

WORLD LITERATURE

English 212

Fall 2009

Section 007 TTh 9:30-10:45 am, 216 Daniel

Section 002 TTh 11:00 am - 12:15 pm, 403 Daniel

Dr. Brian Croxall

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(864) 656-3457

615 Strode Tower

Office Hours: TTh 3:30-5:00 pm and by appointment

Digital Office Hours: MW TBA or whenever I'm shown as available to chat on [the wiki](#)

* I reserve the right to modify this syllabus.

Course Description

In this course we will be reading many works of literature that have been considered important by our culture and others for hundreds, if not thousands of years. Not content to look only to the past, we'll also consider thought-provoking texts from the last one hundred years as well. As we read them, we will consider how the texts comment on and teach us something about the cultures in which they were created. In particular, we will focus on the concept of the hero and observe how the role that heroes play depend upon the cultures in which we find them.

Course Goals

By the end of the semester, successful students should

- become familiar with significant literary works from ancient to modern times
- become more proficient at the interpretation and analysis of poetry, fiction, and drama
- be able to compare and contrast the work of different authors in terms of literary style, intellectual orientation, and historical and cultural perspective
- learn to collaborate with group members on assignments
- develop arguments about how literature represents and engages social conflicts, both within particular texts and across a range of texts

Texts

The **required** texts for this course are

- *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, Shorter Second Edition vol. 1 (Norton, 978-0-393-93302-4)
- Henry James, *Daisy Miller* (Dover, 978-0486287737) 1-800-223-3130
- Milton, *Paradise Lost* (Norton, 978-0-393-92428-2)
- Ibsen, *Hedda Gabbler* (Dover, 978-0486264691)
- Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, *Watchmen* (DC Comics, 978-0930289232)

Important Note: Campus bookstores exist as a convenience, not as a final resource. As such, you might consider purchasing some of your texts from another source (which might be cheaper). But be sure that you have your copy of the text by the assigned dates.

Finally, there are a number of texts that are only available online. **These [online readings](#) are required and *must* be printed off and brought with you to class.** If you do not have your copy of the reading

with you, then you will not be able to participate effectively in the day's activities, and I will count you absent.

Assignments

Papers: There will be two essay assignments throughout the semester. I will distribute the assignments before the due dates. I am happy to discuss drafts, outlines, or ideas in office hours. I am unlikely to respond helpfully to an email message sent the day before the paper is due.

Wiki Class Notes: Class notes are, to borrow from a colleague of mine, "epistemologically weird." On the one hand, they are an individual account of what you learned during a class. On the other hand, if your notes are too individualized or idiosyncratic it means you will have likely missed what was most important. To be effective, in other words, class notes should reflect the collective experience of the classroom. To this end, you will be working in groups this semester to create class notes using the [course wiki](#). I will provide examples for the first few days of class. You will be assigned groups and start taking notes on 27 August.

Having a semester's worth of class notes aggregated on the wiki will also help you see exactly how much work takes place in an English classroom and it will be a useful resource for reviewing material that you might have missed or when preparing for exams. I have been known to consult *your* notes on the wiki when preparing my exam questions.

Each group will write 4 entries on the wiki and the assignment is worth 150 points total. Each entry is worth 30 points. The remaining 30 points will be allocated at the end of the semester based on how a report that group members will make to me--privately--about how the group dynamic functioned. In other words, don't slack off; everyone must carry their own weight in this assignment.

Exams: There will be 3 exams throughout the semester, including the final exam. The exams may incorporate multiple choice, short answer/identification, and essay questions.

Grades

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Participation = 10%
Wiki Class Notes = 15%
Paper 1 = 10%
Paper 2 = 15%
Exam 1 = 15%
Exam 2 = 15%
Final Exam = 20%

Course Policies

Attendance: You can miss three class sessions without penalty. After three, I reserve the right to lower your grade at my discretion; after six absences you risk failing the course. Note that this policy does not distinguish "excused" from "unexcused" absences—such a distinction puts me in a role I don't want to play. If you must miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining the relevant notes and information from your classmates. Finally, be on time to class. I make note of when people are late, and being late three times is akin to an absence.

Preparation and Participation: This is a class based on collaborative discourse. As such, being prepared to participate in discussions is a course requirement. This entails having **read, annotated, and thought**

about the complete assignment carefully before class starts. Furthermore, you **must** bring your copy of the text to class every day. Since we will be engaged in closely examining the texts we read and the language that they use, if you don't have your text then you aren't prepared for class, even if you have read the assignment. Naturally, this admonition applies to the texts that you will find online. **Your active participation will be consequently factored into your final grade for the course.** If you're reluctant to speak up, please talk to me and we'll figure out a way for you to participate.

