

**English 224**  
**Masterpieces of World Literature**  
**Three Credits**  
**Fall Semester 2006**  
**TR 2:00-3:20 / Torrey 5**

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**<http://www.courses.maine.edu/>**

### **Course Description**

This course is a wide overview of the major works of world literature outside the English tradition. We will focus our attention on some of the biggest names and works in and beyond the history of western literature. In all cases we will take time to survey the general traditions of literature of various nations and look at some of the most important pieces of literature of those nations. Prerequisites: Composition, Introduction to Literature, or permission of instructor.

### **How This Course Works**

This class will move swiftly, and we will work in a back-and-forth manner. In other words, we have a lot of reading to do, and we will cover some works in a non-consecutive manner, moving back and forth between them and other works. In addition to the reading, there will be regular short writing assignments, one longer writing assignment, and presentations.

This is mostly a reading class, so the writing in it will be on carefully focused pieces of writing that will lead to longer writing at later points in your academic career. Though the writing assignments will not be lengthy, I will expect them to be written concisely and thoughtfully.

### **Learning Objectives**

Our primary purpose in this class is to become familiar with the major works of literature from around the world. In many cases this will mean reading the entire work; in others, it will mean simply reading a summary of the work, reading a selection from the work, or simply listening to someone else's summary or explanation of a work.

You will enhance your general and close reading skills in your approach to challenging literary texts, especially those from non-English-speaking cultures; as you do so, you will apply your knowledge of literary and cultural theory to the texts; in doing so, you will gain some historical and cultural perspective on world literature (the "big picture");

Students will sharpen their writing skills, especially those required of students of literature, namely

- the succinct but illustrative presentation of an idea or problem in a given text;
- gathering of pertinent bibliography.

Students will exhibit their mastery of these various objectives through weekly focused writing assignments, class presentations, and an extended research paper.

### **Required Texts**

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Fagles Translation.  
Dante. *The Divine Comedy*. Sisson Translation.  
Dostoevsky. *Crime and Punishment*. Monas Translation  
Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*.  
Exupery. *The Little Prince*.  
Course Packet.

### **Recommended Texts\***

A good collegiate dictionary, one with etymologies.  
A Bible, preferably a Catholic Bible or a Protestant one that includes the Apocrypha.  
A reliable mythology handbook. (Avoid Bullfinch. Welcome Hamilton.)  
William Harmon and C. Hugh Holman. *A Handbook to Literature*.  
Joseph Gibaldi. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

Terry Eagleton. *Literary Theory*.  
Kelley Griffith, Jr. *Writing Essays About Literature*.

\*These are not available at the UMM Bookstore. If you would like a copy, see your favorite bookstore.

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

Please see the sections below for more information on each item.

30%	Fourteen (Ten) Weekly Writing Assignments
10%	One Presentation and Report
20%	Research Paper
10%	Preliminary Work for Research Paper
20%	Fourteen (Twelve) Weekly In-Class Writings
10%	Participation
ZZ%	Conferences

### **Twelve (Ten) Weekly Writing Assignments**

Each Friday at Noon you will write a 225- to 250-word well-focused mini-essay to the Thursday reading for the week. The mini-essay should: address a very specific issue; focus on a single passage of no longer than fifty lines or two pages of text; get right to the point; be relevant everyone in this class; avoid biographical and other unnecessary detail.

No late papers will be accepted. You can email me the paper to prove that you are done, but I will expect a hard copy by the following Monday.

You should not do one of these on the week that you are making your presentation. We will also drop the lowest two grades. ( $14 - 2 = 12$ ;  $12 - 2 = 10$ )

Fully satisfactory = 3.0; Mostly Satisfactory = 2.0; Unsatisfactory = 1.0; Not Done = 0.0)

### **One Presentation and Report**

All students will make one presentation on one of the Thursday works we are covering. You will need to find several useful articles in *Mariner*, discuss with me which one would be best to present, present it (summarize it in a concise and useful way), and then write an abstract of it in 250 words. The summary will be due on Friday (the day after) your report.

No re-scheduling or late papers will be accepted.

### **Class Participation and Feedback**

Naturally, everyone in the class will be expected to participate regularly in class discussion. My attendance book will have one of four marks for you each day: "+" means you made valuable contributions, "x" means you made some contributions; "-" means you made no contributions; "0" means you were not present. To get full credit for this part of this class, you will need to get mostly, but not all, "+" marks.

### **Conferences**

I will want to meet with each of you before your presentation and at least once as you are working on your Research Paper. These conferences are required. They might just be ten minutes after class, but they will be important.

### **Research Paper**

A research paper of no longer than 2500 words will be required, as will several preliminary steps. The schedule for these steps will be available soon. All of the preliminary steps must be completed one-week before the Paper is turned in. If all the preliminary steps are not completed in a timely manner and at reasonable intervals, the paper will not be acceptable.

### **In-Class Writings**

These will be brief and on Tuesdays.

## **Course Policies**

Please make sure you review all of the course policies below. Your success in this class depends on these.

