LIT 2110—Survey of World Literature: Ancient to Renaissance

Spring 2025 Section: M181

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Name	Taylor Morris			
Office	TUR 4309			
Office Hours	Wednesdays, 4-6 PM, or by Appointment			
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COURSE INFORMATION:

Days/Times	MWF: 3:00 PM-3:50 PM
Location	Matherly 0118

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This class covers a number of seminal literary texts from antiquity to just before the advent of modernity in the 17th Century, including those from the canon underpinning Western Civilization as well as some of their Eastern counterparts. Special attention will be given to the forms of the epic poem, theatrical drama, philosophical dialogue, and religious scripture and oral tradition—understanding how the particular media of these epochs shaped the culture and intellectual tradition of the past while still holding immense import to the realities of the present and the shaping of the future. Classroom discussions will interrogate the content and theoretical underpinnings of these works in their own context as well as their application to our own lives and vocational pursuits. Outside of reading, we will also examine some cinematic adaptations of these texts in order to consider how media can shift via time period, authorial intent, and national context, and what discourses are built up as a result.

General Education Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within historical literary studies and related fields.
- Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to literature as a discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings and supplementary screenings.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

General Education Objectives

• This course confers <u>General Education credit</u> for either Composition (C) or Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).

- Composition (C) courses provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.
- Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

PERSONAL COURSE NOTE

The aims of this course are, in a way, radical. In our era of STEM dominance and discursive implosion in the realms of culture, religion, and politics, our daily lives have largely eschewed meaningful engagement with most forms of art. Our goal in this course is to attempt to begin a fight against this—to intentionally and discerningly interact both with the important, and hopefully inspiring and illuminating, texts of this course, and with each other through our daily class discourses. Reading and writing about media, and habitually exposing ourselves to it and immersing ourselves in it can be seen as a way to develop a vocational path that incorporates not only a particular field of study or a career, but one's entire life and the lives of others. The world and its fashions often ignore or obscure vocation and the relevance of the humanities, and by encountering the latter we hope to begin to hear the voice of the former.

Class Structure

Classes are held on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons, during which we will meet for a lecture or class discussion. Typically, classes in which new units or concepts are being introduced will be more lecture-based, focusing on aspects of terminology, theory, or history relevant to our ongoing conversations and the material we're reading, as well as setting up various analytical or interpretive problems of interest. As each unit continues, and especially as the semester goes on as we all find a common grounding in our semester's texts, classes will become more and more discussion based, with our conversations unfolding both as an entire class and in small groups.

REQUIRED BOOKS FOR PURCHASE:

(NOTE: I recommend, if possible, purchasing from AbeBooks or a similar used book website!)

• Dante Alighieri (trans. John D. Sinclair.) *The Divine Comedy: Inferno.* Oxford University Press. (ISBN: 0195004124)

- Seamus Heaney, Translator. *Beowulf.* Norton. (ISBN: 9780393320978)
- William Shakespeare. Macbeth. Penguin. (ISBN: 9780143128564)
- Plato. The Republic. Hackett. (ISBN: 0872201368)
- Confucius. *The Analects*. Penguin Classics. (ISBN: 0140443487)
- Shikibu Murasaki. The Diary of Lady Murasaki. Penguin Classics. (ISBN: 014043576X)
- Marcus Tullius Cicero. Selected Political Speeches. Penguin Classics. (ISBN: 9780140442144)

Further note on editions and translations: Since most of our texts are translations and are frequently published works with many different physical and digital editions, it is critical we all read from the same version of the books so that we are all working from the same texts and paginations. When we cite a specific quote or page number, we will all thereby be able to follow along and not get lost in the differences between versions. Please be sure to purchase the correct books (use the ISBN numbers for reference) and let me know if you have trouble obtaining any of them.

Other Readings to be Provided:

- Selections from The Bible: Genesis, Job, First Letter of John
- Selections from the Koran: Surahs 1-5
- Selections from *Hindu Myths* (ISBN: 9780140449907)
- Selections from *The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles* (ISBN: 9639241407)
- from Master Polikarp's Dialog with Death
- J.R.R. Tolkien's Essay on Beowulf from The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

Summary of grading

- Attendance & participation/in-class discussion (20%)
- Midterm/Final Reading Tests (10% each, 20% total)
- Thinking Development Diary on Canvas (2000 words) (10%)
- 1 Close Reading Paper (1500 words) (20%)
- 1 Research Paper Prospectus (500 words) (5%)
- 1 Research Paper (2000 words) (25%)

1. Attendance & Participation (20%)

Attendance: Attendance/Roll will be noted at the beginning of class. Up to 3 unexcused absences are permitted, beyond that absences will harm the participation grade barring extraordinary circumstances. Repeated tardiness will also harm the participation score. Absences will be excused in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable reasons include illness, religious holidays, military obligation, and the twelve-day rule (https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx). Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to what was covered in class.

Participation: Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before each class. Each week will begin with a series of basic questions on the contents of the assigned readings. If students are unable to answer these questions, it will be assumed that they have not done the reading and penalties will be appropriately applied. Consistent participation in class discussions and demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings will also contribute to this portion of the final grade.

An experimental aspect of this class is generally giving you a baseline of trust that you will do the readings in order to contribute to our ongoing group discourse. I believe/hope this has the most potential for success. Please take this course and readings seriously. It will be obvious if you attempt to "phone-in" discussions based on not having read, and I will have to make adjustments that will be much less enjoyable for all of us.

Since we're not doing minor participation assignments or exercises like daily Canvas posts or discussion boards, that means *it's essential that we all regularly participate in group discussion*. I know talking in class in front of others can be intimidating, but try not to fear sharing your ideas and see how we respond to them and how they might be challenged or improved. At the same time also note that *participation for the sake of participation is not the goal*. If you are contributing regularly and putting forth interesting or sincere thoughts, that is far more desirable than speaking in every class but being "that kid" that everyone dreads monopolizing the discourse. It's a balance.

Here are a few qualities by which participation can be evaluated: Individuality, such that comments are not merely recapitulating events or ideas in the readings/films and reflect something of the student speaker. Usefulness, such that comments are relevant to texts being discussed, and might direct us to ideas we might not otherwise have considered. Openness, such that you can stand by your convictions but also be interested in hearing opposing ideas and developing or changing your views accordingly. Discursivity, such that thoughts contribute to ongoing discussion and don't try to overbear or oversimplify topics. I'm aware that this type of exercise might be new for a lot of you. So I don't expect perfection, especially early in the semester. We'll develop together.

2. In-Class Reading Exams (Midterm and Final, 10% Each)

There will be two in-class exams (each exam is worth 10%, or together, 20% of the total grade). Exams will consist entirely of short answer questions meant to gauge if/confirm that students are completing the assigned readings. They will inquire about various details from the text that can be known only by actually reading the material, and not consulting from Sparknotes or similar online skimming "resources". That is, these will not be the sort of exams you can "study for" the week of or night before. If you consistently complete your readings, the exams will be relatively easy. If you neglect your readings, the exams will be more or less impossible. Submitted exams will be assessed for evidence of collusion.

3. Thinking Development Diary on Canvas (at least 5 entries of 400 words, at least 2000 words total, 10%)

This assignment relies on the link between thinking and writing, revealing the understanding that writing is a key part of and shaper of one's thinking. Throughout the semester you will write several posts in which you engage with any of the reading and/or corresponding discussion topics from this class and work to develop some original thoughts of your own to reach critical tensions or epiphanies that you otherwise would have not. You are encouraged to look through the diaries of other students to see what issues they are considering, as these might shape, complement, or complicate your intellectual process. Here are some suggestions as to the format/approach of these posts:

- Form questions that interest you and begin to come up with answers: These should go beyond mere desires for clarification about narrative or content, instead trying to work out things that the text leaves unaddressed or ambiguous, etc. A truly stimulating question does not have a simple answer you can find through a Google search, but rather is something you have to take time to situate and analyze.
- Try to make compelling connections between media: This can be done even with texts that at first impression seem very distant or distinct. Discuss how one literary work might inform another or cast it in a new light. Make comparisons and contrasts between material in each. Comparative analysis is an extremely powerful intellectual tool, and can reveal important complexity in thematic issues that might at first seem simplistic.
- <u>Journal the evolution and adaptation of your reactions to the material:</u> It is very likely that as our semester progresses your thoughts and responses to what we are reading and discussing will change or deepen. Tracking this progression can be quite useful as it can assist in understanding how exactly you have come to alter your views or outright change your mind, while similarly illuminating the positions of others who might be at a different stage of the journey. *Conversion is one of the fundamental experiences of human life, and worth charting for both personal and public benefit.*

4. Close Reading Paper (1500 words, 25%)

This assignment will test student skills in close reading, especially as that skill pertains to passages or scenes from epic poetry and drama. Students will be expected to analyze a text carefully and develop an argument regarding the whole of the text through a close reading. No outside sources may be used for this assignment. **The Close Reading assignment is due during the 8**th week of the semester. It is recommended that students consult their ideas and early writing drafts with me in the lead up to this due date. Office hours are a great opportunity to brainstorm and bounce ideas off the instructional "sounding-board" as we hone your writing and thinking processes.

5. Research Paper: Prospectus (500 words, 5%)

For this assignment, you will focus on a different course text from that of the close reading paper and write a short proposal for the final research paper. This will include a bibliography of

2-4 outside, scholarly sources with which you will be able to sophisticate and ground your argument. In a paragraph or two, you will propose a topic of inquiry, working thesis or research question, and research methodology for the final paper. **The Research Prospectus will be due in Week 13 of the Semester.**

6. *Research Paper* (2,000 words, 30%)

For the final assignment, you will write an analysis of the text and topic that you selected to research for your prospectus. Using the methods of analysis covered in the course, you should make an original argument about the meaning of the text's form or thematics through a specific theoretical framework. The body of your paper should explain and support your argument by providing close analysis of several key scenes or sequences with attention to the formal, critical, and methodological frameworks we cover throughout the semester. The paper should incorporate the research conducted for your bibliography to contextualize and justify your argument. The final paper will be at the end of Week 15 of the semester.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

• Late Work. Papers will be penalized by applying this multiplier to your grade:

$$1 - \left(\frac{t}{7*24*60}\right)^4$$

where t is the number of minutes the work is late. For example, if an assignment is submitted exactly 2 days late (2880 minutes) and receives a pre-penalty grade of 90, your final grade for the assignment would be 89.4. The late policy is quite generous, basically giving you a 2-day grace period for assignments but with accelerating penalties as the deadline continues past. You need not ask to submit an assignment late; you can, but with the appropriate late penalty. Unpenalized extensions for illness, emergencies, etc., will be handled on a case-by-case basis. (*Credit to Hoss Craft for providing the lateness formula*.)

- Electronics Policy: Please do not use phones or laptops unnecessarily during class. Laptops will be necessary when we are discussing texts provided in online PDFs, but on other days we shouldn't need these devices out. It is advised that you take physical, written notes during lecture and discussion. This electronics policy is so our communication with each other is more intentional and productive.
- Academic Honesty: Students are required to be honest in their coursework, may not use
 notes during quizzes or exams, and must properly cite all sources that they have
 consulted for their projects. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean
 of Students and may result in failure of the assignment in question and/or the course.
 For University of Florida's honor code, see Student Conduct Code | SCCR (ufl.edu)

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating and dishonesty on papers will not be tolerated in this class. This includes the use of generative AI such as ChatGPT as well as copying text from previous generations of students or students from other universities. There is a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of academic dishonesty. Any assignment that violates this rule will be given a grade of zero and a case will be filed with the appropriate academic and administrative authorities. If you are concerned about proper citation style please feel free to visit during office hours and we can review all of this (and fear not—it is easy for an instructor to distinguish between unintentional and malicious practices.) For our written assignments, any standard citation style and corresponding style manual is acceptable (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.) as long as you are proper and consistent with the format you choose.

- Accommodations for Students with Disabilities 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. Contact the
 Disability Resources Center (<u>Disability Resource Center Disability (ufl.edu)</u>) for
 information about available resources for students with disabilities.
- Counseling and Mental Health Resources: Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352 392-1575; http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/).
- Online Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

OTHER CLASS POLICIES/RULES

- 1. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course. https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/
- 2. Paper Format & Submission: Papers should be submitted with standard, 1-inch margins, double spacing, and 12-point Times New Roman font. All papers will be submitted electronically, via Canvas.
- 3. Paper Maintenance Responsibilities. Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course (save things on a cloud server in case of severe computer issues). Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
- 4. For information on UF Grading policies, see: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx
- 5. Grade Appeals. In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling

out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant by email (cblount@ufl.edu). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

6. UF's policy on Harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equitydiversity/resource s/harassment/

7. There will be several opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester. These might include attending certain lectures or other events in the English Department or on campus related to the interests and themes of this class. Each completed extra credit opportunity will award one bonus point to a paper or other assignment grade.

Example Grading Scale (& GPA equivalent):

Α	Α-	B+	В	B-	C+	С	C-	D+	D	D-	E
100-9	92-9	89-8	86-8	82-8	79-7	76-7	72-7	69-6	63-6	62-6	59
3	0	7	3	0	7	3	0	7	6	0	-
(4.0)	(3.67	(3.33	(3.0)	(2.67	(2.33	(2.0)	(1.67	(1.33	(1.0)	(0.67	(0)
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Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. See here for further information on UF's Grading Policy.

Example Essay Rubric (Credit to Christopher Smith for general format and style.)							
Length	10 points: within 10% of Length	6 points: 11% to 15% off of length	3 points: 15% to 20% off of length	0 points: more than 20% off of Length	10 Points		
Thesis Statement	15 to >12 pts Thesis is clearly stated and is a provable point	12 to >0.0 pts Thesis unclear There is a stater organization, bu bit fuzzy about v will actually argu statement that th "discuss" or "exa something, withe the paper's argu	ment of t perhaps it is a what the paper ue. Or it is a ne paper will amine" out stating what	0 pts No thesis or not submitted	15 points		
Secondary Sources	20 to >10.0 pts Two academic sources, properly cited	10 to >5.0 pts One source, or sources Paper only has a source and anot is not academic encyclopedia, a magazine article organizational w One source may information rathe analysis. Citation have some issue	one secondary one academic ther source that (e.g., an newspaper or e, a personal or rebsite, etc.). The be used for er than ns may also	5 to >0 pts No sources or improper sources, not submitted The paper has no secondary sources, or all sources are non-academic . Sources only used for information. Sources are not cited or citations have major issues.	20 points		
Organization/Flow	20 to >15.0 pts Well organized paragraphs Each body paragraph has a clear point that contributes to proving the thesis, and includes primary source textual evidence and analysis.	15 to >5.0 pts Some organizational problems Some body paragraphs may go off on tangents that do not contribute to the thesis. Some paragraphs may lack a clearly articulated point, or discuss the text in a broad way without citing specific evidence.		Some organizational problems Some body paragraphs may go off on tangents that do not contribute to the thesis. Some paragraphs may lack a clearly articulated point, or discuss the text in a broad way without		5 to >0 pts Serious organizational problems or not submitted Organization is so problematic it is hard to follow the argument at all. No primary source evidence, or no analysis.	20 points

Argumentation	20 to >15.0 pts Convincing The paper's argument follows logically from point to point and ultimately succeeds in convincing the reader of its argument (even if the reader might have some minor reservations)	15 to >10.0 pts Mostly convincing The argument is mostly convincing, but there might be one or two paragraphs that are not convincing, or where the argument has obvious flaws that a well-informed reader can easily see. Despite these flaws, however, the paper succeeds overall in convincing the reader of the thesis statement.	10 to >5.0 pts Partially convincing There are several paragraphs that are not convincing, or where the argument has obvious flaws that a well-informed reader can easily see. While the reader can see some merit in the overall thesis and might be partially convinced, they remain dubious	5 to >0 pts Not convincing, or not submitted The argument has no logical flow, and is so flawed that the reader remains totally unconvinced.	20 points
Mechanics	15 to > 12 pts Grammatical and correctly spelled, good sentence structure	12 to >5.0 pts Some mechanical errors Some misspellings or grammatical errors, but overall very readable		5 to >0 pts Many mechanical errors Misspellings or grammatical errors are so severe they make the paper hard to read or understand.	15 points
Total Points: 100					

Note: It is a recurring pattern that papers with severe deficiency in one of these categories will often have problems that "spill over" into other categories. For example, a paper with noticeably poor mechanics will often hinder the comprehensibility of the paper's argument and flow. So make sure to take each of these categories of a paper's content seriously!

Tentative Course Schedule

(Students should note that this schedule is a guideline and may change)

WEEK 1 1/13-Introduction to class and ourselves 1/15-Inferno, Cantos 1-5 1/17-Inferno, Cantos 6-10 1/20-GOVERNMENT HOLIDAY, NO CLASS WEEK 2 1/22-Inferno, Cantos 11-20 1/24-Inferno, Cantos 21-25 1/27-Inferno, Cantos 26-34; WEEK 3 1/29-Selections/Discussion from film L'Inferno (1911) 1/31–Beowulf, Part 1 WEEK 4 2/3-Beowulf, Part 2 2/5-Beowulf, Part 3 2/7-Tolkien Essay on Translating Beowulf WEEK 5 2/10–Beowulf 2007 Film Discussion 2/12-Macbeth Acts I & II 2/14-Macbeth Act III WEEK 6 2/17–Macbeth Acts III-V 2/19—Discussion of *Macbeth* Film Adaptations (particularly Polanski, 1971) 2/21–Republic, Book I and II WEEK 7 2/24-Republic, Books III-V 2/26-Republic, Book VI 2/28-Republic, Book VII WEEK 8 3/3-Republic, Book VII and IX 3/5-Republic, Book X 3/7-Cicero "Defense" Speech **CLOSE READING PAPER DUE ON FRIDAY** WEEK 9 3/10-Cicero "Against" Speech (Special Guest: Patrick Callahan) 3/12–Genesis, Chapters 1-17 3/14-Genesis, Chapters 18-34 **MIDTERM EXAM**

WEEK 10	SPRING BREAK, NO CLASSES, READ SELECTIONS FROM <i>DEEDS OF THE PRINCES OF THE POLES</i> and <i>MASTER POLIKARP'S DIALOG WITH DEATH</i> .
WEEK 11	3/24—Discussion of selections from <i>Poles</i> and <i>Polikarp</i> 3/26—Genesis, Chapters 35-50 3/28—Job, Chapters 1-14
WEEK 12	3/31–Job, Chapters 15-28 4/2–Job, 29-42 4/4–First Letter of John
WEEK 13	4/7–Koran, Surahs 1-5 4/9–Selections from <i>Hindu Myths</i> 4/11– <i>Analects</i> Books I-XII (57 pages) RESEARCH PROSPECTUS DUE ON FRIDAY
WEEK 14	4/14–Analects Books XIII-XX (42 pages) 4/16–Diary of Lady Murasaki (63 pages) 4/18–Finish Murasaki Discussion
WEEK 15	4/21–Wrap-Up Discussion, "Tier List Day" 4/23–Final Exam RESEARCH PAPER DUE ON FRIDAY