

Axioms and Methodology for this Course

Axiom:

Literature is (at least on some level) didactic. It communicates a particular worldview to the reader.

Corollary:

Because literature is a speech act (an act of communication), it is analogous to other forms of writing that are more explicitly expository or persuasive.

Corollary:

It is the reader's job to uncover the meaning that the text is attempting to communicate.

Corollary:

This is complicated by the fact that literature seldom is *explicitly* didactic. The point of view of the text must usually be inferred (using the logic of synecdoche).

Methodology:

These inferences are made
by examining patterns
within a text.

Axiom:

This works because the default assumption will always be that details and ways of presenting information exist for a reason: to better facilitate communication with the reader.

Corollary:

This means the focus should be on the text and what is provable. If an inference cannot be explained with reference to the text, it is largely irrelevant.

Methodology:

This class will be concerned with ways of breaking down information in the text into the patterns that construct meaning.

Immediate Agenda:

The first analytical tool we will be investigating is the way characterization reveals meaning. What are the characters like, and what do their reactions to events reveal about the world in which they inhabit?

Questions and Discussion

Procedure for Collation

- I collate by topic.
- I simplify the questions.
- I sometimes reconfigure questions to address what *should* have been asked (but was only implied) in the original question.
- Anytime I use a question verbatim, I will almost always silently correct minor spelling or grammatical mistakes.
- I will not include every question, especially if it is too close to feeding you answers for the task you will be asked to do on your own.

Procedure for Discussion

- The purpose is to help you get to the point where you can effectively navigate the task you will be doing on your own.
- I already understand how the text works. This is not for me.
- If overall engagement is low, I will assume you view this intermediate step as a waste of time, and we will move on to the assignment.
- The collated questions are just setting an agenda. We do not necessarily have to stick to this agenda.
- Sometimes (oftentimes) there will not be any need to even answer all the questions in the collation, as the answers should begin to become obvious after a while.