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ENG 2601-001: Backgrounds in Western Literature

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**English 2601-001—Backgrounds in Western Literature
Fall 2002**

Dr. Campbell
CH 3572, 581-6974
Office hours TTH 11-12:30, W 11-12

TTH 9:30-10:45
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Texts

Lawall and Mack, *Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*, Vol. 1, 7th edition
Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*

Course Description

This course is designed to provide an introduction to literary works considered central to the development of western literature. Writers throughout the centuries have responded to and incorporated aspects of works by their predecessors and their contemporaries into their own "new" creations. In this course we will especially explore various lines of artistic and topical influence that stretch from classical origins through literary works of the Renaissance. We will observe how ideas are adopted and adapted to suit the social, political, and personal situations of the writers. Furthermore, we will discuss our own early twenty-first-century impressions of these works, addressing such questions as the following: What seems familiar or contemporary to us about these writers regarding their social milieux, their historical moments, and their texts? Why have these texts been so influential for so long? Why do they still fascinate? How should we, reading several of these texts in translation, think about the transitions they have gone through regarding the practices of translating and editing? Above all, by the end of the course you should have a greater understanding of the literary periods and genres of the western literary canon, as well as a sense of the historical shaping of some of your own ideas and values.

Policies

--The English Department statement on plagiarism stipulates that 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 a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of NC for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

--Hand papers in on time. If you're having problems, let me know. Papers more than a week late without a University-approved excuse will not be accepted at all. Also plan to show up for exams. Again, if you have problems, let me know. You will have no more than one week to make up an exam, and the make-up exam will be different from the one given during class.

--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.

--Be prepared for class. You'll get a lot more out of class discussions if you are participating in them, and I'll notice if you do not seem prepared to participate.

Requirements

- Two exams 30% (15% each of final grade)
- One 7-10 page research paper . . 20%
- One presentation 10%
- Response writings, preliminary
research report and paper draft15%
- Final exam 25%

The **two exams** and the **final** will cover the three units of study: the Ancient World, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance, respectively; however, there will be interplay between these periods in our discussions and in the test questions, and the final exam will be comprehensive.

The **paper** topic will be chosen from the assigned texts and issues related to them. I will give you a list of possible topics and/or areas of study to consider early in the semester because you will be expected to select a topic and begin research early on. The paper will be 7-10 pages long. You will use at least 3-5 outside sources to support your arguments, and they should consist of scholarly books, journal articles, and internet sources of well-known scholarly repute. You will use MLA Parenthetical Style, with a Works Cited page, for documentation. Around midterm, you will have a **preliminary research report** due to show the progress that you have made regarding your research project. At some point after that, you will also have due a **rough draft** of the paper. Do not worry that we haven't covered the topic that interests you in class—this portion of our study is meant to be independent exploration of a topic that may be completely new to you. It is my hope that your independent study will augment for you what is eventually covered in class and will broaden the scope of the course as a whole for you. You, in turn, will share with the class what you have learned during your research near the end of the semester.

The **presentation** will be a 7-10 minute oral report over your research project, due near the end of the semester. After conducting your research, discussing your findings with me, and writing your paper, you will be able to present to the class what you have learned. The goal is to provide, via your and your fellow students' reports, both a "big picture" look at the area we have covered over the course of the semester, as well as introduce specialized information that you have focused on during your own independent reading.

The **response writings** will be concerned with specific reading assignments and are meant to generate class discussion. I will give you a series of questions to answer or a short topic to address. You will word process and turn in these assignments.

Tentative Schedule

Note: Readings may be shifted around during the semester to accommodate the class discussion.

The Ancient World

T. Aug. 27— Receive syllabus. Begin reading *Antigone*.

Th. Aug. 29— Introduction to course. *Antigone*.

Note: **Always** read your text's introduction to each author.

T. Sept. 3—*Antigone*.

Th. Sept. 5—*Antigone*. Begin reading *Lysistrata*.

T. Sept. 10— *Lysistrata*.

Th. Sept. 12—*Lysistrata*. Begin reading *Medea*.

T. Sept. 17— *Medea*

Th. Sept. 19—*Medea*. Review for Exam I.

T. Sept. 24— Exam I. Begin reading *Inferno*.

The Middle Ages

Th. Sept. 26—*Inferno*

T. Oct. 1— *Inferno*. Begin reading *Decameron*.

Th. Oct. 3— *Decameron*, Read *Sir Gawain*

T. Oct. 8— *Sir Gawain*

Th. Oct. 10— *Sir Gawain*, Read *Everyman*

T. Oct. 15— *Everyman*

Th. Oct. 17— *Everyman*. **Discuss papers/topics.**

T. Oct. 22— Research projects.

Th. Oct. 24— Research projects.

T. Oct. 29— Review for Exam II. **Preliminary research report due.**

Th. Oct. 31— Exam II. Read Petrarch, Shakespeare sonnets, and Donne selections.

Read *Courtier*.

The Renaissance

T. Nov. 5— Petrarch, Sonnet handout, Shakespeare sonnets, and Donne selections. Read *Courtier* and *Heptameron*.

Th. Nov. 7— *Courtier*. *Heptameron*. Read *Othello*.

T. Nov. 12— *Othello*

Th. Nov. 14— *Othello*, Read *Much Ado*

T. Nov. 19—Finish *Othello*. Start *Much Ado*.

Th. Nov. 21— *Much Ad.* **Rough drafts are due.**

T. Nov. 26—Thanksgiving

Th. Nov. 28—Thanksgiving

T. Dec. 3— *Much Ado*

Th. Dec. 5—Begin oral presentations. **Research papers are due.**

T. Dec. 10—Oral presentations.

Th. Dec. 12—Finish oral presentations. Review for Final Exam.

Final Exam: Wed., Dec. 18, 8:00-10:00 am.