Office Hours: As noted above, my office hours are from 3:30-5:00 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I consider this *your* time, and I encourage you to make use of it. Please don't think of meeting with me as something to do only as a last resort but rather as an important and integral part of your learning. While you are welcome to just show up during office hours, given my schedule this year and the number of students I have, you might be best served to let me know ahead of time that you are coming. Additionally, feel free to chat with me online during my digital office hours. I've been known to be there at times around the clock. If it says I'm available, I am.

Papers:

- Writing assignments will be graded on the strength of the argument, the structure in which that argument is conveyed, the use of evidence to support the argument, and the clarity of the essay's style. **Hard copies** of papers are due **at the beginning of class**. If you will miss class the day a paper is due it is still your responsibility to turn in that paper **before** class. **Late work will not be accepted**, except at my discretion (with a significant grading penalty). Assignment deadlines are not flexible.
- Papers must be typed in 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins and must be in MLA standard style format. Furthermore, the pages should be numbered in the upper right corner and must be stapled together.
- You may not turn in work to me that you originally completed for another course. Should you wish to draw on a paper that you have written or are currently writing for another course, please discuss the matter with me.

Late Instructor: In the unlikely event that I am late to class, you may feel free to leave 10 minutes after the scheduled start of the class. Don't count on this happening, though.

Academic Integrity: When writing, one needs to give credit when one uses the ideas of others. It is important, therefore, to not only give citations for direct quotations but also summaries or paraphrases. Thus, not only are you expected to avoid stealing others' ideas, but you are also expected to know how to cite your sources in your papers. Please see me if you have any questions about proper citation of sources. Plagiarism may result in a failing grade for the course.

What follows is Clemson University's official statement on academic integrity:

"As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a 'high seminary of learning.' Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form."

"When, in the opinion of a faculty member, there is evidence that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, the faculty member shall make a formal written charge of academic dishonesty, including a description of the misconduct, to the Associate Dean for Curriculum in

the Office of Undergraduate Studies. At the same time, the faculty member may, but is not required to, inform each involved student privately of the nature of the alleged charge.”

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who need accommodations should make an appointment with Arlene Stewart, Director of Student Disability Services, to discuss specific needs within the first month of classes. Students should present a Faculty Accommodation Letter from Student Disabilities Services when they meet with instructors. Student Disability Services is located in G-20 Redfern (telephone number: 656-6848; e-mail: sds-l@clermson.edu). Please be aware that accommodations are not retroactive and new Faculty Accommodation Letters must be presented each semester.

Counseling Services: Confidential and free (for students paying the health fee) counseling services are available from Clemson’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Call (864) 656-2451 for more information or see <http://www.clemson.edu/studentaffairs/redfern/caps/care.php>.

Writing Center: The Writing Center in 305 Daniel is an excellent resource for writers of all skill levels. It offers assistance with all aspects of writing, including brainstorming, organization, thesis formation, style, wording, and revision. I strongly encourage each of you to schedule a meeting at the Writing Center at least once this semester. It is a good idea to secure appointments as far in advance as possible, especially towards the end of the semester, when the Writing Center is busiest. You can schedule appointments by calling 656-3280.

Paper Grading Criteria

Your papers should make a compelling argument based upon convincing interpretation of textual evidence. When reading your papers, I employ the entire scale of letter grades. These are my grading criteria:

- A** The “A” paper makes an original argument and does so persuasively. It is the product of work of consistently high quality and occasional brilliance. It uses this argument to open up new avenues of interpretation, including some avenues that it does not have time to explore. It cites evidence, but does not rely too heavily upon quotation. It anticipates the criticisms and questions that a skeptical reader might have, and it uses those criticisms and questions to make its argument even more complex. The paper does not merely prove an argument; it develops an argument in a provocative and logical manner. Of course, an “A” paper is free of grammatical errors. In addition, it meets the criteria described directly below.
- A-, B+** These grades are awarded to careful and engaged work combining concise and accurate interpretation with analysis. The paper explains its insights carefully and addresses the implications of those insights. The essay states a clear thesis, but does not repeat its own conclusions unnecessarily. The central argument is narrow and well-defined, and the writer has begun to consider the new questions that this argument raises. The essay is written with clarity, style, and grace.
- B** The “B” paper puts forward a persuasive argument and successfully marshals evidence to support it. The paper is largely cohesive and coherent. Each paragraph develops a single point, and the transition from one paragraph to the next makes logical sense. The “B” paper often fails to question its own reasoning in a consistently rigorous manner and sometimes lacks a provocative conclusion. It may also linger too long over points that could be made more concisely — or may move too quickly past points that require further explanation.
- B-, C+** These are the highest grades that a paper relying extensively on summarization or quotation will receive; these are also the highest grades that I will award any paper with serious grammatical errors, such as run-on sentences or sentence fragments. This grade is often awarded to papers that address too broad a topic and/or that contain a major organizational flaw. These papers often look at problems too superficially and try to solve them too simplistically; a paper in this range usually fails to engage questions that naturally follow from its own argument.
- C** The “C” paper puts forward a cogent thesis but usually fails to argue its merits in a persuasive manner. It too heavily relies on quotation and summarization, and it stretches out points that do not require so much attention. It often fails to notice important objections to its argument and/or the important implications of its argument. Its logic is not as coherent as it could be, and the writer often fails to make his or her argument as clear as it needs to be. Its structure is generally clear, though perhaps rigidly mechanical: there is an introduction, body, and conclusion (the dreaded “five-paragraph theme”); points are arranged in a perceptible way; and paragraphs are adequately structured, though there may be irrelevant points or nonfunctional digressions, an unsteady sense of “movement,” or lapses in the writer/reader contract. Improvement is desirable, but you should remember that a “C” grade does indicate average college work.
- D** The “D” paper rarely articulates a clear and defensible thesis and usually suffers from either a lack of supporting evidence and/or serious organizational problems. It may also be an argument whose intelligibility is seriously flawed—it may read as a mere “collection of thoughts” or as a rant. The writer has not been able to make his or her ideas accessible to the reader, and the paper does not adequately support its argument. The paper does not engage the issues that are most important to its focus. The paper may also suffer from important grammatical and syntactical problems.
- F** The “F” paper does not meet the requirements of the assignment: the paper is not completed or not handed in; or it falls significantly short of the minimum length requirement; or it addresses no topic under discussion; or it seriously violates common standards of civility and argumentation; or it is plagiarized or involves self-plagiarism (modification of a paper used for a different class).

Reading Schedule

Complete all assigned reading before coming to class. Please keep in mind that all reading assignments are **subject to change**. All page numbers refer to the editions/ISBNs that I have ordered. For some readings, you will download and print the text from our [course wiki](#).

Aug 20. Th **First Day of Class**
Introductions, Syllabus

Unit 1: Mythic Heroes

Aug. 25 T Homer, *The Odyssey* Book I, Book V (*only* lines 1-250), VI-VIII (Norton 274-285; 328-334; 340-370)

Aug. 27 Th Homer, *The Odyssey* Book IX-XII (Norton 370-423)

Sep. 1 T Homer, *The Odyssey* Book XIII-XVI (Norton 424-471)
Last day of Add/Drop/Swap

Sep. 3 Th Homer, *The Odyssey*, Book XVII-XX (Norton 471-520)

Sep. 8 T Homer, *The Odyssey*, Book XXI-XXIV (Norton 520-563)
Tennyson, "Ulysses" (online)

Sep. 10 Th Euripides, *Medea* (Norton 614-646)

Sep. 15 T The Ramayana of Valmiki (Norton 723-742)

Sep. 17 Th The Ramayana of Valmiki (Norton 742-761)

Sep. 22 T **Class cancelled**

Sep. 24 Th **Exam 1**

Unit 2: Religious Heroes

Sep. 29 T The Hebrew Bible (Norton 97-111)

Oct. 1 Th Dante, *Inferno*, cantos I-VIII (Norton 1214-1239)

Oct. 6 T Dante, *Inferno*, cantos IX-XVII (Norton 1239-1268)
Paper 1 Due

Oct. 8 Th Dante, *Inferno* cantos XVIII-XXVI (Norton 1268-1298)

Oct. 13 T **Fall Break**

Oct. 15 Th Dante, *Inferno* cantos, XXVII-XXXIV (Norton 1298-1326)

Oct. 20 T Milton, *Paradise Lost*, TBA

Oct. 22 Th Milton, *Paradise Lost*, TBA

Oct. 27 T Li Po, all poems (Norton 972-976)
Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind" (online)

Oct. 29 Th Tu Fu, all poems (Norton 976-981)
Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" (online)

Nov. 3 T **Exam 2**

Unit 3: Female (?) and Super (?) Heroes

Nov. 5 Th James, *Daisy Miller*

Nov. 10 T Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*, Acts I and II

Nov. 12 Th Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*, Acts III and IV

Nov. 17 T Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths" (online)

Nov. 19 Th Devi, "Breast-Giver" (online)
Paper 2 Due

Nov. 24 T Duffy, poems from *The World's Wife* (online)

Nov. 26 Th **Thanksgiving Break**

Dec. 1 T Moore, *Watchmen*, Chapters 1-3

Dec. 3 Th Moore, *Watchmen*, Chapters 4-6
Course Conclusions

Final Exams

Section 007 (9:30-10:45): Wednesday, Dec. 9, 8:00-10:30am

Section 002 (11:00-12:15): Wednesday, Dec. 9, 3:00-5:30pm