Summer 6-15-2000

ENG 3010G-115

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SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR: John Kilgore. Office: 314K Coleman Hall. Hours: TWR 1-4; also often in on Tuesday morning. Phone: (217) 581-6313 (office); (217) 345-7395 (home). E-mail: cfjdk@eiu.edu. Please feel very free to call my home at reasonable hours. When leaving voice mail at the office, include date and time of call, and do not trust voice mail for urgent messages—try me at home instead.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Two or three papers (55%); brief oral presentation (ungraded); final exam (30%); attendance and participation (15%). I reserve the right to depart from these percentages somewhat.

ESSAYS. Will come due on 7/6 and 7/20, with an optional third paper due on 7/27; see schedule below. These are to be analytical discussions of about 1,000-1250 words, thoughtfully posed, rigorously developed and defended, written with great care. Detailed writing guidelines and suggested topics will be forthcoming. You are welcome to develop your own topics rather than writing on the suggested ones, but be SURE to check with me first. If you choose to write a third paper, the best two of your three grades will count, while the lowest grade is disregarded.

All papers should be typewritten (or computer printed), double-spaced, and generally legible. I prefer NOT to receive papers in report covers. Check the Writing Guidelines handout for other relevant information.

FINAL EXAM. Is meant to ensure that you have done ALL readings carefully and have a good grasp of issues and concepts covered in class discussion. It will consist chiefly of short essays (5-10 minutes each) which ask you to analyze concepts, interpret passages, and demonstrate basic familiarity with works on the syllabus. One or two synoptic essays, asking you to draw various works and ideas together, will probably be included as well, and a section of objective questions is possible.

Three keys to success on the final: 1) Keep up with the reading, and come to class prepared. 2) Be on the lookout for study questions which I will distribute once or twice during the term. These will be closely related to the exam questions. 3) Be SURE to get a copy of the Exam study sheet which I will distribute in Week 7.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS. These will be 3-5 minute talks on fairly simple assigned topics related to the assigned readings. See the attached list, and sign up for any topic that looks interesting to you; or be creative and invent your own topic, but be sure to clear it with me in advance. Beginning in the second week, we will have one or two of these talks per night, timed to coincide with related class discussions.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION. Are key aspects of your performance in the course, and will accordingly count roughly 15% of your grade. From the second meeting on, I will be passing around an attendance sheet which you must sign. At the end of the term, I will assign a participation grade according to the following scale: 2 absences--A; 3 absences--B; 4 absences--C; 5 absences--D; 6 absences--F. I will raise this grade a bit if I think your contributions to class discussion have been especially good. Absences beyond the maximum of 6 will result in a further, proportional lowering of the course grade.

Note that you have two "free" absences. Use these as insurance against illness and other unavoidable circumstances that may keep you from attending. I will not award attendance credit for any session which you have missed. Not automatically, at least; but in the case of an excusable absence, I will usually be willing to assign make-up work--onerous, annoying make-up work--for attendance credit. See me if you prefer this to
taking the absence. Please note that excusable absences, according to official EIU policy, are limited to “properly verified absences due to illness, emergency, or participation in an official University activity.”

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Allison, Ed., The Norton Anthology of Poetry, 3rd ed. (NAP)
Austen, Jane, Pride and Prejudice (Norton)
Homer, The Iliad (trans. Stanley Lombardo)
Kafka, Franz, The Metamorphosis
Remarque, Erich, All Quiet on the Western Front
Voltaire, Francois, Candide
Worthen, ed., The Harbrace Anthology of Drama (HAD)

KEYS TO SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS:

#1: Do ALL the reading, do it carefully, and do it EARLY. Writing assignments come thick and fast at the end of the term, and you need to make time now.

#2: Attend faithfully.

#3: Start your papers early and work hard on them, writing multiple drafts.

SCHEDULE

Note: Please complete the readings for each session before the class meets

Please make a habit of bringing this syllabus to class with you, as we may need to adjust the schedule from time to time.

1) June 13-15
   T: COURSE INTRODUCTION
   R: Homer, The Iliad. Read Preface, Introduction, and Books 1, 6, 8, 9.

2) June 20-22
   The Iliad, Books 18-22.
   Sophocles, Oedipus Rex (in HAD)

3) June 27-29
   Shakespeare, Hamlet (in HAD)

4) July 5-6 [No class on July 4]
   Voltaire, Candide

***FIRST PAPER DUE ON THURSDAY***

5) July 11-13
   Austen, Pride and Prejudice
   Keats, Eve of St. Agnes (NAP650—read twice!)

6) July 18-20
Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto I (NAP612 for first half; handout for second half—read twice!)
Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

***SECOND PAPER DUE ON THURSDAY***

7) July 25-27
Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*

***OPTIONAL THIRD PAPER DUE ON THURSDAY***

8) August 1-3
Review

**FINAL EXAM ON THURSDAY**

* LATE WORK POLICY: I am willing to be somewhat flexible providing you have been in touch with me BEFORE the missed deadline. Otherwise late papers will be penalized one third grade (e.g., from "A" to "A-") or from "A-" to "B+") for each calendar day of lateness, weekends and holidays excluded; and they will receive no written commentary, but a letter grade only. Pick up the phone, dial my number, and save yourself from this demoralizing fate.

Please be aware that the penalty for plagiarism or cheating, which I trust I will not have to impose, is automatic failure of the course. See me if you have any questions about this policy.

I will be more than happy to make reasonable accommodations for any student with a documented disability. Please contact me if you will need such an accommodation; or call the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services, 581-6583.

Sample Topics for Oral Presentations

The following are samples and suggestions only. Please feel free to propose other relevant topics.