### **Class Conduct**

I expect that you will be fully attentive, courteous, and professional at all times. This means that I expect that you will:

- be punctual for all class meetings, you will be ready to begin on time;
- be attentive to the instructor and to all members of the class;
- ask questions when you do not understand what others, including me, say;
- keep your attention focused on the topic at hand;
- do your best to assist others in their learning.

I expect that you will not:

- take breaks during class (I expect that you will take care of personal needs before and after class);
- engage in private conversations when others, including me, have the floor;
- eat or drink in class (please eat your breakfast before class);
- read newspapers (unless that is the class work at that moment);
- do work for other classes;
- pack up early--in this class we work from beginning to end.

This is a serious matter. If you act unprofessionally in any way, I will let you know, and I will expect that you apologize to the class for any such incident. I especially will not tolerate people speaking out of turn: when someone else has the floor, you are to treat them with your complete respect.

### **Attendance**

In this class, as in all of your classes, you are expected to attend all of your class meetings. With this in mind, my policy on missing class is very simple: if you miss more than three classes, your grade is lowered by one increment for each class you miss over three. For example, if your average is a B and you have missed four classes, your final grade will be a B-; if your average is a B and you have missed five classes, your final grade will be a C+.

If you miss class, I expect that you will contact me before or directly after class. I also expect that you will consult with another student to find out what you have missed, so that when you return to class the next time you will be in stride with the rest of the group.

All absences are excused absences. I trust that you will be mature enough to manage your time and personal circumstances to make it to class each time. If not, I trust that you have good reason. But I also expect you to keep up with your work.

### **Policy On Plagiarism And Academic Dishonesty**

Any student found guilty of willful plagiarism (claiming another's work to be one's own) will be dropped immediately from the course with a grade of F. The student's name will then be submitted to the student's advisor, the Conduct Officer, and the Academic Dean with a recommendation that further action be taken. The same is true for any other form of academic dishonesty.

Occasionally a student will accidentally forget to include the reference of a work that has been used, quoted, or paraphrased. In this case, the student's work will not be assigned a grade until the paper is revised and the proper citations have been submitted to me.

Often these problems can be avoided by consulting the proper reference materials. See the handouts titled "Paraphrasing, Documenting, and Integrating Sources," and "MLA Documentation" on Blackboard.

### **Late Policy**

All Weekly Assignments will be due on Fridays at Noon. As you are forgiven up to two of these assignments, no extensions will be given. There will be no possibility of being late for in-class presentations or in-class writings.

Late work on the Research Project will be accepted if you ask in advance for an extension and if you show me that you have done considerable work already.

### **Incompletes**

Sometimes it becomes necessary to request an Incomplete, but such a request is only to be granted in extreme cases. No Incompletes will be given in this course unless you can fulfill three requirements. First, there must be sufficient cause. Incompletes are not to be given just because you get behind schedule. I will give you extensions, if necessary, but an Incomplete is only for extreme cases. In order for me to consider giving you an incomplete, therefore, you must show a reasonable cause. You can show this by offering me documentation from a doctor or a similar professional outlining sufficient cause for the request for the incomplete. Such documentation must include full contact information for that professional. Second, you must not have more than one outstanding (unfinished) assignment, or no more assignments that are due in the last ten days of the semester, including the final exam period. If you have more missing than this, you have not sufficiently completed your end of the contract and will need to face the consequences. Third, you will need to obtain a Request for Incomplete form from the Registrar, complete the form, and give it to me in person, by the last day of regular classes. Unless all three of these requirements are met, I can not, in good conscience, give you an Incomplete.

### **Minimal Expectations**

Students who do not meet the expectation on a given assignment will be asked to revise that assignment.

### **Academic Freedom and Academic Integrity**

As you are allotted a great deal of academic freedom in this course, I will expect that you exercise a great deal of academic integrity. What does this mean?

1. That you will keep up with the workload to the best of your ability.
2. That you will attempt to complete all assignments as carefully as you can.
3. That you will complete assignments on time. (See Late Policy below.)
4. That you will be helpful or collegial with your fellow students.
5. That you will take credit for the work you do and give credit to those from whom you are borrowing ideas and information. (See Policy on Plagiarism below.)
6. That you will not abuse the privileges that come with the academic freedom of a course such as this, in other words, that you will be honest in completing all your work.
7. That you will report to me any difficulty you are having, so that we might remedy the situation. (You are welcome, of course, to report your successes as well.)



### **How To Succeed In This Course**

Naturally, this course is built for your success. Before you get started in this section, here are ten general tips that will do much to ensure your success:

1. do all work conscientiously, and hand it in punctually;
2. ask questions when you do not understand;
3. take your writing seriously, always with an aim to improve it;
4. read assigned material before class;
5. when you are reading, jot down important points or points you do not understand;
6. attend all classes and participate regularly;
7. begin early on your Course Project;
8. be creative, i.e., try to do things in such a way that no one else would think of;
9. read and follow directions;
10. if you have any sort of problems that will affect your work, let me know.

