

# ENGL 23800-003: Introduction to Fiction

## Houses, Homes, and Havens



### Course Information

This course is entitled “ENGL 23800-003: Introduction to Fiction” (CRN: 32019). This course will take place between June 13-August 2, 2022 (MOD 2/3) and is a distance learning course, meaning it will take place entirely online and asynchronously. You can access our course calendar, which includes readings and due dates for all assignments, [here](#).

### Instructor Information

Name: Alex Anderson

Email: [ande1204@purdue.edu](mailto:ande1204@purdue.edu)

Student Hours: Thursdays, 9:00-10:00 a.m. over [Zoom](#) (meeting linked) or by appointment

### Course Description

This course will introduce you to a variety of narrative forms and styles as well as the basic tools necessary for understanding, analyzing, and writing about fiction. The particular focus of this course is on the roles that homes, houses, and havens play in a range of forms, genres, and styles of fiction. We will explore questions like, “What does it mean to feel at home? What does home look like for people occupying a range of subject positions with differing gender identities, ages, class statuses, abilities, races, and sexual orientations?”

To help us explore these questions, we will study the basic elements that make up works of fiction, including plot, setting, point of view, and more. We will examine how they produce cultural commentary and ultimately develop, through reading, writing, and discussion, a working definition of *fiction*: what it is, what it does, and the kinds of meanings it can generate.

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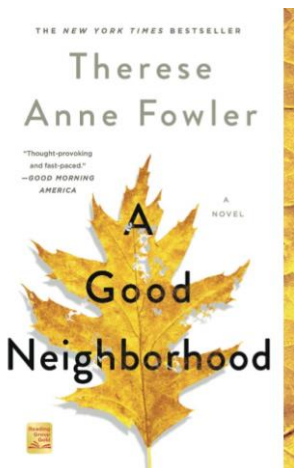
## Learning Outcomes

English 23800 is a three-credit course designed to teach students how to read fiction critically. It promotes understanding and appreciation of the range, values, techniques, and meanings of genres of fiction. By the end of the semester, you will be able to do the following:

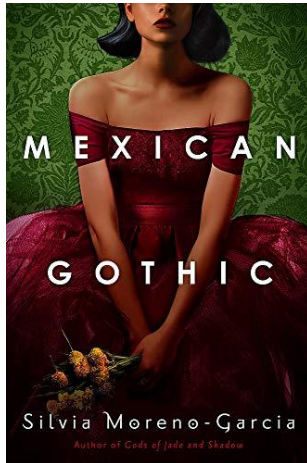
- Define “fiction” along with other key literary terms and identify significant features of literary styles and genres
  - Discuss significant social and cultural functions of fiction
  - Draw on relevant cultural and historical information to situate texts within their proper contexts
  - Adopt methods such as argumentation and analysis to interpret assigned texts and understand how those methods contribute to understanding the meaning of literary works
  - Use logic and creativity to produce original projects and persuasive arguments
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## Required Texts & Materials

### Texts



*A Good Neighborhood* by Therese Anne Fowler  
(ISBN: 978-1250237293)



*Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia  
(ISBN: 978-0525620785)

🏠 All other course readings will be available via the Brightspace course site.

🏠 **A note about the required texts:** Because fiction is often inspired by or intended to portray real or realistic people, places, and/or situations, these novels contain some themes, scenes, and/or ideas that may be upsetting to read. If you are concerned about the contents of these texts, I encourage you to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

## Materials

- A reliable internet connection
- A computer
- A program that can open PDFs such as Adobe Acrobat
- Word-processing software such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs

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## Course Expectations

Virtual courses differ considerably from in-person courses. Class discussion takes place entirely on the discussion board forums on Brightspace. My lectures for each set of texts and literary terms will likewise be available on the course's Brightspace page at least one week before we are scheduled to discuss them.

Most of your communication with me and with your classmates will happen via email or Brightspace. Make sure to use appropriate conventions—such as a subject line, salutation, and professional signature—when communicating with your instructor and peers via email. You should also check your email frequently, engage with the discussion boards regularly (as required according to course guidelines), and ask questions as needed.

Please note that the discussion boards on our Brightspace course site are intended to replicate in-person discussions. I encourage polite academic debate, but remember to be civil and professional when discussing course texts. Do not insult, harm, or threaten to harm others; offensive language and hostility will not be tolerated. The first instance of inappropriate behavior/language will result in an email discussion with me; if the behavior persists, more serious action will be taken.

This is a condensed course, which means that it is intensive and fast-paced. We have a lot of material to cover. You will need to use your best time-management skills to stay on top of the reading and meet the deadlines for all of the assignments. I encourage you to ask questions or otherwise communicate with me as often as necessary and as soon as possible; this will help you to avoid falling behind and ensure that you engage with the course as much as you can.

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## Assignments & Grading

Note: More detailed guidelines (including assignment sheets and assessment information) for these assignments are available on the course website. See the [course schedule](#) for each assignment's due date.

