

Northeastern Illinois University
Reading 116
Fall 2009 Syllabus

Instructor: James O'Connor, M.A.

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Times and Location: MW 4:15pm – 5:30pm, El Centro Room 122

Office Hours: I will be available for office hours in the El Centro Instructor's Office following the end of each class meeting and at other times by appointment. Please feel free to see me in office hours or to contact me at any time with any questions or concerns you may have.

If you wish to try to contact me by phone, you may also call the main El Centro number (773-442-4080) during the normal hours of operation. If I am not available, someone will take a message for me and leave it in my mailbox. However, e-mail is usually the best way to reach me.

Please use your NEIU email account when contacting me by email. It is a good idea to get in the habit of regularly checking your NEIU email account because you will be receiving announcements and university correspondence there.

Required Books and Materials: Please obtain these books as soon as possible, either at the temporary El Centro bookstore or at the bookstore at the Main Campus.

Troyka, Lynn Quitman and Joseph Wayne Thweatt. *Structured Reading* (with MyReadingLab), Seventh Edition (2009)

Cormier, Robert. *Heroes*. New York: Dell Laurel – Leaf (1998)

You will also need a good portable dictionary for this class.

There will be an on-line component to this course (www.myreadinglab.com). The sign-in codes for this site are packaged with the *Structured Reading* book. It is important that you save them because we will be using MyReadingLab beginning in the second week of the semester.

In addition to pencils, pens, highlighters, etc., I suggest you have a notebook and folder dedicated to this class, a USB flash drive, and a stapler. **All multi-page assignments for this class must be stapled.**

You will need to use a computer for this class, for both word processing and Internet access. There are computer labs with Internet access and free printing available here at El Centro. Be sure to get set up for NEIU e-mail as soon as possible; you will need it to get free printing.

Blackboard: We will be using Blackboard this semester, so make sure you are up and running with it by the end of the first week of classes. Announcements, course documents, assignments, and required readings will be posted on Blackboard throughout the semester. Please check it regularly and as directed.

Reading Lab: You will be receiving information soon about the Reading Lab. It exists to help you with all of your reading needs as NEIU students. I suggest that, early in the semester, all students familiarize themselves with all of the tutoring and other academic support services available to them (especially the Writing Lab). Take advantage of these services. They are for all NEIU students, and they can help savvy and motivated students to improve both their grades and their overall learning experience.

Course Objectives: Reading is the single most important skill for the university student. Reading is essential for success in every class in every department. Developing your skills as a reader drastically improves your chances for success in academics as well as in your working life and better prepares you to participate as a responsible citizen. Reading is also intimately linked with writing, and being a more proficient and critical reader will be invaluable when you are called upon to produce your own texts. Furthermore, reading can enrich your life in ways you may not have even imagined.

The main purpose of this course is to prepare you for the kind of reading you will be required to do throughout your college career and beyond. College reading demands much more skill and strategy than casual reading or reading for pleasure. In your courses you will be reading both to obtain information and to understand arguments. In order to read well, you will need to read *actively*.

In Reading 116 we will be working on strategies for effectively and efficiently reading both expository and narrative prose. We will respond to the reading we do in class discussions, small group discussions, and in writing. We will also improve our research skills and our research related writing. Students who successfully complete this course will be better readers than they were before. They will be better writers. They will also be better prepared for the rest of their college careers in terms of vocabulary and critical thinking skills.

Requirements: In order to succeed in this course, students will need to do the reading and writing that is required of them. Students are expected to participate in class discussions. Students are also required to do one research project and to make a Power Point presentation that is based on their research project to the class. **Please remember that you are responsible for keeping copies of all of your assignments for the semester. You may be including some of these in a portfolio at the end of the semester.**

There will be tests and quizzes (including unannounced quizzes) in this class, including a final examination. Students are also required to do on-line assignments on MyReadingLab and other reading and writing assignments (both in class and outside of class).

Attendance: **Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes.** In keeping with university policy, more than three hours of unexcused absence will cause your grade to be lowered by one letter. Further absences will have a further negative impact on a student's grade. University policy will be followed. (It is important to familiarize yourself with all the university policies set forth in the Catalog and the Student Handbook.) Decisions regarding absences are at the discretion of the instructor. An absence will only be excused in cases of serious illness or in rare emergency situations. If you are ever absent and if you would like your absence to be

considered as an excused absence you must present a letter of explanation to the instructor the day you return. The letter should state the circumstances of the absence, and any relevant documentation (a doctor's note, for example) should be attached.

If some extraordinary circumstance does cause you to be absent, it is best to get in touch with me via email or telephone on the day of the absence to inform me about the situation. When you return to class it is expected that you will be prepared for any tests or quizzes given on the day of your return. You will also be responsible for staying current with readings and assignments.

Also, it is very important to be on time for class. If you arrive more than five minutes late you will be considered tardy. Every three instances of tardiness will be counted as one unexcused absence.

Students who miss the first day of class without prior notification of the instructor are liable to lose their seat in the class. Students not in attendance on the first day of class will not be allowed to add into the class.

Assignments: Hard copies of assignments will be due at the beginning of class on the date assigned. Electronic submissions will only be accepted in the event of an absence. (They then should be emailed to the instructor as Word document attachments.) Late assignments will be accepted only at the discretion of the instructor and are subject to being marked down. Assignments are due even in the event of absence. Students should keep backup copies of all assignments in case of emergency. Unless specifically stated otherwise, all assignments are to be word-processed (printed from the computer or typed). Please use a standard font size (10 point or 12 point) and one-inch margins. Multi-page assignments should be stapled.

Classroom Policies: Please turn off cell phones and pagers and other non-necessary electronic devices while in class. If you need to keep your phone on because you may be receiving an extremely urgent call (for example, from a family member who is ill), please inform me before class.

Please do not eat in the classroom. Beverages (such as water and coffee) are acceptable.

Assessment: Your final grade will be based on the following:

Participation	15%
Tests and quizzes (other than final exam)	35%
Research assignment (paper and presentation)	20%
Other Assignments	20%
On-line component	10%

Plagiarism: It is very important that you do your own original work. No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated in this class. University policy will be followed in any cases of academic dishonesty.

A Final Word: My goal is to foster a relaxed and supportive academic environment in which all students will feel comfortable asking questions and participating in class discussions. Please assist me in this.

For Wednesday, read and annotate the following portions of *Structured Reading*:

pp. 1-2, Chapters 1, 2, 3, and the "Guide to Dictionary Use" pp. 417 - 425

Do the exercises for each chapter. You can do them in the book or in a notebook.

A week-by week schedule with reading assignments, test dates, and assignment due dates will be provided on September 2.

The syllabus and schedule of assignments are subject to modification.