Week 2, Homer:

- Armed combat in antiquity. Find out something about the nature of combat in the 13th or 12th century B.C. (when the Trojan War was fought) or in the 8th century B.C. (when Homer wrote the poem(?)). Share with us anything you can discover about arms, strategy, tactics, training. What kind of tactics are visible in the *Iliad*?
- Romanticized combat—and the opposite. What are some of the ways Homer romanticizes combat? What are some of the ways that he does the opposite—emphasizes the gruesomeness of war?
- Hector vs. Achilles. Briefly compare and contrast the two heroes. Why is Achilles finally superior? But why would the Christian Middle Ages—and many readers throughout the poem's long history—find Hector the more attractive figure?
- Homer’s women. Describe and comment upon the status of women as depicted in those sections of the *Iliad* we have read.

Week 2, Sophocles:

- Using the encyclopedia, learn the basics of Aristotle’s theory of drama, which was closely based on *Oedipus Rex*. Then explain to us such concepts as the unity of time, the unity of action, the nature of the tragic hero, *hubris*, *hamartia*, *anagnorisis*, and *catharsis*.
How does Sophocles—or Oedipus's—conception of guilt appear to differ from ours? Would the concept of “extenuating circumstances” mean much to Oedipus? The idea that all murder is wrong?

Using the encyclopedia or some basic Psychology textbook, learn the basics of Freud's theory of the Oedipus Complex and explain them to us.

Compare and contrast Oedipus and Achilles. Is there a fundamental similarity? What defines the nature of the hero?

Week 3, Shakespeare:

- Memorize one of the play's great soliloquies, and recite it for us.
- Describe Hamlet as a character, differentiating his personal qualities, insofar as you can, from his situation. Why is he accounted one of the most fascinating personalities in all of literature?
- Same question, but concentrate on Hamlet's situation while excluding his character. What is peculiarly exciting about the dilemma in which he finds himself? In what sense is his a “universal” predicament?
- Watch Alfred Hitchcock's classic movie Psycho. Summarize it for us, and then tell us of any parallels you see between Hamlet, Oedipus, and Norman Bates.

Week 4, Voltaire:

- Using the encyclopedia and perhaps some History textbook, learn about the Enlightenment. Summarize the main characteristics of this period of intellectual history, and tell us why Voltaire is seen as a primary exponent of its core values.
- Discuss three terms—skepticism, pessimism, and cynicism—in relation to Candide. Does Voltaire's basic skepticism seem healthy and bracing? Does it verge at times on a more disheartening pessimism? Does the questioning of established values sometimes suggest a merely self-interested cynicism? Give examples.
- Comic characters, it is often noticed, differ sharply from tragic ones. Comment on some of the basic differences, drawing your examples from Candide and from the two tragedies we have read so far.

Week 5, Austen:

- How “romantic” is Austen’s romance? Does she trust and value passion? Comment at some length, giving examples.
- The conventions of romantic comedy are remarkably consistent, and Austen is sometimes given much of the credit for making them so. Looking at the book as a more or less “typical” romance—though of course an especially excellent one!—tell us what the expected or obligatory elements are. E.g., what kind of lover must we have? What kind of ending? What kinds of troubles along the way?
- Love is sometimes about love in the novel, but more often it is about money. Explain, giving examples.
- To what extent do you see the novel as a critique of English society, especially in regard to the oppression of women?

Week 5, Keats:

- Attack or defend Porphyro on the charge of date rape. In taking one side of the question, be sure to address key arguments on the opposite side.
- Readers often comment on the amazing sensuousness of Keats's verse. Choose two or three short passages which strike you as especially strong in their “appeal to the senses.” Comment on images, phrases and metaphors which you find especially effective.
- The poem is sometimes described as a debate left unresolved at the end. Explain. What values are being debated, and how is the ending ambiguous?

Week 6, Byron:

- In what ways does Byron seem to share the skepticism of a Voltaire? The fairly cool
intellectualism of an Austen?

➢ To what extent—and in what ways—does Byron seem to join in a “romantic” celebration of passion?
➢ Discuss the ironies of Donna Inez’s approach to sex education. What does Byron seem to be saying about passion and the effort to control it?
➢ Discuss the character of Donna Julia. Is she ever honest and sincere? To what extent do we sympathize with her?

Week 6, Remarque:

➢ During the nineteenth century, advances in tactics and weaponry transformed the whole nature of warfare, but neither the public nor the military establishment recognized this in time to prevent the catastrophe of the Great War. Explain. How had weapons and tactics changed?
➢ Why do traditional, “Homeric” ideals of combat behavior become irrelevant, suicidal, and hypocritical in the trenches?
➢ Comment on the significance either of Paul’s trip home on leave, or the night he spends in a shell hole with the man he has killed.

Week 7, Eliot:

➢ How do Eliot’s two poems taken together express the alienation of the individual from modern, mass society?
➢ Does the incoherence of The Waste Land seem to bespeak the disillusionment of the Word War I generation?
➢ Comment on Eliot’s nostalgia. What aspects of the vanished past does he especially seem to mourn?
➢ In a dictionary or handbook of literary terms, look up “romance” or “waste land.” Explain to us what the basic traditions—i.e., usual plot, setting, characters, etc.—of literary romance are. Then show how certain of these elements can at least be glimpsed in The Waste Land.

Week 8, Kafka

➢ To what extent does Gregor Samsa’s transformation seem a logical outgrowth of the life he has lived heretofore?
➢ What Freudian or Oedipal overtones do you see in Gregor’s predicament? To what extent does Kafka, like Freud, seem to see family life as imbued with tragic conflict and ambivalence?
➢ Kafka seems to be commenting in part on forces that, in modern society, tend to dehumanize us. What forces? Explain.