

**English 162, 162W
Literature and Place**

II. Criteria for Perspectives Courses

Justification

Please describe how the course will address criteria for Perspectives on the Liberal Arts courses. Be sure to include an explanation of the course's specific learning goals for students to make a connection between these and the general criteria for Perspectives courses.

In studying the various roles place can have in a literary work when it becomes more than setting, 162 introduces students to the reading and analysis of literature. It teaches the basic techniques of close reading, explication, and writing about literary texts, and it introduces students to different critical methods and perspectives. It helps students understand and appreciate the special kinds of knowledge or consciousness that literature provides, the complexities and resonances of literary language, and the various ways in which texts may interact with other texts and with cultural, historical, and geographical realities. It shows how literature exposes us to experiences and perspectives other than our own because of differences of time, place, race, class, and gender, and how literature may also show us our own experience and place from other perspectives.

How do places, with their history, traditions, myths, customs, tensions, social structures, and physical form, shape people's lives? What does it mean to have a home or not to have a home? What does it mean to change places, either voluntarily or involuntarily? How do different people experience the same place differently? How do places change over time, and how do they remain constant? How do certain places assume a mythic status? How do places develop their own cultures? Why do we need to invent non-existent places or think about places that are not and may never be part of our experience? In asking such questions through literary works, the course brings the resources of literature to bear on a topic with which everyone can identify and which is part of everyone's experience and thinking. To the perspectives on place that may be offered by historical, sociological, urban studies, anthropological, and other viewpoints, this course adds the consideration of how we represent place and our relationship to it in literary form. It uses the literature to deepen the students' appreciation of the rich, complex, and varied engagement between human beings and the places they inhabit and imagine.

The course studies how writers of diverse sensibility and background experience and represent a place. A particular question that it asks is how the mediating presence of place produces different responses to that place conditioned upon the writers' differences in race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and historical and cultural moment. Even sections that limit the scope of the material to a given historical period would demonstrate the changes that occur in the specific time period in the development of literary form and content, in historical and political changes, in changes in cultural mood, and in the sense that any cultural moment represents a change from a previous moment or era. Sections of the course with larger frames of reference are, in fact, *about* change, as the place itself

undergoes transformation. Part of the subject matter of the course is the examination of the writer as he or she confronts the transformation of a native or adoptive home.

162 engages students in active inquiry by requiring of them extensive analytical, interpretive, and, in many cases, research writing, as well as by involving them in extensive class discussion.

As in any literature course, students will be studying primary literary texts.

Criteria Checklist

Please be sure that your justification addresses all three criteria 1-3, below. For criteria 4-8, please check all that apply and discuss these in your justification.

A Perspectives course must:

1. Be designed to introduce students to how a particular discipline creates knowledge and understanding.
2. Position the discipline(s) within the liberal arts and the larger society.
3. Address the goals defined for the particular Area(s) of Knowledge the course is designed to fulfill.

In addition, a Perspectives course will, where appropriate to its discipline(s) and subject matter:

4. Be global or comparative in approach.
- X 5. Consider diversity and the nature and construction of forms of difference.
- X 6. Engage students in active inquiry.
- X 7. Reveal the existence and importance of change over time.
- X 8. Use primary documents and materials.

III. Course Materials, Assignments, and Activities

Please provide an annotated list of course readings and descriptions of major assignments or exams for the course, as well as distinctive student activities that will engage students in working toward the course goals discussed in the course description and/or justification.

Please include the author and title for each reading or text, along with a short description providing information about how the reading will contribute to course goals

Sections will use different topics and texts, but all sections will address the general issues of literature, place, and the liberal arts discussed in the Justification above. See sample syllabi below.

IV. Assessment

Perspectives courses must be recertified every five years, and we are seeking ideas for how to best carry out this assessment. What forms of evidence that the course is meeting its goals as a Perspectives course would be appropriate to collect for this course during the next five years? How would you prefer assessment to be conducted? How might evidence of effective teaching and student learning be collected and evaluated?

The Department will collect and submit syllabi and will also design questionnaires for both instructors and students to evaluate the course.

V. Administration

What process will your department develop to oversee this course, suggest and approve changes, and conduct assessment? Who will be in charge of this process?

The PLAS English courses and their assessment will be administered by the Chair or her designee, most likely either the Curriculum Committee or the Director of Undergraduate Studies (Associate Chair). The Chair or her designee will collect syllabi to make sure that the PLAS criteria are being fulfilled and to maintain a file that other instructors can consult. The Chair or her designee will meet with part-timers assigned to PLAS courses in advance of their teaching the courses to make sure they understand the PLAS criteria and to help them develop syllabi. Any changes in the course, like curricular changes in general, would be proposed by the Curriculum Committee and voted on by the Department.