychological manifestations of aging; *Stealing Time: Episode 2 Turning Back the Clock* (video)

10/2 - *The Diaries of Jane Somers: The Diary of a Good Neighbor* only (253 pgs.);

10/9 - Holiday

10/16 - Short paper due (5 pgs.) with one page abstract for oral presentation; *Stealing Time: Episode 3 Mastering the Mind* (video)

10/23 - *The Fifth Season* (246 pgs.)

10/30 - Discussion of collaborative presentation assignment and formation of groups; *Lost for Words* (film)

11/6 - *Praisesong for the Widow* (256 pgs.)

11/13 – Discussion of long paper assignment; group presentations and supporting documentation due

11/20 - *As We Are Now* (133 pgs.)

11/27 - Presentation by Dr. Roger Dunn on artistic depictions of aging

12/4 - *The Stone Angel* (308 pgs.)

12/11 - Long paper due (15 pgs.) with one page abstract for oral presentation; *Wild Strawberries* (film)

**I look forward to spending the semester together exploring this subject.
The best of luck in all your courses!**