

Spring 1-15-2016

## ENG 2009G-001: Lit/HV: Faith, Survival, Progress

Dagni Bredeesen

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### Recommended Citation

Bredeesen, Dagni, "ENG 2009G-001: Lit/HV: Faith, Survival, Progress" (2016). *Spring 2016*. 47.  
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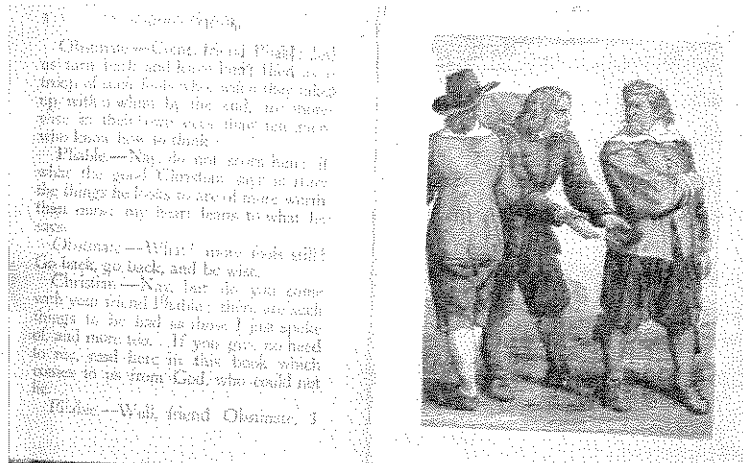
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English 2009—001  
“Literature and Human Values: Faith, Survival, Progress”  
Spring 2016/Coleman Hall 3160

Dr. Dagni Bredeesen

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### Course Overview:

In this humanities course, we will be reading literature—both fiction and non-fiction—that represents “life-as-journey.” As they move towards their final destination—often some kind of home—characters endure various tests. Thus, in addition to focusing on how these stories of “faith, survival, and progress” are told, we will also be studying what sustains an individual through these trials. Our texts will include: John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Frederick Douglass’ *Narrative*, Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, Mary Doria Russell’s *The Sparrow* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*. You will also need to be willing to look up words to succeed in this course.

One objective of this course is to develop further a critical appreciation of and a confidence in reading and discussing literature and the ways literature speaks about and to the human condition. Furthermore, in this course, you will have many opportunities for extending and enhancing skills in reading, writing, and speaking in general, in ways that will benefit you throughout your University career, and, indeed, your life.

Please note that this class is DISCUSSION-DRIVEN. This means that there is an expectation that each student will be fully prepared for each meeting with the text assigned for the day read and able to initiate or contribute to discussion with relevant and meaningful questions or comments that indicate a serious effort to grapple with the assigned texts and the questions that frame this course.

**Course Assignments:** To achieve the objectives described above students will need to keep up with the rigorous reading schedule and actively participate in the class discussion. The following assignments will foster the active engagement necessary to make this a productive and exciting learning experience.

**I. Five Key Passages:** These assignments are intended to encourage thoughtful reading of the texts and to help stimulate class discussion. As you read the assigned texts, note passages that seem especially revealing, interesting, perplexing, or controversial in the light of this seminar's topics. When you finish reading the texts for that week choose *one* passage (no more than 3 prose sentences) and jot it down on a **4X6 index card** (or failing that, a half a sheet of paper) along with your name, the date of the reading you are responding to and the number of this KP, for example 2/5. Also include the author and title of the work in which the passage appears and page number in which it appears. On the back of the card, write a paragraph explaining what you think is taking place, what you think the passage means and why it is significant to the themes of this class. Given the course focus, a good strategy would be to look for examples in the texts in which address one or more of the three terms we are discussing (faith, survival, progress). You will produce five of these key passages—one for each book that can be turned in at any class in which we are scheduled to discuss that particular book but must be drawn from that day's assigned. These passages may be handed in late *only* in cases of excused absence (i.e. absence due to sickness for which a doctor's note is provided, or to participate in an approved University activity) (10%).

**II. Papers:** Three essays based on the readings (10%, 15% and 20% respectively).

**III. Exams and Quizzes:** There will be a mid-term (10%) and a final examination (15%). There may be quizzes to test comprehension and retention.

**IV. Discussion Partnerships and Presentations:** For the last two books you will team up with two other people and "teach" an assigned section. More information on this assignment will be forthcoming (10%).

**V. Extending Oneself:** The word "university" carries with it the idea that part of your education includes an exploration of the universe, that is, the world around you. This course "Literature and Human Values" offers you the opportunity to gain credit for participating in activities in ways that stretch you intellectually, politically, personally. For this assignment you are encouraged to go to an event or performance, a lecture, a concert that in some way that extends you beyond what you have previously experienced. Thus for example, most of you have been to movies or concerts but maybe you have never watched an "art film" or listened to classical music or attended a ballet.

