AP/EN 4130 6.0 A (S1):
The Short Story

Instructor: Doug Freake
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Time: Monday and Wednesday, 11:30-2:30

Description:

EN 4140 3.0 provides an overview of the short story genre from its inception in the early nineteenth century to the present. It combines the close reading of short story texts from many countries with the study of important theoretical approaches to the short story form. Although “stories” are ubiquitous in cultures worldwide, the modern literary short story is a particular, and complicated, type of story. The short story is a form associated with aspects of “modernity,” in terms of its actual production (in journals and magazines, for example) and in terms of its tone, often reflective of “alienation” as a modern(istic) theme or trope. The form is extremely diverse, producing examples of both popular and rarefied tales (ghost stories and Borges, not to mention hybrids such as Henry James’ “The Turn of the Screw.”) The short story is sometimes thought of as a lesser offshoot of the novel, at others as a particularly refined sort of fiction that approaches the subtlety and refinement of poetry. The course explores the richness of particular stories (many great short stories, in spite of their shortness, illuminate large swaths of history and culture) and highlights theories of the short story that explain its nature and its power.

Course Requirements:

Class presentation, on one short story, to be handed in as a 2-3-page written assignment: 15%
Essay 1 (6-8 pages): 25%
Essay 2 (6-8 pages): 25%
Participation (this includes attendance and contributions to class discussions): 15%
Final test: 20%

Texts:

Note: most of the stories in the syllabus are available on line. A full syllabus will be available from the instructor as of March 10, 2012 (see

The following text will need to be purchased or found in a library: Alice Munro, *Who Do You Think You Are?*