

Fall 8-15-2011

ENG 2601-003: Backgrounds In Western Literature

Bonnie Irwin
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2011



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Irwin, Bonnie, "ENG 2601-003: Backgrounds In Western Literature" (2011). *Fall 2011*. 76.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2011/76

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2011 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2011 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

Backgrounds of Western Literature
TuTh 3:30-4:45 PM, Coleman Hall 3150

Dr. Bonnie Irwin
 E-mail: bdirwin@eiu.edu

Office: Doudna 2218
 Phone: 581-2922

Office Hours: *after class most days, 9 AM some Fridays, and TBA*

Course Description

The catalogue description of this course reads, "A reading of major world masterpieces through the of Renaissance, works that have influenced literature in English, by such writers as Homer, Sappho, Sophocles, Plato, Virgil, Ovid, Marie de France, Dante, Rabelais, Cervantes." I intend to make the course far more interesting than this rather dry catalogue copy. To that end, I will be asking for a lot input from *you*—your beliefs, ideas, desires, goals, and interests in taking this class.

In terms of format, we like to see a lively class. I will do whatever I can to keep you awake and involved and interested. Don't be surprised to see a lot of small group interaction and a variety of activities. I do *not* want to hear myself talk for 150 minutes a week and I doubt you do either.

I make certain assumptions about students: among these are that you are self-motivated, that you come to class prepared, and that I can trust you enough not to give quizzes. If I am proved wrong in these assumptions, I will resort to reading quizzes! There will be times when the subject matter for discussions will be based on your outside research. We will not limit ourselves to the texts, and we will not always all be reading the same material.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, I expect you to *know* . . .

- How literature builds on earlier traditions
- How "quality" and "importance" of literature are defined
- The significance of verbal art produced in non-literature cultures and the impact of the rise of literacy on western tradition
- The social, political, and aesthetic contexts of literature
- How to synthesize and analyze information from scholarly sources
- How to communicate research findings in oral and written form
- How you learn
- How to think independently and reflectively

With this knowledge I expect you to be able to . . .

- Use appropriate literary terms correctly when discussing texts
- Identify strategies for retaining information and reflect on your progress as a reader of literature
- Recognize and identify motifs, storylines, and images that are sustained over time, and evaluate how they change in various temporal and cultural contexts
- Recognize the hallmarks of a literary masterpiece
- Think critically about what you read
- Apply what you know about ancient and medieval traditions to later works of literature
- Analyze the significance of the social, political, performance, and aesthetic contexts of literature
- Enjoy!

Texts

Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces
 Homer, *Iliad* (tr. Lombardo)
 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (tr. Mandelbaum)
The Arabian Nights (tr. Haddawy)
 Cervantes, *Don Quixote* (tr. Ormsby)

There is a *lot* of reading in this course, some selections easier than others. Thus, discipline will be rewarded, procrastination will get you into trouble. I believe that you will enjoy most of the selections.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation	150 points
Journal	200 points
Papers	450 points
Learning self-assessment	100 points
<u>Final</u>	<u>100 points</u>
Total	1000 points

Course Grade:

901-1000 points	A
801-900 points	B
701-800 points	C
601-700 points	D
0-600 points	F

Words of Advice on Grades

Adequate, Average work will earn you a 'C' in this course. If you merely go through the motions, but do so with a certain amount of skill, you are an average (i.e. 'C') student. Good work, i.e. extra effort leading to a good quality product will earn you a 'B.' Excellent work, i.e. going above and beyond the requirements for assignments, using both skill and creativity, should earn you an 'A.' I do *not* care what grade you *need*; I will do whatever we can to help you *earn* the grade you *want*, including returning much work for your revision and resubmission.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 581-6583 (9th Street Hall).

Policy on Plagiarism

Any teacher who discovers plagiarism—"the appropriation 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 assignments of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

A Few Notes on the Syllabus

- Readings are listed on the day by which they must be *completed*
- Assignments due dates are recommendations; we will change them if/when necessary, but consider doing what you can early.

Questions? Feel free to drop by my office or make an appointment via e-mail.

