This is a reading course for fiction writers, designed to acquaint, or to re-acquaint, you with some basic works, in a variety of fictional genres—from realism to fabulism to so-called metafiction. (That’s what *The Tempest*, which isn’t fiction at all, is doing here.) You’ve read some of them before: old warhorses of the Western Canon, and stuff every creative writing teacher trots out. (“Hills Like White Elephants” again?) You can still learn from them—and anyway, would you listen to your favorite song only once? And some of them you may feel guilty for not having read. These works aren’t all of the least you need to know—where’s *Anna Karenina*? where’s *Hamlet*? where’s *Infinite Jest*?—but most serious fiction writers know most of them. They’re fundamental points of reference. Fair warning: coming at you week after week, all this Greatness might grind you down—we’ll intersperse the longer works with shorter pieces to give you time to keep up—so come prepared to read hard. But you won’t be bored. All authors guaranteed dead. The “learning outcome” is that students will become better readers and get some basic texts under their belts.

Students are required to come to all classes and to write short response papers every two or three weeks. Grades depend on participation and the understanding shown in the papers.

Here’s the university’s policy on plagiarism: “Plagiarism is defined in the UM Student Conduct Code as representing another person’s words, ideas, data, or materials as one’s own. Consequences include failing an assignment, failing a course, or even expulsion.”

Here’s the boilerplate about disabilities: “Qualified students
with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please come and see me. Be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator.”

This syllabus is subject to change.