I urge you to do things you would not ordinarily do. Here are some ideas for individual field trips:

1) go to an art museum and look at an exhibit then focus on one particular painting for 15 minutes, perhaps attempt to draw it on a piece of paper or in a pad you bring with you, paying attention to light and shadow, form and empty space as well as the subject itself; 2) go to an ethnic restaurant that serves food other than Mexican, Chinese, Italian, or any other food you are familiar with. Pay attention to the ambience, décor, what you order, how it tastes, etc. 3) do something different: for example give blood, register to vote, volunteer in the community NOT because your fraternity or sorority has mandated that you do it but for its own sake. 4) attend a lecture/presentation in a field that is different from the one in which you are studying. 5) other—clear with me.

The “field trip” itself is part one of this assignment. Part two involves writing about it in a thoughtful, well-crafted way that clearly describes the experience itself and explains in what ways it has taken you beyond your comfort zone, and finally reflects on this experience in relation to something we have discussed in class. This paper should be type written, carefully proofread and its length should run 2 to 3 pages. (5%).

**VI. Participation and Attendance:** You are young professionals in training so punctuality, attendance, and efforts to contribute in meaningful ways to class discussion and activity is not only appreciated but expected. To be present means you “show up” fully. Save your cell phone calls and texting for the scheduled break or, better yet, after class. Perfect attendance is priceless but is worth an extra 5%.

**Attendance Policy:** This class will meet 15 times during the semester (excluding exam week). Missing one class is like missing a week of classes. That said, life can on occasion pose challenges that will necessitate your being absent. Keep in mind, you alone are responsible for finding out what you have missed and to that end you will want to establish a cohort of study-buddies. Please don’t come to me until you have consulted with your peers. If you miss more than 2 classes, you will drop a grade level for that class missed, for example, if you were earning a B, you would be dropped to C. If you miss 4 or more classes you will receive a failing grade for this class.

Regarding Emails: When you email me please put in the subject line the course number, your last name and topic. For example: 2009 Mantegna question about Allegory

**Course Schedule:**

Please note this schedule is provisional and subject to change. Also, students should read assigned text(s) prior to the class in which the text(s) will be discussed.

Week One  
(1/13)

Introduction to Class/ Biblical Swoosh  
*Everyman*, an introduction to **ALLEGORY** and *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

HMWK: Read *Pilgrim’s Progress* p 1-141 (that’s roughly 22 pages a day of somewhat challenging prose, so you won’t want to t leave it all to the last minute)

Your first key passage should identify a section of *PP* that you think is interesting allegorically and discuss what is being allegorically represented.

Fill out study guide and be prepared to discuss where Christian goes, who he meets, and the significance of these places and encounters.

Week Two  
(1/20)

Discuss *Pilgrim’s Progress* 1-141 (see above).  
Pilgrim’s journey—the game.

HMWK: Read *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* chapters 1-5

Week Three  
(1/27)

*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* **MEMOIR Chapters 1-5**  
**ETHOS/PATHOS/LOGOS/Intro to Essay #1**

HMWK: Finish reading *NLFD* and handout "What to the slave is the fourth of July?"

Week Four  
(2/3)

Discussion: *Frederick Douglass* chapters 6-10  
and essay "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July"  
**WRITING WORKSHOP**

Week Five  
(2/10)

*Jane Eyre*: Author's Preface and chapters I-IV  
**NOVEL/BILDUNGSROMAN**  
**First Paper Due/ intro to Second paper: The Index**

Week Six  
(2/17)

*Jane Eyre* chapters V-XXVII  
**WRITING WORKSHOP/Midterm exam prep sheet**

Week Seven  
(2/24)

Discuss: *Jane Eyre* chapters XXVIII-XXXVIII  
Midterm 55"

Week Eight

(3/2)

Film: *Black Robe*  
Discussion Partnership and Presentation 1: *Black Robe*  
**INTRO to *The Sparrow* NOVEL/SCIENCE FICTION**

Week Nine  
(3/9)

DP&P 2: *The Sparrow* chapters 1-11  
**Second Paper Due plus index and annotated bibliography**

#### **SPRING BREAK MARCH 14-19**

Week Ten  
(3/23)

DP&P 3: *The Sparrow* chapters 12-22

Week Eleven  
(3/30)

DP&P4: *The Sparrow* chapters 23-32

Week Twelve  
(4/6)

Visiting Scholar Jessyca Walton  
*Half of a Yellow Sun* Part One (pp1-147) **POSTCOLONIAL NOVEL**

Week Thirteen  
(4/13)

DP&P5: *Half of a Yellow Sun* (pp151-257) Part Two

Week Fourteen  
(4/20)

DP&P6: *Half of a Yellow Sun* First Half of Part Three

Week Fifteen  
(4/27)

DP&P7: *Half of a Yellow Sun* Second Half of Part Three

Final Paper Due Monday May 2nd at 5pm.

Final Exam: May 4<sup>th</sup> 7:30-9:30pm