

To satisfy ignorance is to put off writing until tomorrow.
Gilles Deleuze

Dare to know! Have the courage to use your own understanding.
Immanuel Kant

...to go with you on your own exciting journey.
a motivational tape

A metaphor. Things are looking up.
Harold Pinter

WORLD LITERATURE SINCE THE 17TH CENTURY

LIT 2120, section 2504
Matherly 0010
MWF 3 (9:35 – 10:25)

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This syllabus serves two purposes: it is a technical document which contains important information about this course, and it is a contract containing mutual agreements between students and teacher. We will update and modify it during the semester through a consensus process.

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Course Overview

In this class, we will read and discuss written language. You may find it challenging, but to succeed, you need only dedication and a desire to learn. If you put forth the necessary effort, you will improve your appreciation and understanding of art and language. If you find these topics uninteresting, then this may not be the best class for you.

We will study the things traditionally called literature, like poems, short stories, novels, plays. We may also read texts that expand the scope of the literary: creative works like comic books and strips, television shows, films, music, videogames; nonfiction like essays, letters, scientific writing, and journalism; and other discourses, like philosophy and criticism. You may find some of the subject matter controversial; please remember that we are here to explore ideas, not to offend or convert.

Studying literature yields some immediate benefits, like a better understanding of language and poetics. It also promotes critical and creative thought—abilities that have their own long-term rewards, like becoming an innovative professional and capable citizen, which in turn benefit our society and culture as a whole.

Art, like nature, has to be distinguished from the systematic study of it, which is criticism. It is therefore impossible to "learn literature": one learns...the criticism of literature. Northrop Frye

Dr. Frye's theory about studying literature has some important consequences for us this semester. Studying nature yields scientific knowledge, and studying literature develops poetic knowledge. Criticism is *not* about making value judgments about good and bad; the best criticism is more systematic in character because it requires meticulous scrutiny and critical thought. This class's purpose is to cultivate these abilities, not provide information to memorize and reiterate.

Since this is a general course, we will study texts as well as contexts: literature itself, and the historical conditions surrounding its production and reception. We will discuss historical periods, and, to ensure a more comprehensive view, some theoretical approaches to the care and handling of literature. However, our emphasis will be on the literature itself, rather than its social or historical situation.

To develop and improve as a critic (not to mention pass the class) you must *do* criticism: read, think, write, and discuss. Rather than just providing information through lectures and presentations, your teacher will encourage you to think independently by facilitating and moderating discussion, providing useful ideas and contextual information, and suggesting further reading and research avenues. In sum, the teacher is a resource; *the student must be motivated* to use that resource, and others like outside reading, researching, etc.

Your written work is a little bit like a lab report: it should draw conclusions based on evidence which you have carefully gathered and contemplated. In the case of literature, these conclusions can be complex and abstract. Your job, as a literary critic, is to express these ideas in clear, precise language. To help you with this, our class incorporates writing instruction through written feedback, one-on-one meetings, and in-class workshops.

In your essays, you should *not* consult and reiterate what other critics have written about a specific literary work. (Also, see UF's policy on plagiarism, below.) You may—but aren't required to—expand, or contest, or qualify other critical interpretations. Your primary effort should be to discern a meaning or idea in everything we read. Understanding a literary masterwork can be as challenging and rigorous as calculus or biochemistry, but your reward will be the satisfaction of solving a problem or puzzle in a unique and personal way.

Your experiences with literature will become more stimulating, enlightening, and fulfilling when you find ways of incorporating your own interests and knowledge into your criticism. Curiosity motivates good critics, and freedom allows curiosity to run its course. To ensure that we have this freedom, our reading schedule is only partially complete. One of your responsibilities, as a student, is to suggest additional texts for us to read and discuss.

Your final grade will reflect the quality of your written essays, your own individual improvement throughout the semester, and your participation in class (which includes discussion and suggesting readings). To do well in all of these areas, you must read—read closely, and read each text more than once. Your overall goal is to demonstrate an understanding of poetics and your own literary cultural heritage.

