Introduction to English & American Literary Studies
Group 2: Analysis of narrative fiction

I. Carry out your own analysis of the sample chapter(s) by using and discussing the following criteria:

a) What do we know about the author of this work, and about the work itself (when written, what kind of novel)? What cultural knowledge do we need to understand the text?

b) In this excerpt, what story is being told/narrated? What actions and topics are announced by the "synoptic" title? What expectations does it awake?

c) Narrative modes: narratorial report, comment, description; direct speech (scenic narration). Find examples of these. Then find textual samples of various narratorial functions (e.g., speaks to fictitious reader, characterizes, assumes something about a number of readers, attaches value to actions or attitudes, speaks of narrative process, places action in time, etc.). In each case, find out what purpose the function serves and how it guides the reader's response (e.g., establish confidential relationship between narrator and reader, create a certain idea of a character, involve the reader in assumptions, get to know narrator's social values, anticipate action to arouse interest, etc.). Prepare a chart with columns for these categories.

d) Divide the chapter(s) into units of meaning, based on the following categories: What characters are involved? What kind of utterance is being made (e.g., summary, assumption, announcement, flattery, report, description, question, advice, etc.)? Who is the addressee (e.g., the reader in general terms, only a certain number or kind of readers, a particular character, etc.)? Who is speaking/narrating? A new section begins with a new answer to any of these questions. Prepare a chart with columns for these questions. How do these units relate to each other?

e) What do we learn about the narrator's attitude to any of the characters? And about the narrator's attitude to the reader?

II. Present the results of your analysis in the course:

Ask course members to read the text in advance. Describe the outline/structure of your presentation. Explain information as in (a) above. Ask/Answer questions about lexical and syntactic comprehension. Have someone read the title. Ask questions about it (as above). Involve course members in finding narratorial modes / functions and their purposes: explain relevant kinds, and ask course members to go through sections of text and identify them and their purposes. Announce relevant kinds of utterance (as in (d)): then involve course members in finding such units of meaning. Ask how these units relate to or build on each other. Ask course members: Do we learn anything about the narrator's attitude to any of the characters? And about the narrator's attitude to the reader?

Try to avoid reading out a fully formulated text, and make your presentation as oral and communicative as possible. Prepare a blackboard or transparency structuring of categories and fill in results of discussion. If these results are different from your charts, discuss the differences with course members. NB. The course instructor may help at any time.

Group members: