



GREAT WORKS OF THE WESTERN WORLD I

CLT 2219
Section 03
Fall 2005
TR 3:00 – 4:30
Hill Hall, Room 201

Dr. Timothy K. Nixon
Office: Hill Hall, Room 206
Office Hours: MTWR 1:30 – 2:30
410 857-2423
tnixon@mcdaniel.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a survey of western literary artists and their works from the earliest civilizations to the Renaissance. A wide range of authors, texts, and genres will be covered, and special emphasis will be placed on the relationship literary works of art have with their historical precursors. The bulk of the material to be covered in this class will be pulled from the European (specifically non-English) tradition; however, efforts will be made to demonstrate that western literature did not develop in isolation but has been influenced from its beginning by other traditions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students will be well acquainted with representative works of the western literary tradition. Literature's connection with the wider cultural heritage will also become apparent. And the idea of a separate, hermetic, and distinct western literary heritage will be challenged as students see examples of the cross-pollination between occidental and oriental cultures that has occurred throughout history. Finally, students' skills in reading carefully and thinking analytically will be sharpened.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Ferry, David, trans. *Gilgamesh: A New Rendering in English Verse*. New York: Farrar, 1993.

Lawall, Sarah, et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of Western Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. 1. New York: Norton, 2005.

Various items will be posted on Blackboard as well.

GRADE CALCULATION

The student's final course grade will be calculated using the following weights:

| | |
|-----|-------------------|
| 25% | Critical Essay |
| 25% | Final Exam |
| 20% | Mid-Term Exam |
| 15% | Oral Presentation |
| 15% | Reading Quizzes |

Critical Essay: The critical essay will be a scholarly analysis of some text or author or subject covered in class. Students should feel free to write about any topic, but they must discuss their idea and research strategy with the instructor first. When finished, the paper should be

eight to ten pages in length, including the works cited page. It should demonstrate the student's skills as a close reader, a careful researcher, and a critical thinker.

The essay must be typed and double-spaced. *Everything* in the paper should be double-spaced, including block quotations and the works cited page! Students should use one-inch margins on all four sides of the page and a legible, fairly standard font when preparing their papers. (Examples of acceptable fonts include Times New Roman 12 pt. or Arial 11 pt.) The student's name, the course title, the instructor's name, and the date should be typed and double-spaced in the upper left corner of the first page of the composition. Students should number all pages and ensure the entire package is stapled together. References to the work(s) under consideration and any secondary sources should be documented parenthetically, and a works cited page, adhering to the MLA style guide, should be included as part of the paper.

Oral Presentation: Throughout the semester students will be called upon to provide the class with information on cultural and historical ancillaries to the literature being discussed. This information sharing will take the form of oral presentations, and its purpose is to provide a broader context to the discussions that will occur on writers and their work. Each student will be required to deliver one presentation to the entire class on a topic she or he has selected from the list of presentations found in the Course Schedule section of this syllabus.

The oral presentation should last about ten to twelve minutes. Students are to provide a brief (single page) handout with significant points or an outline of the presentation to each class member. References to any secondary sources used in the preparation of the presentation should be included in a works cited section, adhering to the MLA style guide, at the bottom of this handout. After finishing the presentation, students will need to upload an electronic version of this handout to Blackboard.

These presentations will be graded on delivery, content, research, and relevance. Concerning relevance, students need to ensure that their presentations conclude by highlighting how the topic contributes to our understanding and appreciation of the literary material under discussion. Also, creativity in the presentation and handouts will be looked upon kindly. Finally, students must ensure that their presentations do not run long, because one letter grade will be deducted from the presenter's grade for each minute she or he runs on beyond the fifteen-minute mark!

Reading Quizzes: This course is a literature survey, and as such, keeping up with the assigned reading is a major component of its requirements. In order to evaluate how diligent students are being with the reading, brief quizzes will be given throughout the semester. The questions on these quizzes will be straight-forward and relatively easy for those who have completed the assigned reading for that day's class. To this end, students should come to class each day prepared for a quiz. The following guidelines apply: 1) Quizzes will be given promptly at the start of class, and questions will not be repeated for students who arrive in class after the last question has been asked. 2) The quiz component of the student's grade will be calculated by averaging all quiz scores *after the lowest three quiz scores have been dropped*. 3) Missed quizzes cannot be made up.

GRADING SCALE

The following grading scale will be used in this class:

A = 100 – 92
B = 91 – 83
C = 82 – 74
D = 73 – 65
F = 64 and below

SPECIAL NOTE

Any student who may need an accommodation due to a disability should make an appointment to see the instructor during his office hours or at another mutually agreed upon time. This meeting should occur as early in the semester as is possible so the instructor can make appropriate arrangements. A letter from the Student Academic Support Services office authorizing any such accommodations will be needed.

CLASS POLICIES

Students are expected to be present, on time, and prepared for discussion whenever the class is scheduled to meet. However, things conflicting with class attendance invariably arise. At this point, each student should have the maturity and professionalism necessary to monitor his or her own attendance. If there is some extenuating circumstance that prevents the student from attending class, he or she may rely on three of the lowest reading quizzes being dropped. Beyond three absences, the student should talk with the instructor before or after class or during his office hours about this matter. For his part, the instructor reserves the right to fail a student for excessive absences.

Plagiarism is a serious matter, and the College has set high standards for academic integrity. Therefore, class members should consult “The Honor System” section of *The Student Handbook* to familiarize themselves with the section on academic dishonesty and the repercussions associated with any violations. A copy of *The Student Handbook* can be found on the McDaniel College web site at <http://www.mcdaniel.edu/students/studenthandbook.pdf>.

Out of respect for colleagues and the instructor, students are asked to turn off (or leave at home) cell phones and pagers before coming to class.

If a student wants to discuss a grade on a quiz, the essay, or an exam, she or he should meet with the instructor in his office during office hours or at a mutually agreed upon appointment. The instructor will not discuss grades in the classroom.

COURSE SCHEDULE

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Week 1: Introductions & The Ancients | | |
| Aug. 30 (T) | Introductions of the class members, instructor, and syllabus. Overview of the semester. | |
| Sept. 1 (R) | <i>Gilgamesh</i> . | Presentation: Semitic Peoples. |
| Week 2: The Ancients (Cont'd.) | | |
| Sept. 6 (T) | <i>Gilgamesh</i> . | Presentation: Ancient Mesopotamian Cultures. |
| Sept. 8 (R) | Excerpts from the Hebrew Bible: Genesis 1 – 3 (The Creation, The Fall); Genesis 6 – 9 (The Flood); Genesis 11 (The Origin of Languages); Genesis 22 (Abraham and Isaac); Job; Psalm 23; Psalm 104; Psalm 137 (N 39-42, 43-46, 50-51, 66-92, 93-95). | Presentation: Zionism. |
| Week 3: The Ancients (Cont'd.) | | |
| Sept. 13 (T) | <i>The Odyssey</i> by Homer. Books I – VIII (N 206-301). | Presentation: Ancient Mediterranean Cultures. Presentation: The Trojan War. |
| Sept. 15 (R) | <i>The Odyssey</i> by Homer. Books IX – XVI (N 301-403). | Presentation: The Olympic Games. |

