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ENG 2009G-002: Literature and Human Values: Faith, Survival, Progress

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Spring 2007 / MWF 1:00-1:50am / Coleman 3160

PROFESSOR SUZIE PARK

Office: 3030 Coleman, 217-581-6285

Office Hours: M 10-12, F 10-11, W 10-11

Course Description

This course is writing- and *reading-intensive*. It emphasizes practice in two things: composing essays and responding to literary works. We will spend a good deal of time reading works that will help us consider issues of faith, survival, and progress. You will exercise your skills in interpreting and discussing narratives that invite you to contemplate the meaning of “having morals” in a secular modern world that privileges wealth, conspicuous consumption, easy entertainment, self-gratification, and efficiency. What does it mean for an individual to have values—let alone exercise these values—when objects surrounding the individual are invested already with seemingly limitless, almost magical value?

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is a **writing-centered, writing-intensive** course. You will do a lot of writing and responding. If you foresee difficulty in attending class regularly this semester, you should reconsider taking this course. **You also must be present on the scheduled mid-term and final exam dates in order to complete your exams. I do not schedule make-up exams.** See the attendance policy below.

TextsTheodore Dreiser, *An American Tragedy*Jane Jacobs, *Systems of Survival*Jhumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies*Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Miracle of Mindfulness*J.M. Coetzee, *Foe*Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*Diane Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual***REQUIREMENTS: BEFORE YOU COMMIT TO THIS CLASS**

The primary aim of this course is to help you to become a sharper, more persuasive, and more self-reflective writer. Now that you are writing at the university level, you should be able to:

- know your audience, and to write persuasively for different audiences and purposes
- communicate and collaborate effectively in both oral and written encounters
- review and understand scholarly literature in your field of expertise
- economically incorporate and correctly document outside sources of ideas and information
- revise, revise, revise your writing so that it is grammatically sound and logical

PLAGIARISM (using another writer’s written words or ideas without giving properly documented credit) will not be tolerated and will result in a FAILING GRADE on the assignment, if not for the course. I will follow the departmental policy on plagiarism:

“Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—“The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s own original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.”

Always submit your assignments using correct MLA format.

CONFERENCES: As I get to know your writing better throughout the semester, I will require that you meet with me on an individual basis. In these conferences, we will discuss where you think your writing and critical skills are improving or need more work.

LATE POLICY: For the purposes of your class participation grade, being late for class is the same as being absent. In addition, all take-home papers and assignments are due at the beginning of class. You will NOT be able to make up any missed in-class assignments and quizzes. More details:

- 1) Late final versions of assignments will be marked a full grade lower for every class day late. Assignments turned in a week past the deadline will be given a “zero.”
- 2) In-class writing assignments must be turned in by the end of class, and cannot be made up at a later date.

ABSENCE POLICY: When you are absent—especially when you are frequently absent—two things happen. First, your participation grade drops substantially. Second, you naturally fall behind in understanding course material and neither the class nor the Professor can catch you up on everything missed in a day’s class. YOU need to decide when it is absolutely necessary to miss class. Be wise. It bears repeating: you cannot make up missed work and late assignments will be penalized. Whether these are excused or unexcused absences does not matter for this course. The Professor does not need to have your absences documented or explained. You must complete your Mid-Term and Final Exams on the scheduled dates. **NO MAKE-UP EXAMS**.

EMAILING POLICY: I want to get to know you and your work this semester. Thus I ask that you call me or stop by my office during office hours (or scheduled times) so that we can talk. **DO NOT EMAIL ME TO ASK FOR AN “UPDATE” ON MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, OR TO EXPLAIN AN ABSENCE**. Working groups will be assigned so that you can contact group members for notes and missed work.

ESSAY FORMAT: Your paper should be paper-clipped or stapled. It must include page numbers. Format: 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

PARTICIPATION: This means more than simply being present in class. It means being on-time, prepared (**BRING THE CORRECT TEXTBOOKS TO CLASS**), thoughtful, respectful of others, engaged, and fruitfully open to criticism. **While you’re in class, act like it and respect your teacher and fellow students: no cell-phone rings, no text-messaging, no iPods or headphones.**

GRADES

Participation (10%)

Essay 1 (10%)

Essay 2 (20%)

Response papers, in-class assignments, quizzes (20%)

Mid-Term exam (20%)

Final exam (20%)

For in-class writing assignments, group exercises, grammar exercises, and essay drafts, you will be graded on a scale of $\sqrt{+}$, $\sqrt{}$, or $\sqrt{-}$. Work that is strongly engaged and on-topic will receive a $\sqrt{+}$. Satisfactory work that is on-topic will receive a $\sqrt{}$. Work that shows little engagement or is off-topic will get a $\sqrt{-}$. Final versions of assignments will receive letter grades. See the attached **GRADING RUBRIC** for details of the grading criteria I will use.