

English 683: Structure of Fiction
Michael Parker Fall 2008
3308 HHRA 334-4696 mfparker@uncg.edu
Office Hours: Th 12-2 and by appointment.

This is a course designed for students in the MFA program in Creative Writing and other interested parties curious about the art of narrative fiction. The emphasis, as the title suggests, is on structure, though any talk of structure requires intense discussion of form. We'll be looking closely at form-- the harmonious blending of all fictional elements—in the three primary categories of fiction: short story, novella and novel.

Needless to say, you need to read the assigned works in full before class. If for some reason you find yourself behind with the reading, you're still expected to show up for class. I don't have a formal attendance policy as this is a graduate seminar and I expect you all to be there every week. If you do have to miss class, I'd like to know about it in advance.

As for requirements, you will be responsible for one in-class oral presentation on some formal or structural aspect of an assigned narrative (around 20-25 minutes of class time); and a 10-15 page paper due near the end of class. Class participation is also considered a requirement in such a conveniently small seminar.

CALENDAR

AUGUST

26--Class Introduction. Handouts: "Tobias Wolff, "Say Yes," "Bullet in the Brain."

SEPTEMBER

2—Intro Cont'd. Handouts: "What the Thunder Said," Janet Peery, "Argument and Persuasion," Donald Hall, "Work," Denis Johnson. (handouts)

9— "The Pedersen Kid," William Gass, handout; "The Left-Handed Woman," Peter Handke (handout)

16—*Madame Bovary*, Gustave Flaubert

23—*Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf

30—*The Wild Palms*, William Faulkner

OCTOBER

07-- *Mrs. Bridge*, Evan Connell

14—*Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Marquez; *Fishboy*, Mark Richard

21—Fall Break

28—No Class

NOVEMBER

04—*Suttree*, Cormac McCarthy

11—*So Long, See You Tomorrow*, William Maxwell

18—*Waterland*, Graham Swift

25—*The End of the Story*, Lydia Davis

DECEMBER

02—*Veronica*, Mary Gaitskill **Final papers due**