

Lawyers and Literature | Professor James R. Elkins

College of Law | West Virginia University

**Final Take-Home Examination
Spring/2000**

Instructions: The examination must be returned to either me, or my secretary, Karen Feathers (Rm. 117), no later than Wednesday, April 19th at 4 P.M. The examination should be typed. There are no page limits. The examination will constitute 50% of your grade for the course (the other 50% of your grade will be based on your course writing portfolio). If you have questions about the construction of the questions, or any matter regarding the test, you should resolve the matter as best you can, stating the assumptions you made in resolving the problem. Each of the questions will be given equal weight in determining the grade for the Examination.

The questions ask you to address broad thematic issues and the course of readings as a whole. It will not, I assume, be possible for you to address your commentary to every story we have read. Consequently, you must select which of the stories/characters best allow you to address the question.

I.

A story character is more or less reflective about the situation in which she finds herself, indeed, about her life (and how it works). Compare the story protagonists (lawyers and non-lawyers) you have encountered in the readings for “Lawyers and Literature” as reflective observers (of their own lives, the lives of others, or of the world).

II.

A colleague (John Bonsignore) refers to the stories we have been reading as “stories of disaffection.” Do you agree? (What could he have meant by the use of this odd term?) How has your stance as a reader—disaffected or not as you may be—influenced your engagement with the “disaffection” theme? (If you do not see the course stories as explicating the “disaffection” theme, what major theme(s) do the stories address? And how has your reading been affected by this theme?)

III.

What strategies for reading stories have you drawn upon, devised, or had available to you for your work with the stories presented in “Lawyers and Literature”?

I assume here that serious engagement with a story involves a strategy for reading. One might assume, given the educational context in which the stories are being read, that your strategies for working with the stories (and describing this work in your own writings) have changed (for better or worse) as the reading progressed. If so, how has this change taken place? And if you cannot identify any change, how can you explain that none occurred (or that none was needed)?

IV.

What kind of “perspective” does “Lawyers and Literature” offer on legal education and your quest to become a lawyer?