| Week 4: The Ancients (Cont'd.) | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Sept. 20 (T) | <i>The Odyssey</i> by Homer. Books XVII – XXIV (N 403-495). | Presentation: Women in Ancient Greece. |
| Sept. 22 (R) | No class! Excerpts from <i>The Republic</i> by Plato (N 817-24). Poems by Sappho (N 497-501 and Blackboard). Questions on the readings posted on Blackboard. | |
| Week 5: The Ancients (Cont'd.) | | |
| Sept. 27 (T) | <i>Medea</i> by Euripides (N 690-720). | Presentation: Classical Greek Drama. |
| Sept. 29 (R) | <i>Lysistrata</i> by Aristophanes (N 722-56). | Presentation: The Peloponnesian War. |
| Week 6: The Ancients (Cont'd.) | | |
| Oct. 4 (T) | Excerpts from <i>The Aeneid</i> by Virgil (N 930-1023). | Presentation: Rome and the Roman Empire. |
| Oct. 6 (R) | Excerpts from <i>Metamorphoses</i> by Ovid (N 1027-64). | Presentation: Roman Religion and the Evolution of Roman Beliefs. |
| Week 7: The Ancients (Cont'd.) | | |
| Oct. 11 (T) | Excerpts from the Christian Bible: Matthew 5 – 7 (The Teaching of Jesus, The Sermon on the Mount); Luke 15 (The Teaching of Jesus, Parables) (N 1085-90). Excerpts from <i>Confessions</i> by Augustine (N 1114-41). | Presentation: The Early Christian Church. |
| Oct. 13 (R) | Mid-term examination. | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Week 8: The Middle Ages | | |
| Oct. 18 (T) | No class—Fall Break! | |
| Oct. 20 (R) | Excerpts from The Koran (N 1150-73). “The Singing Lute” by Ibn Arfá Ra’suh (N 1390-91). “In Battle” by Abu-l-Hasan Ibn Al-Qabturnuh (N 1393). “Summer” by Judah Halevi (N 1392-93). “A Letter from the Grave” by Meir Halevi Abulafia (N 1408). | Presentation: Islam. |
| Week 9: The Middle Ages (Cont’d.) | | |
| Oct. 25 (T) | “Thorstein the Staff-Struck” (N 1375-80). “Lanval,” “Laüstic,” and “Bisclavret” by Marie de France (N 1318-25 and Blackboard). Four Fabliaux (N 1430-53). | Presentation: Lycanthropy. |
| Oct. 27 (R) | “A Lover’s Prize” by Beatrice, Countess of Dia (N 1402-03). “The Wound of Love” by Heinrich von Morungen (N 1405). “The Cult of Love” by Hadewijch of Brabant (N 1408-09). “Dancing Girl” by Walther von der Vogelweide (N 1407). Excerpt from “Letter to Abelard” by Heloise (N 1851-55). Excerpt from <i>Letter from the God of Love</i> by Christine de Pizan (N 1862-68). | Presentation: The Chivalric Code. Presentation: Women in the Middle Ages. |
| Week 10: The Middle Ages (Cont’d.) | | |
| Nov. 1 (T) | <i>Inferno</i> by Dante Alighieri. Cantos 1 – 17 (N 1465-1519). | Presentation: The Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. |
| Nov. 3 (R) | <i>Inferno</i> by Dante Alighieri. Cantos 18 – 34 (N 1519-76). | Presentation: Medieval Florence. |
| Week 11: The Middle Ages (Cont’d.) | | |
| Nov. 8 (T) | Excerpts from <i>The Decameron</i> by Giovanni Boccaccio (N 1600-41). | Presentation: The Plague. |
| Nov. 10 (R) | Excerpts from <i>The Thousand and One Nights</i> (N 1772-1821). | Presentation: The Middle East in the Middle Ages. |

| Week 12: The Renaissance | | |
|--|---|---|
| Nov. 15 (T) | "Love and Poetry" and a Sonnet by Dante Alighieri (N 1414-15). Excerpts from <i>The Prince</i> by Niccolò Machiavelli (N 1949-61). | Presentation: The Medicis. |
| Nov. 17 (R) | Sonnets by Francis Petrarch (N 1903-08). Sonnets by Michelangelo Buonarroti (N 1909-11 and Blackboard). "Capitolo 13" by Veronica Franco (N 1914-15). | Presentation: Fine Art in the Renaissance. |
| Week 13: The Renaissance (Cont'd.) | | |
| Nov. 22 (T) | Excerpts from <i>Gargantua and Pantagruel</i> by François Rabelais (N 2142-78). | Presentation: France in the Renaissance. |
| Nov. 24 (R) | No class—Thanksgiving! | |
| Week 14: The Renaissance (Cont'd.) | | |
| Nov. 29 (T) | "Of Cannibals" by Michel de Montaigne (N 2190-99). Accounts of the New World by Christopher Columbus, Hernán Cortés, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Hans Staden, and Bartolomé de las Casas (N 2505-33). | Presentation: The Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. |
| Dec. 1 (R) | Critical essay due at the beginning of class. Excerpts from <i>Don Quixote</i> by Miguel de Cervantes (N 2221-85). | Presentation: The Golden Age of Spain. Presentation: Satire. |
| Week 15: The Renaissance (Cont'd.) & Final Thoughts | | |
| Dec. 6 (T) | Excerpts from <i>Don Quixote</i> by Miguel de Cervantes (N 2285-2349). | Presentation: Publishing/The History of the Book. |
| Dec. 8 (R) | Final class meeting and course wrap-up. Discussion of final exam. | |