Textbook and Useful Resources

Required textbook

Harmon, William, and Hugh Holman. A Handbook to Literature. 11th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2009.

Note: The 11th edition of the *Handbook* is recommended, but since it's out of print, it may be difficult to find. Get a copy if you're able, but otherwise, the 12th edition will work adequately.

Online literature resources

Bartleby.com. Bartleby.com, 2013. Web. 28 April, 2013. <<http://www.bartleby.com/>>

Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg, 2013. Web. 28 April, 2013. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/>>

The Literature Network. Jalic, 2013. Web. 28 April, 2013. <<http://www.online-literature.com/>>

Online writing resources

Hacker, Diana. "Researching in the Humanities". Research and Documentation Online. 5th ed. Bedford/St. Martin's. n.d. Web. 28 April, 2013. <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch04_o.html>

Olson, Gary A. Punctuation Made Simple. The College of Arts and Sciences at Illinois University. 1999. Web. 9 January, 2011. <<http://lilt.ilstu.edu/golson/punctuation/>>

Punctuation Made Simple. Punctuation Made Simple. PMS, nd. Web. 28 April, 2013. <<http://www.punctuationmadesimple.com/>>

Oxford English Dictionary. OED Online. Oxford Online. 2009. Web. 6 Nov, 2010.

Note: Access the OED through the Smathers library website.

George A. Smathers Libraries. George A. Smathers Libraries. University of Florida, 2013. Web. 28 Apr, 2013. <<http://www.uflib.ufl.edu.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/>>

Written Coursework

Any assignment may be submitted early (at least one week before the deadline) for feedback and a tentative grade. When submitting the final version, please include the marked draft, or when submitting revised papers, the original marked and graded submission.

Critical Response Papers: Literature evokes some sort of response from the reader. When we read critically, we come to better understand a text's complexity, and critical writing (analyses, interpretations, and conclusions) formalizes this understanding for ourselves and others. Toward this end, response papers should explain your own critical interpretation of a text in about 2 to 3 pages (about 600 – 900 words). Response papers should clearly express some insight, *not* make value judgments; do not explain why something is “good” or “bad”, nor whether or not you liked it. These papers should be well-organized; notes, outlines, and free-writing will not be graded (though these may be useful for you when drafting and revising your work). These papers serve as a measure of your proficiency in individual, ungraded activities (reading, note-taking, reflection, etc.).

Each response paper can earn up to 50 points, and the papers collectively may earn up to 150 points toward your final grade. You must complete at least three response papers, one for each main unit. However, you may write as many response papers as you need or wish. Each additional paper's score will replace the lowest previous score. Zeroes for unsubmitted papers cannot be replaced.

Critical Essays: Critical essays, like the critical response papers, interpret literature. Critical essays are longer and more detailed (4 – 5 pages, about 1,200 – 1,500 words) and make a more extended argument. You may write about a text we discuss in class, or you may choose another, as long as it is available for the teacher's reference during grading. You may submit a critical essay at any time before the scheduled deadline for feedback and a tentative score.

Each critical essay can earn up to 150 points, and these papers collectively may earn up to 450 points toward your final grade. You may write as many response papers as you need or wish, and higher scores will replace a lower essay score, but only within the same literary genre. Zeroes for unsubmitted papers cannot be replaced.

Final: The final paper will be an extended critical essay (5 – 7 pages; 1,500 – 2,100 words) that should treat a text in an extended, coherent fashion. It may also incorporate a more abstract or global statement about literature based on your experiences in this course. These larger conclusions should grow from, and relate back to, your chosen text. You may submit the final paper early for feedback and a tentative grade.

Alternative Coursework

Quizzes and in-class writing: If class participation ever falls into a chronic lull, the teacher may implement a series of in-class exercises to substitute for the participation credit that is normally earned through discussion. The use of class time for these exercises may last for an indefinite period, or may occur spontaneously. These assignments will be worth 100 points each, and your average score will constitute your participation credit. Taking the responsibility and initiative to prepare for class discussion is ultimately more rewarding and enriching for everyone involved. Please read early, read often, and come to class with a head full of thoughts to share. In accordance with University of Florida policy, these in-class exercises will not count for writing credit.