SYLLABUS

1. Please note that the reading is listed on the day by which it must be *completed*.
2. While not assigned, the little introductions to the works in the *Norton Anthology* are quite informative, and you may want to read them.
3. In addition to discussing the individual works of literature, we will also discuss the following—your approach to reading and writing, relationships among the various arts, how you learn, and the relationship between literature and its contexts—at any time during the semester.
4. Many days have a theme listed that will guide discussion and might be a good idea for you to address in your journal; discussion on these days will not be limited to just the topics listed, however.
5. Depending on your abilities and interests, this schedule may be subject to change.

Tu Aug 23	Introduction Class overview Theme: what is a “masterpiece” and why should we care?
Th Aug 25	<i>Gilgamesh</i> and the Old Testament: Creation and flood Themes: How to read a sacred text; how sacred texts influence literary texts. <i>Norton</i> , pp. 16-18, 41-44, 51-58 Close Reading Cooperative (iTunes): Imagery Journal due
Tu Aug 30	<i>Iliad</i> , Books 1-4, 6 Themes: Honor; rage; what is the relationship between gods and human beings? Journal due
Th Sept 1	<i>Iliad</i> , Books 9, 11, 15-16 Close Reading Cooperative (iTunes): Allegory and Symbolism Theme: How to read an oral poem; <i>how</i> does the <i>Iliad</i> mean? Journal due
Tu Sept 6	<i>Iliad</i> , Books 17-19, 21 Close Reading Cooperative (iTunes): Simile Themes: Friendship and loyalty; audience and performance Journal due
Th Sept 8	<i>Iliad</i> , Books 22-24 Themes: Sacrifice and celebration Journal due
Tu Sept 13	<i>Odyssey</i> , Books 1 and 8 (starting on page 300, line 486)-12 Themes: the role of hospitality; leadership vs. heroism. Journal due
Th Sept 15	<i>Odyssey</i> , Books 19, 21-24 Themes: family and loyalty; crime and punishment. Journal due
Tu Sept 20	Greek Drama

Group 1: Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* (Norton, pp. 521-566)
 Group 2: Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* (Norton, pp. 599-639)
 Group 3: Euripides, *Medea* (Norton, pp. 642-671)
 Group 4: Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* (Norton, pp. 674-725)
 Close Reading Cooperative (iTunes): Irony or Irony and Paradox
Journal due

- Th Sept 22 Greek Drama discussion
Paper 1 online draft due
- Tu Sept 27 Greek Drama discussion
Journal due
- Th Sept 29 Virgil, *Aeneid*
 Norton, pp. 817-847
Paper 1 due
Journal due
- Tu Oct 4 Virgil, *Aeneid*
 Norton, pp. 847-894
Journal due
- Th Oct 6 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*
 Close Reading Cooperative (iTunes or YouTube): Metaphor
Journal due
- Tu Oct 11 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*
Journal due
- Th Oct 13 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*
Journal due
- Tu Oct 18 Sacred Texts: New Testament and the *Qur'an*
 Norton, pp. 960-975, 1040-1057
 Dr. Irwin out of town – online discussion
Online Journal due
- Th Oct 20 Dr. Irwin out of town – Reading day
- Tu Oct 25 Dante, *Inferno*
 Norton, pp. 1293-1409
Journal due
- Th Oct 27 Dante, *Purgatorio & Paradiso*
 Norton, pp. 1409-1429
Paper 2 online draft due

Tu Nov 1 *1001 Nights*
Journal due

Th Nov 3 *1001 Nights*
Dr. Irwin out of town – online discussion
Online Journal due

Tu Nov 8 *1001 Nights*
Paper 2 due

Th Nov 10 *Dr. Irwin out of town – Reading day*

Tu Nov 15 Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
Journal due

Th Nov 17 Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
Journal due

Tu Nov 22 THANKSGIVING BREAK

Th Nov 26 THANKSGIVING BREAK

Tu Nov 29 Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
Paper 3 online draft due
Journal due

Th Dec 1 Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
Journal due

Tu Dec 6 **Paper 3 due**
Review and Summary Discussion

Th Dec 8 Review and Summary Discussion

Tu Dec 13 FINAL EXAM
2:45 – 4:45