

ENGLISH 1114  
Reading Literature: Wit and Wisdom  
Spring 2014, Block 4

Professor: Dr. Aaron Butler  
Office phone: (704) 637-4390  
Home phone: (704) 637-0489 (feel free to call me, as long as it's not between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.)  
E-mail: [abbutler@catawba.edu](mailto:abbutler@catawba.edu)  
Office: Admin. 301  
Office hours: Monday 4-6, Wednesday 3-5, Thursday 4-6, and by appointment  
Classroom: Admin. 318  
Class meets from April 10<sup>th</sup> to May 8<sup>th</sup> on Mondays and Thursdays from 6 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. (except for Monday, April 21<sup>st</sup>); it also meets on Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> from 8 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

---

Texts

*Wit* by Margaret Edson

*Much Ado about Nothing* by William Shakespeare

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

**Bring to first class:** *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde

**Note: The first night of class, you will attend a performance of Oscar Wilde's play that is being presented on the Catawba campus. The class will meet in the classroom at 6 and talk about some basic aspects of the play before you see it. (You do not need to read it ahead of time.) The class will go to Hedrick Little Theatre at 7, and the play will begin at 7:30. It may run a little past 9:45; if it does, you will receive some class time off at a later point. We will discuss the play and the performance more at the second class meeting. If you miss the first class meeting on April 10<sup>th</sup>, you are required to go to the play on Friday or Saturday (April 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>).**

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will read and understand primary works in literature, religion, philosophy, or the fine arts.
2. Students will analyze how these works reflect, respond to, and shape social, political, religious and/or intellectual contexts.
3. Students will write about these works from rhetorical, aesthetic, analytical, or ethical perspectives.

Student achievement of these outcomes will be measured by means of writing assignments and specific portions of the exams.

Course Description

What is wit? What constitutes wisdom? How are they different? What can literature teach us about ourselves as we read about characters who attempt to exercise their wit and increase their wisdom? This class focuses on several works of literature related to understanding these qualities and thereby understanding oneself better. The class explores and discusses what these works tell us about the characters we will encounter and how their experiences connect to our lives and real-world events.

In the course of this exploration, you will also learn ways to analyze and interpret the works we read so that you can better appreciate works of literature. Classes will consist primarily of discussions of the works we read, and you will be expected to participate regularly in these discussions.

Assignments, Attendance, and Grading

Your course grade will consist of the following:

Writing assignments and quizzes – 50%

Final exam – 30%

Class participation and some in-class work – 20%

Writing assignments must be submitted when they are due in order to receive full credit; if you miss class, submit writing assignments by the beginning of class. Work which does not represent a real attempt to complete an assignment will receive a grade of zero. In-class work and quizzes usually cannot be made up at a later date.

Students are expected to be in attendance every class period and to be ready to contribute to the discussion of the readings. Missing more than one class will lower your final average, and missing more than two class meetings means that you fail the class, except in extraordinary circumstances. Missing part of class counts as a partial absence equal to the proportion of the class missed. Attendance and lateness problems also affect your participation grade.

While class is going on, your focus should be on the work that we are doing. There should be no texting or other electronic communications except during breaks. Also, electronic devices are not to be used during the final exam; such use will be considered an honor code violation.

### Honor Code

Students enrolled in this course are obligated to observe the College Honor Code as stated below and to conduct themselves in accordance with the standards set forth in it:

*As a member of the Catawba College community, I will practice academic honesty, communicate truthfully, and show respect for the rights and property of others. I will also encourage others in the community to behave honorably.*

Instances of cheating and plagiarism will be dealt with severely. Please ask me if you have questions about proper use and documentation of sources.

### Resources for help

Please feel free to make an appointment with me or to contact me by phone or e-mail to discuss your work and any other aspects of the course. I am always glad to talk with students about their writing, reading, and other concerns.

The Writing Center is another source of feedback on your writing for this or any other course. The Catawba College Writing Center provides free, one-on-one consultations to *all* Catawba students. Writing Center tutors have been intensely trained, and while they won't rewrite students' papers for them, they will give students feedback and encouragement at all stages of the writing process (brainstorming, drafting, revising, polishing). Students who use the Writing Center should be prepared to discuss the assignment they are working on and to begin making revisions, with the tutor's guidance, during the session. All appointments take place face-to-face. The Writing Center is open afternoons (in Admin. 211) and evenings (in the Library). Walk-ins are welcome, but the Writing Center honors appointments first. Appointments can be scheduled online at [www.catawba.edu/writingcenter](http://www.catawba.edu/writingcenter).

### General schedule (subject to change, as needed)

4/10 Introduction to *The Importance of Being Earnest*; the class will attend the play this evening, as well, in Hedrick Little Theatre

4/14 Discussion of *The Importance of Being Earnest*

4/17 Finish discussion of *Earnest*; start discussion of *Frankenstein*

4/21 Easter Monday (no class)

4/24 *Frankenstein*

4/26 Finish *Frankenstein*; start *Much Ado about Nothing*

4/28 Continue discussion of *Much Ado about Nothing*

5/1 Finish *Much Ado*; start discussion of *Wit*

5/5 *Wit*

5/8 Final exam