### Short Writings (cumulatively 40%)

- **Discussion Posts & Peer Responses (30%):**
  - **Initial Posts:** These 500-word posts ask you to think about and discuss the assigned texts. In these posts, you will practice using terms and concepts that are central to interpreting fiction through a variety of prompts. These prompts may ask you to respond to certain texts, identify a particular literary device(s) within a text, explain a device's function, close read a passage, or otherwise engage with the assigned material. **These posts will not be graded for completion.** Please follow the rubric on our Brightspace to receive full credit.
  - **Peer Responses:** In these 150-word discussion board posts, you will engage with your peers' longer responses. You can ask questions, offer additional/alternative interpretations and commentary, identify other relevant passages, make connections with other readings, and so on. These response posts offer the opportunity to strengthen each other's interpretive abilities and push class members to continue to think critically about the assigned texts.
- **Project Proposals (10%):** Project proposals prompt you to brainstorm the major ideas, pieces of textual evidence, and claims of significance that you

plan to include in your Close Reading and Comparative Analysis essays. These proposals are meant to be exploratory (that is, you are not married to the ideas you submit); however, they are excellent opportunities for you to receive feedback on your essays' most crucial elements before the final drafts are due.

### **Projects (cumulatively 60%)**

These projects serve as a more formal and lengthier engagement with course readings. Note that you may not select the same text for multiple projects. For example, if you write your first paper about *A Good Neighborhood*, it cannot be the subject of another project.

- **Close Reading Essay (20%):** Select a passage in one of the texts we've read during weeks 1-4. In 1,000-1,200 words, interpret that passage as a microcosm for the broader concerns of the text.
- **Comparative Analysis Essay (25%):** Compare the representations of homes, houses, or havens in two of the texts we've read during weeks 1-6. In 1,750-2,000 words (excluding your Works Cited page), compare how these elements function in each text, focusing on a few literary devices to prove your point.
- **Film Adaptation & Reflective Essay (15%):** Select one of the assigned readings and conceptualize its film adaptation. For this assignment, you will decide a color palette for the film, create a playlist for the score, and design a poster (including a tagline) to advertise your work. In addition, you must write a 750-word explaining your rhetorical choices, emphasizing how those choices emphasize important literary devices of the source material.

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### **Course Policies**

You can find a thorough list of student resources [here](#). I encourage you to be aware and to take advantage of these resources as you need. If you have questions regarding these resources or feel you have a need that is not being met by any of those available, feel free to reach out to me (or to your advisor). If I do not know the answer to your question(s), I will put you in contact with someone who does.

To ensure your success in this course, in particular, please keep the following policies in mind.

### **Assignments**

I will post detailed assignment instructions on Brightspace. You can email me, set up a Zoom meeting, or schedule an appointment to visit me during Student Hours if you have any specific questions or concerns about the assignments. Because this

course has been condensed from a 16- to an 8-week course, I will not be able to provide you with extensions for Discussion Board posts; however, should you find yourself unable to complete a Biweekly Project by its due date, I may be able to grant you an extension of 24 hours. If you require an extension, please let me know via email 48 hours in advance.

### **Statement on Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty is unacceptable. “Dishonesty,” here, is a capacious signifier for acts including but not limited to: submitting someone else’s work as yours; using words, phrases, or sentences from the work of others; and using materials written by others after making slight changes (paraphrasing). Any amount of plagiarism, even a short phrase that you’ve copied from a webpage without attribution, will result in an automatic zero on the assignment and may be reported to the Dean of Students. Please note that a 0% is far more damaging than an honestly earned F (up to 60%). I am available for questions if you have concerns about academic honesty.

### **Statement on Disability**

Purdue requires that students who are eligible for academic accommodations due to a disability must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) before any classroom accommodations may be provided. Please contact me ASAP if you are having trouble securing accommodations or if you have needs you would like to discuss.

### **Statement of Emergency Preparedness**

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, assignments, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change due to circumstances beyond the instructor’s control. Should such an event occur, I’ll be in touch with necessary changes.

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## **Course Schedule**

Below is an overview of how our course is organized. For a more detailed course schedule (including scaffolding assignments and their due dates), please see our [course calendar](#).

### **Unit 1: A House Is Not a Home**

- **Week 1:** *A Good Neighborhood* (Part I, pp. 3-123)
- **Week 2:** *A Good Neighborhood* (Part II, pp. 123-227)
- **Close Reading Essay Proposal due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, June 24**
- **Week 3:** *A Good Neighborhood*, (Part 3 & Epilogue, pp. 232-311)

- Close Reading Essay due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, July 1



## Unit 2: Haunted Houses

- Week 4: [“Ghostless”](#) by Ann Pancake
- Comparative Analysis Essay Proposal due by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, July 14
- Week 5: *Mexican Gothic* (pp. 3-157)
- Week 6: *Mexican Gothic* (pp. 158-301)
- Comparative Analysis Essay due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, July 22



## Unit 3: Unexpected Havens (Home Is Where the Heart Is)

- Weeks 7 & 8: [“Wolf-Alice”](#) by Angela Carter
- Creative Adaptation Project due by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, August 2