There are several other elements as well that might help you in this course: interpreting works of literature, contacting me during my office hours, contacting other personnel related to the course, using additional resources, and not, as they say, shooting yourself in the foot. These four items are outlined below.

### **How Not To Succeed In This Course (How To Shoot Yourself In The Foot)**

There are many ways not to succeed in this course, but you will probably avoid all of these. Just in case you might wonder, though, what will hurt you in this course (in fact, in most any course), I will list the most obvious ways:

1. don't attend class often, and, when you do, don't pay close attention;
2. assume that you know enough as it is, or that you already have the right way of looking at things;
3. don't ask questions, except to the person next to you, and only on topics unrelated to class;
4. likewise, don't participate in class discussions;
5. read the assigned material after class, if at all, and don't bother with the readings in the packet;
6. watch the clock to see when class ends, take an occasional nap, and pack up your things early; also, be late for class, and get up every twenty minutes to get a drink and walk around;
7. badger the instructor about grading, even though this is all covered on the Syllabus;
8. hand in assignments when and if you feel like it;
9. don't worry about instructions on assignments--what you think is fine, is fine;
10. spend a minimum of time on your exams--don't start them until the day before they are due.

### **Course Invitation**

This course is your course. If you want it to go well, it will. By your enthusiasm and participation, you can significantly affect the direction of the course. I invite you to contribute not only to our class meetings but also to the design of the course. I am sure you realize that the amount you get out of a class is usually directly proportional to how much you put into it.

If anything will affect your performance in the class, I expect that you will make this known to me as soon as possible. If it is a serious problem, I advise that you also bring it to the attention of the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs.

I hope you enjoy the course and gain much from it.



## Tentative Course Schedule

### Week 1

Thursday, August 31

Course Introduction  
Homer's *Iliad* Summary

Friday, September 1

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:  
Log onto Blackboard (<http://www.courses.maine.edu>) and follow the instructions on the Announcements page. If you have trouble logging in, please call the Helpline at (1-800-696-4357). If that doesn't work, visit the ITV Office and/or call Distance Education at 255-1241 (both in Torrey Hall).

Reply to my email ([necastro@maine.edu](mailto:necastro@maine.edu)). You should have received a message from me by this point. If you have not received a message, it means that you have not put your correct email address in Blackboard. (See instructions from Wednesday and on Blackboard.)

### Week 2

Tuesday, September 5

Homer. *The Iliad*. Summary  
Homer. *The Iliad*. Book XXIV

Thursday, September 7

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Books 1-14

Friday, September 8

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

### Week 3

Tuesday, September 12

*The Descent of Innana*  
*Epic of Gilgamesh* (Summary and Selections)

Thursday, September 14

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Books 5-10

Friday, September 15

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

### Week 4

Tuesday, September 19

Lao Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*

Thursday, September 21

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Books 11-17

Friday, September 22

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

### Week 5

Tuesday, September 26

Japanese Poetry  
Sufi Poetry

Thursday, September 28

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Books 18-24

Friday, September 29

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

### Week 6

Tuesday, October 3

Vergil. *The Aeneid*. Summary  
Vergil. *The Aeneid*. Books 1, 3, 4, and 6

Thursday, October 5

Dante. *The Inferno*. Cantos 1-5

Friday, October 6

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

### Week 7

Tuesday, October 10

*The Thousand and one Nights*. Selections

Thursday, October 12

Dante. *The Inferno*. Cantos 6-12

Friday, October 13

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

### Week 8

Tuesday, October 17

Boccaccio. *The Decameron*. Selections

Thursday, October 19

Dante. *The Inferno*. Cantos 13-22

Friday, October 20

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

**Week 9**

Tuesday, October 24

Moliere. *Tartuffe*  
Cervantes. *Don Quixote*

Thursday, October 26

Dante's *Inferno*, Cantos 23-34

Friday, October 27

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

**Week 10**

Tuesday, October 31

Voltaire. *Candide*

Thursday, November 2

Dostoyevsky. *Crime and Punishment*, 1-9

Friday, November 3

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

**Week 11**

Tuesday, November 7

Goethe. *Sorrows of Young Werther*

Thursday, November 9

Dostoyevsky. *Crime and Punishment*, Chapters 10-19

Friday, November 10

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

**Week 12**

Tuesday, November 14

Ibsen. *Enemy of the People*

Thursday, November 16

Dostoyevsky. *Crime and Punishment*, Chapters 20-29

Friday, November 17

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

**Week 13**

Tuesday, November 28

Kafka. *Metamorphosis*  
Reyes. "Major Aranda's Hand"  
Garcia Marquez. "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World"

Thursday, November 30

Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Chapters 30-39 and Epilogue

Friday, December 1

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

**Week 14**

Tuesday, December 5

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Chapters 1-12

Thursday, December 7

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Chapters 13-25

Friday, December 8

Weekly Writing Due at Noon:

**Week 15**

Tuesday, December 12

St. Exupery. *The Little Prince*.  
Wrap-Up

**Final Exam Week**

We will not have a final exam, but, should we get behind on our schedule, we will use our allotted time this week to make up for lost time.

