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ENG 2091-099: Literature, the Self, and the World-Fiction (Honors)

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ENGLISH 2091G: Literature, the Self, and the World—Fiction (Honors)

Fall 2005 (Section 99)
 Wednesdays 1800-2030
 Coleman 3170

Dr. Zahlan
 Office: 3556 Coleman
 581-6977; cfarz@eiu.edu

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesdays and Thursday, 3:30-5:30(1530-1730); By Appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Who was the first storyteller? A lonely hunter consoling his fellows on a cold northern evening far from home? A mother calming a frightened child with tales of gods and demigods? A lover telling his intended of fantastic exploits, designed to foster his courtship? . . . we shall never know the answer, for the impulse to tell stories is as old as the development of speech, older than the invention of writing. It has deep, psychological springs we do not fully comprehend, but the need to make up characters, and to place them in worlds that are parallel to our own or are perhaps wildly at variance with it, is part of the history of all peoples, cultures, and countries; there is no known human group that has not told tales. (Michael Hoffman and Patrick Murphy, "Introduction," Essentials of the Theory of Fiction)

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We need not go to school to understand the importance of narrative in our lives. News of the world comes to us in the form of "stories" told from one or another point of view. The global drama unfolds every twenty-four hours—split up into multiple story lines that can be reintegrated only when they are understood from the perspective of an American (or Russian, or Nigerian), a Democrat (or Republican, or monarchist, or Marxist), a Protestant (or Catholic, or Jew, or Muslim). Behind each of these differences there is a history, and a hope for the future. For each of us there is also a personal history, the narrative of our own lives, which enable us to construe what we are and where we're headed . . . (Wallace Martin, Recent Theories of Narrative)

In this course, we will study the interactions of self and world in an important literary form: narrative. We will read, discuss, and write about novels that illustrate the significance of narrative in human life. As we read and enjoy works of fiction from different times and places, we will consider the uses of story-telling and story-writing as important means of ordering experience and sharing it with others.

Eastern's General Education Curriculum is designed to help students develop and improve their abilities to read and write, to reason, and to analyze. As a course that meets requirements in Literature and Philosophy, "Literature, the Self, and the World" will help serious students acquire knowledge of important works of literature, of developments in narrative technique, and of western and non-western cultural traditions. Designated "writing intensive," this course will offer opportunities to improve skills in written (as well as oral) communication; written expression will be an important basis of evaluation. Finally, "Literature, the Self, and the World: Fiction" will encourage critical thought and intellectual questioning as to the significance of narrative to individuals and within societies.

English 2091G: Literature, the Self and the World—Fiction (Honors)

TEXTS

Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*; Allende, *The House of the Spirits*;
Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*; Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*; Frazier, *Cold Mountain*;
Morrison, *Song of Solomon*; Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
Suggested Supplementary Text: *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*

SYLLABUS

WEEK I

- 24 August: Introduction to Course and Assignments
Story-telling and *A Thousand and One Nights*
Introduction to Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*

WEEK II

- 31 August: Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Read & prepare Chapters 1-16.)
Assignment of Papers I and II

WEEK III

- 7 September: Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Complete the novel for tonight.)

WEEK IV

- 14 September: Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Read & prepare Chapters 1-31.)

WEEK V

- 21 September: Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Complete the novel for tonight's class.)

WEEK VI

- 28 September: Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn* (Read and prepare Chapters 1-31.)

WEEK VII

- 5 October: Twain, *Huckleberry Finn* (Complete the novel for tonight's class.)
MID-TERM EXAM (Exam begins at 7:10) (Please bring exam booklets to class.)
Introduction to *Things Fall Apart*

WEEK VIII

- 12 October: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
PAPER I DUE IN CLASS

WEEK IX

- 19 October: Charles Frazier, *Cold Mountain* (Read & prepare pages 1-235 for tonight's class.)

WEEK X

- 26 October: Frazier, *Cold Mountain* (Complete the novel for tonight's class.)

WEEK XI

- 2 November: Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (Read & prepare Part One [Chapters 1-9] for tonight.)

