My syllabus's impressive, academic, introductory literary quote in italics and small caps:

*I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain.* —BLADE RUNNER

Revealing Preamble:

One of my favorite literary anecdotes, though doubtless apocryphal [look it up], involves the 20th Century poets Dylan Thomas and Theodore Roethke. Thomas was a brilliant though over-rated Welsh poet and a drunk. Roethke an under-rated Seattle poet and a drunk. Contemporaries, Thomas had achieved world-wide fame for his often impenetrable though equally-as-often towering and majestic phrasing. Roethke suffered obscurity and toiled at U-Dub. No biggie. Anyroad, sometime in the early 1950s, Thomas's U.S. publishing company, New Directions Press, paid for Thomas to criss-cross the United States on a book and lecture tour. Thomas had read Roethke and of course Roethke knew Thomas's work intimately. Well, Thomas invited Roethke to visit him (Thomas) in Thomas's Seattle hotel room to spend an afternoon together. As I stated earlier, both poets were notorious drunkards (I say that without the slightest sense of reprobation [look it up]). Roethke gleefully anticipated an afternoon of endless whiskies and Guinesses and cigs. When the appointed day arrived, Roethke rode the elevator up to Thomas's floor, seeped in glee that he was about to get absolutely blotto with the most famous poet on the entire planet. The elevator doors opened at Thomas's floor, and as Roethke disembarked, he trembled with anticipation at the looming binge he would share (Y'all [as you Americans would say] know where this is going). He found Thomas's room and knocked on the door, his mouth dry. He licked his lips. He swallowed. Thomas opened the door and they introduced themselves. They shook hands. Thomas ushered Roethke inside, closed the door and said:

"I've taken the liberty to order up some room service." (This was long before the days of mini-bars.)

Roethke took a deep breath of anticipation. "Room service?" he asked, salivating.
"A sharpener?"
"Yes. It seems you American chaps have electric sharpeners."
"For pencils?"
"Yes. Quite. No wonder you Yanks won the war."
"Pencils?" Roethke asked one last time.
"I thought we might spend the afternoon copying out some poems. You know, Coleridge, Wordsworth, 'Death Be Not Proud,' 'Dover Beach.' And any others you fancy."
"Well, sure. Sounds fine. Something new. At least to me. But, er — "
"What?" Thomas asked.
"Did you order up anything to drink?"
Thomas laughed and slapped Roethke on the back. "Of course," he roared. "Gallons of Earl Grey!"
"The 'gallons' part at least sounds good," Roethke said. "Is it brandy? Whiskey?"
Before Thomas could answer, a knock came to the door.
"Yes?" Thomas called through.
"Room service," a male voice called back from out in the hall.
"Ah," Thomas said, rubbing his smallish hands with glee. He opened the door and the valet steered in a wheeled cart draped with immaculate white linen. Atop the linen were indeed a well-arranged wealth of pencils and erasers and notebooks. And, too, a teapot steeping under a quilted, crimson cozy and, beside it, two teacups and saucers.
Roethke, no fool, now knew. "Let me guess," he said, indicating the cozied teapot. "This is the Earl Grey."
"At least the American version," Thomas pointed out.
Later, Ted Roethke would immortalize this story, though Dylan Thomas died in a New York hotel room (from drinking 53 whiskeys in a single evening) before he could corroborate it. Roethke, for his part, insisted that, though he had read those poems many many times, by meticulously writing out those poems by hand, he for the first time experienced the power of their poets and their poetry, insisting that he was able to enter into them in a depth, a dimension, and a visceral understanding he had hitherto never known.

All-Important Syllabus Caveat Emptor:

We may need to change this document more than once throughout the next 10 weeks. Thus, do NOT print out this syllabus unless you are prepared to print out any and all subsequent updates.

English Department Course Outcomes:

1. You will read and respond to literary works from a variety of cultures and from a range of historical periods.
2. You will read and respond to literary works of poetry, fiction, and drama; you may also read nonfiction or view films, depending on the organization and orientation of class materials.
3. You will demonstrate an understanding of how literary elements such as character development, setting, and figurative language relate to literary meaning.
4. In accordance with the General Education Writing Requirement, you will submit at least seven pages of writing "that is assessed for content and mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation, and organization)."

Instructor Contact Info:

Office: Black 225-26 (I'm rarely, if ever, there)
Cell Email: professorbrityank@live.com (preferred because it links directly to my Q10 and, thus, has the immediacy of a text)
Office Hours: MWF 9:00 - 9:50 in Hebeler 218 and any daytime seven days a week by appointment.

**Colin Hester's Wretched Nightmarish Version of This Class:**

Those of you as prescient [look it up] as Mr Roethke will have already groaningly grasped the painful reality: yes, I am D.T., Hebeler 121 is my hotel room and you, my students, are my Teds. As such, you will need lined notepaper, a squadron of Mirado Black Warrior #2 pencils, and a sharpener. With these sacred and ancient instruments, you will transcribe in meticulously neat hand printing sections/entireties of the prose and poems we will read and discuss in class. In doing so you will earn a major portion of your final grade. You will also satisfy Department Course Outcome #4 by writing a 3-page interpretative paper which will also serve as our mid-term, and a 4-page interpretative paper which will also serve in lieu of our final exam. I will post PDFs of the poems and prose selections on Canvas a few days before, so you will have plenty of time to 'Roethke' them. If you do not hand in a readable, complete transcription on the very day we read the selection in class, you will fail to earn those points and only under extreme (i.e., "official") circumstances will you claim the right to hand in your transcription late.

And, yes, we will read a Dylan Thomas and a Ted Roethke. Have nice day.