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Office Hours:
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MWF Per. 3
MAT 0012
LIT2120

(Under)World Literatures through the Nineteenth Century to the World Wars

Course Description:

Heaven and Hell. The Suburbs and the Slums. The Palace and the Pavement. The City and the Ghetto. These divides define the nineteenth century European metropolis and the contours of the demimonde culture that we call "The Underworld." Key texts by French, German, and Russian authors of this period transformed underworld figures into literary symbols that revealed the seedy inner workings of their religions, their cities, and finally their unconscious psyches. We will read across this European canon of the Underworld, and try to make sense of its significance for contemporary world literature and thought in the early 21st century. Beginning with Goethe's *Faust*, we will identify the archetypes for our journeys into various underworlds throughout the semester. From a Biblical Hell, we will then turn to the streets and slums of Paris as evocatively portrayed by the Symbolist poets, who exposed the city's underworld and its inhabitants in a high poetic form. When we reach a Naturalist Russia, we note how writers began exploring the connection between one's mind and one's surroundings, especially in marginalized or unsavory settings. In the final section of the semester, we discuss Modernism and its fascination with the unconscious as the new underworld. These psychoanalytic advancements, however, run in tandem with the emergence of new technologies of the Underground and the marginal: trench warfare in World War I and the death camps of World War II. Do the literary underworlds that preceded the World Wars help us better understand the momentous and often horrific events of the early twentieth century? If so, what do underworlds and their depiction in major European literatures reveal about the human condition in general?

We will also emphasize certain popular critical techniques and literary theories that will help us truly crack these texts open and understand what's happening beneath the surface. Such techniques and theories will include: close reading, structuralism, feminism, psychoanalysis, queer theory, postcolonialism, and poststructuralism. By the end of the course, you should not only know how to think in these terms, but write within them as well. Whether you continue as an English major or not, these ways of thinking will aid your reading of all texts, whether you're reading a book, watching television, or using new media.

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities, and it also contributes 6,000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing.

Required Texts:

You are required to bring a hard copy of the text we are discussing to class.

- Coursepack available at Xerographic Copy Center
- *Faust (Part One)* by Goethe, Translated by David Luke (Oxford World Classics)
- *Notes from Underground* by Fyodor Dostoevsky, Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (Vintage Classics)

Goals:

By the end of the semester, you should...

- Gain an appreciation for the experience of reading in translation major authors and works from France, Germany, Russia, and more, ranging from poetry and fiction to popular art and film.
- Have a strong sense of the European zeitgeist during the nineteenth century through World War II and its aftermath.
- Be able to make historical, literary historical, critical or theoretical statements about the texts you've read and should be able to support those statements.
- Have refined your basic writing skills, including drafting, proofreading, editing, and composing a polished final product.
- Know how to use proper MLA documentation style.

Assignments and Grading Scale:

Reading Responses: 3 entries in total, 500 words each, 20% of your grade

These responses should show that you have read the works assigned and critically analyzed them. In each response, you will cultivate an argument that responds to the prompt I give in class, typically one week before each blog is due. Five hundred words is a small space in which to make an argument, so have a critical eye toward concision and clarity. Take these responses as experiments toward the larger assignments – try different analyses out, play with various texts, and see what you like writing about best. These will all be turned in as blogs on Sakai and are due before class.

Translation Project: 750 words, 15% of your grade

Robert Lowell's translations of Baudelaire read differently than Walter Benjamin's, which in turn differ from James McGowan's version. Which is the "right" poem, the one that draws closest to Baudelaire's own words? According to Benjamin in his essay "The Task of the Translator," the real poem exists somewhere between all these translations. For this assignment, you will choose one poem from a list of French Symbolist poems I provide and, using a French-English dictionary, perform a very literal translation of that poem. Then, read different published translations of your chosen poem to decide which translation you find works "best." There is no right or wrong answer. In your final write-up, you will instead discuss your method, the pitfalls you came across, and how this exercise granted you a different insight on the original poem.

Synthesis Paper: 1,000 words, 20%

In this assignment, you will choose one work that we have discussed in class and another that we have not discussed, then cultivate an argument that grows from the synthesis of both texts. I encourage you to think outside the box and look at your other areas of interest or hobbies for inspiration (i.e., other literature, film, television, visual art, or pop culture). This is not a simple compare/contrast essay. Instead of placing two texts in opposing columns and discussing their similarities and dissimilarities from one another, you must address both texts separately then form an argument that can only arise from putting these two texts side by side. This is a tricky assignment that addresses an important critical skill, so I again encourage you to discuss topics and outlining with me.

Critical Analysis: 2,000 words, 25%

In your final paper, you will use the skills displayed in your transliteration and synthesis assignments, while adding critical theory to your argument. You will choose a work we discussed in class (from any movement or era) and form an argument using the theories at your disposal: postcolonialism, feminism, Marxism, cultural studies, psychoanalysis, and queer theory. You may choose from any of these or other theoretical lenses you may have learned in other literature or philosophy courses. Your paper should have a strong argument, which relies on your chosen critical theory. I expect unique and interesting arguments. Parroting in-class discussions or repetition through the whole paper is unacceptable. Also, you will be conducting outside research for this assignment and integrating this research into your argument.

Reading Quizzes: 10%

These quizzes will occur on a sporadic basis and will test if you read the text and how well you read the text. Therefore, it is important that you take time in your reading to understand issues concerning tone, theme, format, and character, as well as plot. Rather than focusing on just major scenes or chapters, these quizzes will establish the value of other major moments while reading. I will never ask questions that expect you to read my mind and figure out what interpretation I like best. If you read the text closely and attentively, these should all be easy A's.

Participation: 10%

Reading the texts and doing the assignments really only gets you half way there in this class. I expect active class discussion and participation on a daily basis. If you read the texts, but don't participate in class (or vice versa), then your work in general will suffer because of it. Our classroom acts as a safe environment where you can air your opinions and consider those presented by your classmates, so take advantage of this setup and see how something you're thinking of writing a paper on, for instance, flies in general discussion. In essence, active participation helps your personal work, and of course gets you the full 10%.

Grading Scale:

UF has recently instituted minus grades. As a result, letter grades now have different grade point equivalencies.

A =	93% = 4.0	C =	73% = 2.0
A- =	90% = 3.67	C- =	70% = 1.67
B+ =	87% = 3.33	D+ =	67% = 1.33
B =	83% = 3.0	D =	63% = 1.0
B- =	80% = 2.67	D- =	60% = .67
C+ =	77% = 2.33	E =	>60% = 0.0

NB: You must pass this course with a "C" or better to satisfy the CLAS requirement for Composition (C) and to receive the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit (E6). You must turn in all papers totaling 6,000 words to receive credit for writing 6,000 words. PLEASE NOTE: a grade of "C-" **will not** confer credit for the University Writing Requirement or the CLAS Composition (C) requirement.

Grade Meanings:

Here is the meaning behind the grades I assign to your papers (all papers are graded on a letter

scale, not points); you can use these statements to determine how you might work toward a higher grade:

A: You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed below for a B, but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a style.

B: You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range needs revision; however, it is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style.

C: You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range needs significant revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.

D: You neglected some basic requirements of the assignment, and completed it at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Attention to style is often nonexistent or chaotic.

E: An E is usually reserved for people who don't do the work or don't come to class. However, if your work is shoddy and shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment, you will receive a failing grade in this course.

General Classroom Policies:

Attendance

Attendance is *required*. Unlike some other classes you may have taken, just “reading the textbook” won’t get you anywhere near a good grade. You are allowed three absences without any direct effect on your grade. Your final grade will drop by a letter with each subsequent absence after your first three. If you reach six unexcused absences, you will automatically fail the course.

Absences involving military service, court-mandated activities (such as jury duty or testimony in court), or university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays are excused, but you must notify me of your absence prior to the date that will be missed.

Also, tardiness will not be tolerated. Two tardies equal one absence.

Cell phones and other assorted Gadgets

I turn my cell phone off or set it to silent before coming into the classroom and will expect the same courtesy from you. I should not see cell phones on desks or in your laps at any point during class time. If you are using a laptop in class, it should be used only for taking notes.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits plagiarism and defines it as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

(University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 8 July 2011)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code.

All the work submitted on Sakai will be passed through Turnitin.com, a website that compares your paper to other papers on the Internet, any published work, and the Internet itself. If you plagiarize, you will be caught, which could result in an automatic E for the assignment, the course, or a disciplinary measure from the university, depending upon the gravity and frequency of the matter.

Classroom Behavior

Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and elicit strong opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. In other words, any rude, coarse, or offensive remarks based upon race, gender, or sexual identity will not be tolerated. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

In-Class Work

Students will be expected to work in small groups and participate in group discussions, writing workshops, and other in-class activities. Students must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them. In-class work cannot be made up. In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

Paper Maintenance Responsibilities

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and to make available this material.

Mode of Submission

All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) documents to E-learning/Sakai. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered.

Papers and drafts are due at the beginning of class or on-line at the assigned deadline. Late papers will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting accommodation should contact the Students with Disabilities Office, Peabody 202. That office will provide documentation to the student whom must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: August 25-29

M – Introduction

W – Goethe: *Faust* (Scene 1-5)

F – Goethe: *Faust* (Scenes 6-9)

Week 2: September 1-5

M – NO CLASS

W – Goethe: *Faust* (Scenes 10-22)

F – Goethe: *Faust* (Scenes 23-28)

Week 3: September 8-12

M – *Writing Workshop*: Basic Writing Checklist

W – Walter Benjamin: “The Task of the Translator”

F – **Blog #1 Due!**

Charles Baudelaire: Selections from *The Painter of Modern Life*

Week 4: September 15-19

M – Charles Baudelaire: “To the Reader” & “A Carcass”

W – *In-class Exercise*: Discussion of various Baudelaire translations

F – Charles Baudelaire: “Spleen LXXVIII”, “Spleen LXXIX”, & “Spleen LXXXI”

Week 5: September 22-26

M – *Writing Workshop*: Bring in your chosen poem and a translation dictionary

W – Stéphane Mallarmé: “A Favn in the Afternoon”

F – Stéphane Mallarmé: “A Dice Throw”

Week 6: September 29 – October 3

M – **Translation Assignment Due!**

Lecture and Discussion: Realism, Naturalism, and their social aims

W – Fyodor Dostoevsky: *Notes from Underground*

F – Fyodor Dostoevsky: *Notes from Underground*

Week 7: October 6-10

M – Fyodor Dostoevsky: *Notes from Underground*

W – Fyodor Dostoevsky: *Notes from Underground*

F – Anton Chekhov: “The Lady with the Little Dog”

Week 8: October 13-17

M – **Blog #2 Due!**

Anton Chekhov: "A Medical Case"

W – *Lecture and Discussion*: French Impressionism and Post-Impressionism

F – NO CLASS

Week 9: October 20-24

M – Rainer Maria Rilke: "Archaic Torso of Apollo"

W – Rainer Maria Rilke: "The Panther", "The Swan", & "The Spanish Dancer"

F – Thomas Mann: *Death in Venice*

Week 10: November 3-7

M – Thomas Mann: *Death in Venice*

W – *Lecture and Discussion*: World War I and the Treaty of Versailles

F – *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*

Week 11: November 10-14

M – **Synthesis Assignment Due!**

Lecture and Discussion: How to utilize critical theory in a written assignment

W – Marcel Proust: *Swann's Way* – Part 1. Combray

F – Marcel Proust: *Swann's Way* – Part 1. Combray

Week 12: November 17-21

M – Franz Kafka: *The Metamorphosis*

W – Franz Kafka: *The Metamorphosis*

F – *Writing Workshop*: Integrating outside sources into your own writing

Week 13: November 24-28

M – **Blog #3 Due!**

W – THANKSGIVING

F – THANKSGIVING

Week 14: December 1-5

M – Anna Akhmatova: "Requiem"

W – Anna Akhmatova: "Requiem"

F – *Lecture and Discussion*: Riefenstahl's *The Triumph of the Will* and the Rise of Nazism

Week 15: December 8-12

M – Paul Celan: "Deathfugue" & "Shibboleth"

W – **Peer Review!**

F – READING DAY

Week 16: December 15-19

M – **Final Paper Due!**