WEEK XII

- 9 November: Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (Complete the novel for tonight's class.)

WEEK XIII

- 16 November: Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits* (Read & prepare Chapters 1-6.)
One-paragraph (printed) prospectus for Paper II due in class.

WEEK XIV
THANKSGIVING RECESS—NO CLASS MEETING
WEEK XV

29 November: Absolute deadline for submission of drafts of Paper II: 3:30-5:30 in 3556CH.

30 November: Allende, *The House of the Spirits* (Complete the novel for tonight's class.)

WEEK XVI

7 December: PAPER II DUE IN CLASS

Term Paper Presentations; Exam Review; Farewells

FINAL EXAM (CUMULATIVE): _____

GRADE CALCULATION

Paper I = 15%; Paper II (including Prospectus) = 25%;
Preparation, Participation, Quizzes, Oral Reports = 30%;
Mid-Term Exam = 10%; Cumulative Final Exam = 20%

FICTION READING JOURNAL

Each student should keep a separate notebook or journal in which you write both your initial and your considered responses to reading assignments, and in which you log issues raised in class discussion. Use the journal also to record notes of your "outside" reading. From time to time, you will be asked to write responses in class, and you should add them into your journal when they are returned. Journals are very useful in reviewing for exams and in planning your formal papers and oral presentations. I will not collect or grade journals.

ENGLISH 2091: COURSE POLICIES

Class attendance, punctuality, preparation, and participation are expected and required. Students are responsible for all material covered in class and all announcements or assignments made in class as well as for all assignments on the syllabus. Assignments are to have been completed by class time on the date for which they appear on the syllabus. The books in which the day's assignments are contained should be brought to class.

Remember that "class participation" counts towards the course grade; absence from class will result in a "0" for the day's participation as well as on any graded work due or done in class. Unannounced quizzes on assigned material December be given at any time. There will be no opportunities to make up missed quizzes.

Course Policies continued:

There will be no opportunities to make up a missed test or exam other than in cases of documented medical emergency; (signing in at Health Service does not constitute documentation of a medical emergency).

Major Tests and the Final Exam should be written on test booklets, available at the Union Book Store. Please write tests in ink and on the appropriate booklets.

ALL PAPERS AND OTHER WRITTEN WORK must be handed in on the date due.

1. Work turned in late without advance clearance will not be accepted.
2. Clearance does not constitute an "excuse." Work turned in late with clearance will be penalized, usually at the rate of 5 points per day of lateness.
3. Any lateness December delay the grading and return of the paper, perhaps until the end of the semester.

BE SURE TO KEEP A COPY OF EVERY PAPER YOU HAND IN. IN THE CASE OF A MISSING PAPER, THE STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPLYING A COPY.

A NOTE ON PRESENTATION OF PAPERS: Papers must be computer-printed (or typed) on heavy or medium-weight white 9 x 11 paper. The text should be clear and dark--printed on laser or ink-jet printers--no pale or dot-matrix documents will be accepted. Double-space the text, and leave adequate margins. Each paper must have a separate title sheet which includes the title of the paper, course title, instructor's name, student's name, and date of submission. Repeat the title at the top of the first page of text. Papers must be stapled or clipped.

ONLY PAPERS THAT ARE NEAT AND IN CORRECT FORM CAN BE ACCEPTED.

DOCUMENTATION: Use the most recent MLA system to cite both primary and secondary sources used in your papers. The system is fully explained and illustrated in the latest edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Each student should have access to a copy.

Inform yourself about documentation conventions for electronic-media information and materials. All such materials must be documented, and citation forms are illustrated in recent handbooks; go to the Writing Center for assistance. Electronic-media materials must be evaluated for quality and reliability even more scrupulously than print materials. Please remember that you must absorb and process all materials: downloading is not research.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: All written work (papers, exams, tests, quizzes) must represent your own ideas and your own style. Downloading or copying the work of others constitutes plagiarism. Make sure that all of the written work you hand in is original and independent. Please make sure that you understand the meaning of plagiarism and the policy of the English Department:

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 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 assignment of the 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. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: "If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible."