

Fall 8-15-2008

## ENG 2601-001

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2601-001

Fall English 2601  
~~Spring~~ 2008  
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**Texts:** *Norton Anthology of Western Literature* 8<sup>th</sup> ed.  
Burgess, transl. *Song of Roland*  
Hanning and Ferrante (trans) *Lais of Marie de France*  
Boccaccio, *The Decameron* (Musa and Bondanella, trans)  
Greene and Lattimore (trans) *Greek Tragedies* vol 3  
Rabelais, *Gargantua*

**Goals:** The premise of the course is that there are certain works so central to western literature that they simply must be read if that literature is to be understood. Writers often respond to earlier writers in their work; Homer, Dante, Petrarch, and others have served as models for countless English writers. Obviously, it's useful to have read them.

But these works also continue to fascinate in their own right, and the bulk of class-time will be devoted simply to talking about them: what they're saying, how we respond to them, what makes them work. As we talk about them, it's important to remember that we're reading them in translation and many centuries after they were written. In some ways they will remain unreachable, therefore; we read them only in the light of our own culture and language, and must struggle to penetrate the profoundly different worlds from which they emerged. In other ways, though, they are strangely contemporary, posing questions about how one should live, what one should value, whom one should admire . . . questions, obviously, that still concern us.

At the end of the semester you should have a greater familiarity with various literary genres, literary periods, and the western literary canon, as well as a bunch of new books to love.

**Policies:** English Department statement 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 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. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

**Late work:** Plan to hand in papers on time. If you're having problems, let me know. **Papers a week or more late will not be accepted at all.** Responses will be accepted only when handed in at the class for which they were due. This class involves a heavy reading load; make sure you plan your time so that you can keep up with the reading.

**Attendance and classroom etiquette:** Attendance at every class is expected. Note that a significant portion of the grade is based on class participation, in-class writing, and responses, all of which require keeping up with the reading and (obviously) being in class. **Excessive absences will result in a grade of 0 for the in-class portion of your grade.** If you need to leave early for some reason, please let me know ahead of time. Needless to say, please keep cell phones off.

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.

**Requirements:** 3 exams 40% (10/10/20)  
2 essays 30% (10, 20)  
responses, in-class writing assignments 20%  
participation and group presentations 10%

Essay grades will be based on Standards for Grading Themes at EIU. I plan to use number rather than letter grades; this will convert into your final grade as follows: 91-100=A; 81-90=B; 70-80=C. 65-69=D. Because I grade on a 100-point scale, missing assignments affect the grade tremendously.

**Responses:** Almost every week you will be required to hand in a 1-page typed response to the assigned reading for any one of the three class periods (you choose which). The response must be about the reading due on the day you hand it in; it should reflect your thoughts before class discussion. I will not accept responses handed in after the class period in which the relevant assignment has been discussed, nor will I accept responses from students who have not been in class. Responses must be handed in at the end of the class for which they are relevant and must be typed. The point of the responses is to stimulate your thinking about the assigned reading, to give you practice in analyzing it on your own, and to facilitate your involvement in class discussion.

The format for the responses:

1. quote directly a brief passage from the assigned reading that strikes you as particularly interesting, controversial, or significant, providing page number in parentheses, as follows: "His life breath fled with a groan of outrage/down to the shades below" (386). .
2. explicate the quotation: what in it struck you as significant? Unfold the language showing how words, images, characters relate to larger themes in the work as a whole (1-2 paragraphs).
3. what question(s) arose in your mind as you read the assigned reading?

I will grade responses on a 10-point scale, in terms of their thoughtfulness and depth.

If illness or personal emergency keeps you from being in class on the day on which you intended to hand in a response, hand in a response for another class day that week instead; if that's not possible, talk to me so you won't be penalized for problems beyond your control.

**Group presentations:** For each group presentation (there are two) I'll ask you, in groups of 3-4, to focus on how a later illustrator, author, movie maker, etc adapted, interpreted, responded to or borrowed from one of the texts on the syllabus. Essay assignments will grow out of these presentations. You'll be creating your own groups, so it's not too soon to start getting to know each other.

**EWP:** this is a writing-intensive course; papers may be used for your electronic writing portfolio.

### Syllabus (tentative)

#### I. Ancient World: The Greeks

MAugust 25: introduction to course.

W27: Homer. *Iliad*. Book I pp. 107-122. Response #1 due W or F.

Fri29: Homer. Book VI, VIII, IX pp. 122-48

#### MSept 1: Labor Day

W3: Homer. *Iliad* Book XVI, XVIII pp. 148-73. Response #2 due W or F

F5: Homer. *Iliad* Bk XXII, XXIV

M8: Homer. *Odyssey* 1-4 (2 optional). Response #3 due M, W or F.

W10: Homer. *Odyssey* Bks 5-8 (8 optional)

F12: Homer. *Odyssey* Books 9-12. Hand in template.

M15: 13-19 (15, 17-18 optional). Response #4 due M or W

W17: 21-24

F19: Group presentation 1: illustration(s), modern version, poem, involving *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.

M22. Sappho. Essay #1 due.

W24: The *Bacchae* (Greene and Lattimore, separate volume)

F26: The *Bacchae*

M29: *Lysistrata*. Response #5 due M or F

Wed Oct1: exam on the Greeks

#### II. The Ancient World: The Romans

Fri 3: Virgil, Book 1 (Fagles trans. Separate volume)

M6: Virgil, Books 2, 3. Response #6 due M or W

W 8: Virgil, Book 4

F10: Fall break

M13: Virgil, Books 6, 8. Response #7 due M, W, or F

The Middle Ages

W15: The Song of Roland (separate volume)

F17: The Song of Roland

M20: Roland. Response #8 due, M, W, or F

W22: Marie, "Guigemar," "Bisclavret" (separate volume)

F 24: Marie, "Yonec," "Eliduc"

M 27: Dante. Response #9 due M, W, or F

W 29: Dante

Fri31: Dante. For fun, see <http://www.4degrez.com/misc/dante-inferno-test.mv>

MNov3: Dante. Response #10 due M, W, or F

W5: Dante

F7: Dante

M10: Exam: Romans and Middle Ages

IV. The Renaissance

W12: Petrarch

F14: Group presentation #2.

M17: Boccaccio (separate volume). Response #11 due M or W

W19: Boccaccio

F21: Boccaccio. Hand in first version essay #2. On separate sheet, list 5 scholarly articles you have located (but not necessarily read) that you think might be relevant.

Thanksgiving Break

M Dec 1: Rabelais (separate volume). Response #12 due M, W, or F

W 3: Rabelais

F 5: DQ. Hand in annotated bibliography of the three articles most relevant to your topic.

M8: DQ

W10: DQ

F12: DQ. Review. Hand in final version essay #2.

There will be a cumulative final exam during exam week.

Achilles' baneful wrath resound, O Goddess, that impos'd  
Infinite sorrows on the Greeks and many brave souls los'd  
From breasts heroic; sent them far to that invisible cave  
That no light comforts; and their limbs to dogs and vultures gave:  
To all which Jove's will gave effect; from whom first strife begun  
Betwixt Atrides, king of men, and Thetis' godlike son.  
--George Chapman, 1598, 1611

The wrath of Peleus' son, the direful spring  
Of all the Grecian woes, O Goddess sing!  
That wrath which hurled to Pluto's gloomy reign  
The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain,  
Whose limbs, unburied on the naked shore,  
Devouring dogs and hungry cultures tore;  
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove!  
--Alexander Pope, 1718

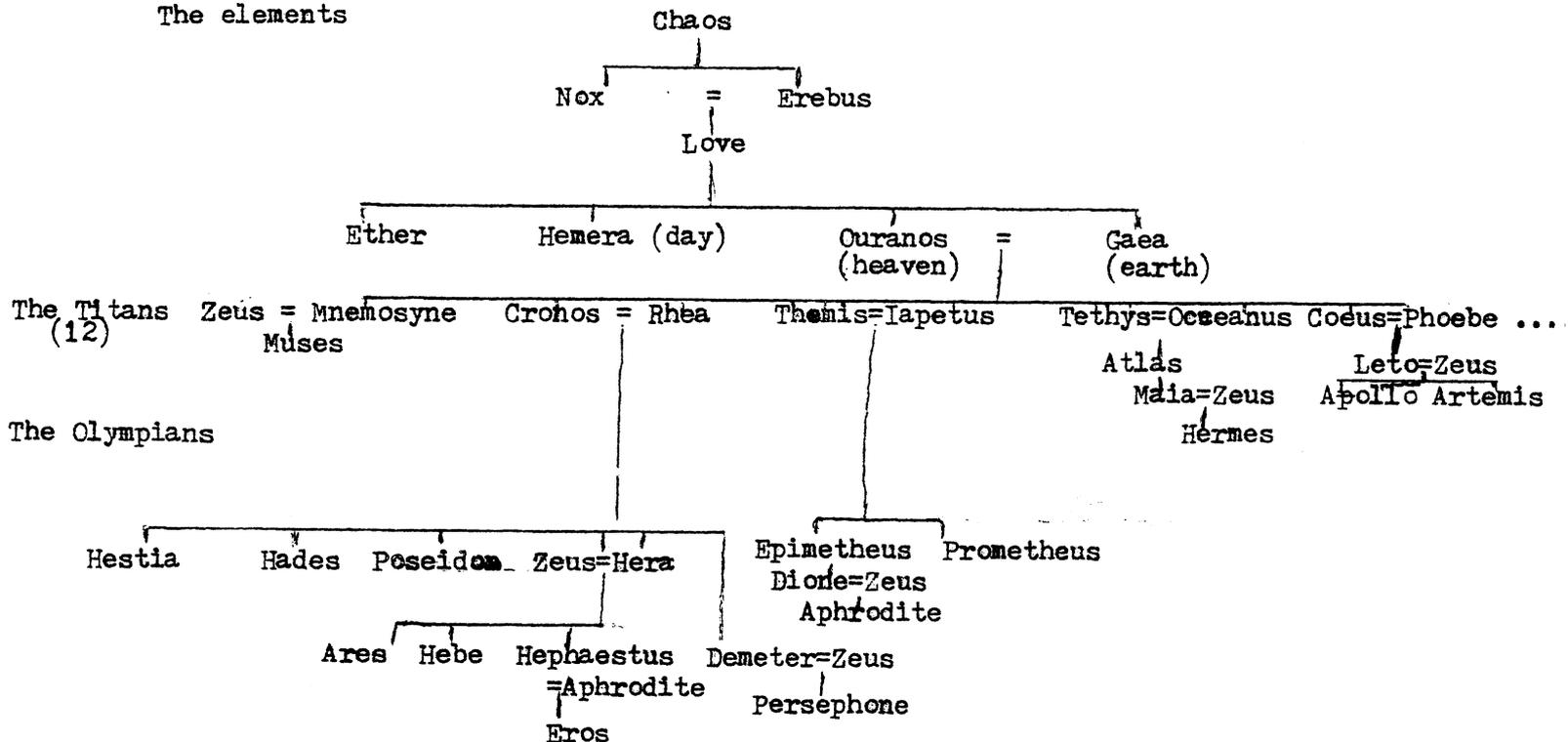
Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus's son Achilleus  
And its devastation, which put pains thousandfold upon the Achaians,  
Hurl'd in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls  
Of heroes, but gave their bodies to be the delicate feasting  
Of dogs, of all birds, and the will of Zeus was accomplished  
Since that time when first there stood in division of conflict  
Atreus' son the lord of men and brilliant Achilleus.  
--Richard Lattimore, 1951

Rage:

Sing, Goddess, Achilles' rage,  
Black and murderous, that cost the Greeks  
Incalculable pain, pitched countless souls  
Of heroes into Hades' dark,  
And left their bodies to rot as feasts  
For dogs and birds, as Zeus's will was done.  
Begin with the clash between Agamemnon—  
The Greek warlord—and godlike Achilles.  
--Stanley Lombardo, 1997

## Major Gods

The elements



### Greeks

Akhaians (Akhaia)  
 Argives (Argos) } = synonyms  
 Danaans  
 (among allies: Myrmidons)

### Trojans (Ilion)

Gk commander-in-chief: Agamemnon (=Clytemnestra; son Orestes, daughters Iphigenia, Electra)  
 Agamemnon's brother: Menelaus (=Helen), from Sparta  
 allies: Odysseus (=Penelope, son Telemachus), from Ithaka  
 Akhilleus, leader of Myrmidons  
 Nestor, old + wise  
 Helen + Clytemnestra, daughters of Leda=Zeus  
 Trojan king: Priam (=Hecuba)  
 his sons: Hector (=Andromache)  
 Paris (elopes with Helen)  
 Deiphobus

### Gods (12 main)

Zeus (king. heaven. thunder) = Hera  
 his brothers: Poseidon (sea) and Hades (underworld)  
 his daughter: Athena (born from his forehead, fully armed, without a mother. owl. handicrafts, intelligence, war/peace. virgin)  
 sons: Hephaestus (lame, blacksmith, = Aphrodite); Ares (war)  
 Hermes (messenger); Apollo (sun, music, prophecy)  
 daughters: Artemis (moon, virgin, huntress) Aphrodite (?) (beauty, love)  
 sisters: Hestia (hearth), Hera (marriage, maternity), Demeter (harvest, fertility)