Alternative Assignments

These optional projects involve creative and curatorial work. To receive credit, each must be accompanied by a 3 – 7 page (900 – 2,100 word) essay. These projects involve more in-depth and longer-term work than normal critical essays; please meet with the teacher to discuss undertaking one of them. Because of their open-endedness, points for these projects will be awarded on a case-by-case basis. These descriptions provide general background; your teacher will provide additional details, examples, and guidance.

Editorial project

This project explores critical editorship, the process that literature undergoes when it (re)appears in an academic anthology or in a critical edition intended for scholarly use. These books always aim at presenting the text in a more accessible way and to augment critical thought about literature.

For this project, you'll select a short text that presents certain difficulties to the reader. Here are a few examples:

- Some texts use language that is partially but not entirely familiar to the reader. Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* is written in Nadsat, a colloquial hybrid of English and Russian; Shakespeare's early modern English contains words that are uncommon in modern language, and variant spellings of common words; James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* draws on multiple languages; Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky* is composed mostly of "nonsense" words. Critical editions would annotate the text and provide to help the reader trying to make sense of the work.

- Complex narratives can be difficult to follow because they express events in a less-than-straightforward way that challenges comprehension—let alone understanding why they're arranged or expressed the way that they are. William Blake's *The Four Zoas* is perpetually re-imagining and recreating its own events; Joyce's *Ulysses* is written in a stream-of-consciousness style that flows seamlessly from external to internal events. Critical editions of these works help readers navigate through the narrative and appreciate its artistry.

- Some literary works rely heavily on external references, like context or other texts. Joyce's works make extensive reference to Irish culture and everyday life in Dublin, as well as other works of world literature; and Blake's *The Ghost of Abel* is a direct response to Lord Byron's mystery play *Cain*. Critical editions establish and explain these external connections and aid the appreciation of how these contribute to the work's complexity.

- A fair number of literary texts exist in multiple versions, either due to revision by the author, tinkering by an editor, or changes introduced by the printer. There are at least six versions of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*; the later two are the product of Coleridge's revisions, but the preceding three resulted from William Wordsworth's editorial work on the original version; and Coleridge himself notes certain "accidental" inclusions made by the printing house's typesetter. Many critical editions are devoted to tracking the changes that a certain literary work undergoes over time, and explaining their significance.

These are some of the difficulties that crop up in editing. To deal with these “problems,” editors can manipulate the layout and design of the page, and employ a variety of critical apparatuses.

The most common apparatuses are introductory essays, marginal glosses, and footnotes/endnotes. Introductions briefly explain why the work is important, and may suggest how the reader should go about interpreting the text. Glosses are short, explanatory comments in the margins of the page. Footnotes and endnotes provide a venue for more extensive explanation and elaboration. Another important apparatus is the delimiter—usually brackets or parentheses—that, when placed around a word, indicates that it is some sort of variant produced by revision. Different fonts and typefaces can also serve this function.

Editors can also manipulate page layout and design to enhance the reading process. For example, the Norton critical edition of Wordsworth’s “The Prelude” prints the passages from the 1805 and 1850 versions of the poem on facing pages, and Martin Wallen’s experimental edition of Coleridge’s *Rime* places stanzas from the three major versions on the same page. These layouts allow the reader to closely examine the differences between the different versions.

However you choose to present your text, it should be accompanied by an introductory essay that explains the significance of this presentation. What textual “problems” does it address, and how does it do so? Why are these problems significant to the poem and to understanding it? It should also provide important contextual information regarding the text and its revisionary history.

The editorial project will be scored based on your edition’s presentation, usefulness, and innovation.

Artistic project

Artistic projects re-envision literature in new forms. The various forms and materials, or media—writing, film, painting, sculpture, etc.—possess certain properties that are unavailable to other media, but which simultaneously present certain restrictions. Adaptation, or remediation, of literature involves working with those limitations and possibilities of art to present a poetic idea in a new way, or to produce a new but similar idea.

An artistic project should be accompanied by an essay that explains this process of translation and how the new art relates to the literary work from which it originates. It should address the key aspects of the original work, and it should also explain how the project preserves or transforms those key elements.

This project will be scored based on the creativity of the artistic treatment and the adequacy of the critical explanation.

Expectations for Written Work

All written assignments must be formatted as follows:

- 12-point, Times New Roman font
- Double-spaced body text
- One-inch margins
- Left justified, or “ragged right” (not double justified)
- Fastened in the top left corner (paper clip or staple)
- Creative, expressive title
- Meets full page and word counts
- Neat, clean presentation—no tears, creases, smudges, corrections, etc.
- MLA format
 - Heading, in the top left corner of the first page
 - Your name
 - Instructor’s name (Walton Wood)
 - Course number (LIT 2120)
 - The date submitted
 - Running page headers
 - Last name and page number
 - In the top-right corner
 - On every page after the first
 - But *not* on the first page
 - In the document page header, not the body
 - Proper MLA citations & bibliography

Any assignment that does not meet these formatting requirements will be returned, ungraded. It may be revised and resubmitted, but it will count as late.

You may submit a maximum of two assignments at a time.

All late assignments will receive a 10% point penalty for each class session beyond the due date. After a week, they will earn an indelible zero.

Attendance Policy

Please arrive in class at or before the scheduled starting time; otherwise, you will be counted as late. Three lates count as one absence. Missing more than half a class session (25 minutes) also counts as an absence. You are allowed 4 unexcused absences, which you do not need to justify; you may simply take them, no questions asked. If you miss more than 4 class sessions, you become ineligible to receive course credit. Use your unexcused absences wisely. Excused absences include illness (with a doctor’s note), participation in a UF organization (sports and other UF-sanctioned groups and activities, with a note from a coach or faculty advisor), and religious observance (holidays and holy days). Other absences may be excused on a case-by-case basis, at the teacher’s discretion.

Grading and Credit

Table 1: Letter grade, grade points, score equivalencies, and writing credit eligibility

Writing credit				No writing credit			
Letter	GPA	Assignment %	Course total	Letter	GPA	Assignment %	Course total
A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	E	0.00	0-59	0-599
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799				
C	2.0	73-76	730-769				

Table 2: Assignments, word counts, and point values

Participation	--	100
Critical response papers	1,800 – 2,700	150
Fiction critical essay	1,200 – 1,500	150
Poetry critical essay	1,200 – 1,500	150
Drama critical essay	1,200 – 1,500	150
Final paper	1,500 – 2,100	300
Total	6,900 – 9,300	1000

Table 3: Grading rubric

A	creative, critical interpretation that provides unique insight into a text
	substantially develops ideas discussed in class
	clearly written and easily understood
	very few or no grammatical or spelling errors
	appropriate and effective organization
B	provides insight into a text, but not quite on the level of an A paper
	relies heavily on ideas introduced in class without significant expansion
	may have some mechanical problems, such as vague or unclear language, grammatical and/or punctuation mistakes, misspelled words, etc.
	may have some organizational problems
C	does not offer new insight into a text, just repeats ideas from class discussion or other sources
	may have moderate problems with language use, such as grammatically incorrect sentences, chronic spelling or punctuation problems, etc.
	may have moderate organizational problems
D	expresses no critical thought about a text, providing only summary, contextual information unrelated to the text in a meaningful way, and/or exposition of unrelated topics
	may have serious language problems, as with C papers, but on a greater scale
	may have serious organizational problems
E	does not address the text
	mostly or totally incoherent
	has serious language problems

Schedule

To start us out, only a few texts have been selected; we will collectively choose the rest. Readings with URLs may be in .html or .pdf format. Readings without URLs will be provided as handouts.

Class Introduction

21 Aug – Class introduction

23 Aug – General discussion

25 Aug – Handbook presentations

28 Aug – Handbook presentations, continued

30 Aug – A physiological basis for literary criticism

2 Sep – Labor Day, no class

4 Sep – Intro to fiction; Vonnegut, “Harrison Bergeron”

<<http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/harrison.html>>

6 Sep – Intro to drama; Rothbard, “Mozart Was a Red”

<<http://www.lewrockwell.com/rothbard/mozart.html>>

9 Sep – Intro to Poetry; “At My Grandfather’s Funeral”, “In The End We Threw a Party”

11 Sep – Creative Nonfiction: Thompson, “The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved”

<<http://english138.web.unc.edu/files/2011/08/The-Kentucky-Derby-is-Decadent-and-Depraved.pdf>>

13 Sep – Image-text: Blake, “The Tyger”, available at <<http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/>>;

Pound, “In A Station of the Metro” <<http://poetry.eserver.org/in-a-station.txt>>

Fiction

16 Sep – du Maurier, “The Birds” <http://www.nexuslearning.net/books/holt_elementsoflit-3/Collection%201/The%20Birds%20p1.htm>

18 Sep – Poe, “The Purloined Letter” <<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/poe/purloine.html>>

20 Sep – Borges, “The Garden of Forking Paths” <<http://www.coldbacon.com/writing/borges-garden.html>>

23 Sep – Forster, “The Machine Stops” <<http://archive.ncsa.illinois.edu/prajlich/forster.html>>;

Vonnegut, “Epicac” <<http://www.bestlibrary.org/files/epicac-1.pdf>>

25 Sep – Fiction response paper due; writing about literature discussion

27 Sep – Reading to be selected

30 Sep – Writing instruction; reading to be selected

2 Oct – Reading to be selected

4 Oct – Reading to be selected

7 Oct – Fiction essay due; Joyce, from *Finnegans Wake*

Poetry

9 Oct – Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow”
<<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15537>>

11 Oct – Coleridge, “Kubla Khan”

14 Oct – Writing instruction; Dickinson, “There’s a Certain Slant of Light” <<http://www.online-literature.com/dickinson/830/>>

16 Oct – Poetry response paper due; Keats: “La Belle Dame Sans Merci/y”

18 Oct – Dali, “The Metamorphosis of Narcissus”

<http://www.authenticociety.com/about/MetamorphosisOfNarcissus_Dali> ,

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/images/work/T/T02/T02343_10.jpg>

21 Oct – Reading to be selected

23 Oct – Writing instruction; reading to be selected

25 Oct – Reading to be selected

28 Oct – Poetry essay due; anonymous poetry grab-bag

Drama

30 Oct – Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* <http://www.online-literature.com/wilde/being_earnest/#>

1 Nov – Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*, Preface and Scene 1

<<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/prometheus.html>>

4 Nov – Writing instruction; reading to be selected

6 Nov – Response papers due; Stoppard, *Professional Foul*

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTt09jaz-PQ>> (in 9 parts)

8 Nov – Homecoming, no class

11 Nov – Veterans Day, no class

13 Nov – Writing instruction; reading to be selected

15 Nov – Reading to be selected

18 Nov – Third essay due; reading to be selected

Course Conclusion

20 Nov – Writing instruction

22 Nov – Conferences

25 Nov – Conferences

27 Nov – Conferences

29 Nov – Conferences

2 Dec – Conferences

4 Dec – Writing day

Final papers are due via email by 8 December, and will be graded and available for return by 12 December.

UF Requirements and Policies

Final Grade Appeals

If you are unsatisfied with your final grade, you may make an appeal by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department of English office (Turlington 4008). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

Statement of Composition (C) and Humanities (H) Credit

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-educationrequirement.aspx>

Statement of Writing Requirement (WR)

This course can provide 6,000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/gordon.aspx>

Statement of Student Disability Services

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Statement on Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

Statement on Academic Honesty

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Document history

This section of the syllabus records changes and emendations made over the course of the semester. Refer to these notes to ensure that your copy of the syllabus is up-to-date.

28 Apr: First draft compiled

6 June: Soft schedule finalized

1 Jul: Submitted for departmental approval

29 Jul: Approved copy posted to website