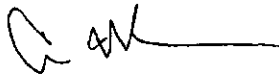


students raised their hands to respond. Discussion leaned towards the grandmother in the story, upon which Morrison directed the class to look at some specific passages about her to help with exploring the textual thematics. Morrison read the passages aloud, and they continued to discuss the grandmother. Throughout this, Morrison sat on the front of the desk at ease as she talked with students. Discussion branched off to other characters, upon which students gave their assessments, and Morrison began to ask the more substantial questions that she was building up to. Morrison was good with the text, often pointing to passages that helped discussion along. I do think, however, that she could have been a bit more familiar with where certain passages were in the reading as it took her some time to find a couple of them. This is a minor point of course, but because so much of the class went so well, I thought this was one thing that she could've improved upon. An extra five minutes of prep would ensure that the textual passages could have been found immediately. After the initial character and plot discussions, Morrison began to ask questions about morality, justice, and the nature of belief. These excellent questions began pushing students toward the more weighty ideas that O'Conner was writing about. I think these questions could have been reached a bit sooner, but again, that is a minor point, for once the class got to these questions, there was full and enthusiastic participation. In fact, I would guess that around 12-14 of the students participated in class discussion, the sign of a semester-long cultivation of participation. During the conversation, Morrison read a quote from T.S. Eliot to help the discussion. She also brought in some of the critical reception that the text received, citing the in-text essays that students had read. Morrison did this to extend discussion, but also to model and illustrate how source-work can assist a discussion in writing, a point that she would go over with class for a handful of minutes. I thought this was an excellent and subtle way to build writing instruction into the class. Morrison also made a few comparisons of the story to contemporary events or scenes, citing the last *Batman* movie, for example, comparing Heath Ledger's Joker character to the Misfit in the O'Conner story... Students really connected with this, and it was extremely effective teaching to take a story and make it relevant to what students have likely seen or experienced. Students were fully engaged and were following Morrison on the meta-level discussion of ideas that the story prompted. Overall this became an excellent discussion about conviction, belief, justice, morality, etc. At 6:41, Morrison began to wrap the class up, by giving them directions for the next class. Once everyone was clear, class was ended at 6:45.

After class, a student approached Morrison with a few questions. I was really impressed with class, but I was more impressed here than with anything. Morrison interacted with the student in a personal and professional manner. This really struck me. My final impression is that Morrison is type of instructor that sincerely cares about her students. Too often I see instructors being unsympathetic with students, or not really listening to student concerns. Morrison's interaction with this student was incredibly refreshing. All one had to do was listen to Morrison's tone to tell that she had listened to the student and cared about the concerns that were being brought up.

Morrison's grading seems on par with the department, and it was consistent from paper to paper. There were good marginal comments, and lengthy, helpful end of paper comments. Class was organized, effective, and insightful. The course was carrying out the goals of the department.

Overall, Morrison is the type of professor that Montclair's first-year writing program is lucky to have. Of the three observations that I have done, hers was by far the most impressive. Class was organized, light-hearted, serious, and most important, effective. I highly recommend a rehire of Stacey Morrison. In fact, she would make an excellent candidate for one of the full-time lecturer positions here. I was just really happy to see how class was conducted.

  
Observer: Aaron McClendon/3-29-2011

Observed: Stacey Morrison/3-29-2011