Spring 1-15-2011

ENG 3010G-001: Literary Masterworks

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English 3010G-001—Literary Masterworks
Spring 2011

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Texts
Lawall et al, Norton Anthology of Western Literature, Vol. 1, 8th edition
Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice
Shakespeare, Othello
Shakespeare, Much Ado about Nothing

Course Description
Do sentiments or imagery from Petrarch appear in lyrics blasting from your iPod? Do television sitcoms unconsciously channel comic formulae popularized by Boccaccio? Without Shakespeare, would Kenneth Branagh have a career? We will address these questions and many others in this course that is designed to provide an in-depth look at a selection of literary masterpieces. In general, we will also explore such questions as what makes a text a literary masterwork? What gives such a piece its enduring qualities? Does our concept of what constitutes a masterwork change over time as facets of our culture shift and change? To explore the ideas inherent in these questions, we will read texts from a period especially known for its masterworks, both in the visual and the literary arts, the Renaissance. Not coincidentally, embedded in the literature of this period, we will find traces of aesthetics, patterns of debate, philosophies of love, and codes of honor that inform many of our contemporary notions in ways that you have probably never considered.

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 assignments in on time. Late papers will be reduced a letter grade for each day that they are late without a university approved excuse. Any in-class writing and in-class group work cannot be made up. If you miss an exam, and you have a university-approved excuse, you may make up that exam. You will have no more than one week to do so, 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

--Three exams .................................. 45% (15% each of final grade)
--One 7-10-page research paper ........... 20%
--Preliminary research report with
  annotated bibliography ................... 10%
--Final presentation ............................. 10%
--Response papers ............................... 15%

Total: 100%

The three exams will cover the three units of study.

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 mid-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 and journal articles. One website of good scholarly repute may be used if necessary. You will use MLA Parenthetical Style, with a Works Cited page, for documentation. For MLA Style, see the Writing Center’s web cite, specifically, under Resources for Writers, http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/.

Just after midterm, you will have a research report with an annotated bibliography due to show the progress that you have made regarding your research project. Do not worry that we haven’t covered the topic that interests you in class by the time you start your research—this portion of our study is meant to be independent exploration of a topic that may be completely new to you. The goal is that your independent study will augment what is 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 in your research near the end of the semester.

The preliminary research report and annotated bibliography will cover the research that you do for your research paper and presentation. The report will address the topic, why you chose the topic, and the avenues of research that you chose to explore. The annotated bibliography will consist of bibliographic citations of at least five sources with your notes on each work that describe the document, summarize why it may be useful to your project, and include possible quotations that you might use in the paper.

The final presentation will be a 7-10 minute oral report over your research project, due near the end of the semester. After conducting your research and writing your paper, you will 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 subjects we have covered over the course of the semester, as well as introduce specialized information that you have focused on during your own independent study.

The response papers will be concerned with specific reading assignments for each unit.

The Writing Center

Please make use of EIU’s Writing Center, located at 3110 Coleman Hall, this semester. The consultants there can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support for, and documenting your papers. One caveat: the Writing Center is not a proofreading or editing service. It is a place where you can learn how to become a more thoughtful, independent, and rhetorically effective writer. To schedule an appointment, drop by (3110 Coleman Hall) or call 581-5929.
Tentative Schedule
Note: Readings may be shifted around during the semester to accommodate the class discussion.

Unit One

Petrarch: Master of Lyric Poetry

T. Jan. 11—Introduction to course. View images from Renaissance art. 
(Note: Always read your text’s introduction to each author or section.)

Th. Jan. 13—Further introduction to the Renaissance. Petrarch and popular lyrics: Discuss a) the spread of Petrarchism across the Continent to England, b) evidence of Petrarchism still popular in lyrics today. Consider: Is the mark of a literary master-writer the ability to tap into profoundly universal feelings and experiences? How might that be true in Petrarch’s case? What about the strains of anti-Petrarchism that flourished among some writers? Can you think of contemporary writers or lyricists who become so popular that there is a backlash against their work? 
Read sonnet handout and poetry, pp. 1909-1918.

T. Jan. 18—Wrap up poetry discussion, especially re: the followers of Petrarch. 
Read Boccaccio’s Decameron, pp. 1600-1627; 1631-1641; Marguerite de Navarre’s Heptameron, pp. 2104-2112, 2116.

Boccaccio, Marguerite de Navarre, and the Tradition of the Tale

Th. Jan. 20—First, discuss the Framework Story. Next, discuss the assigned tales from the Decameron. Consider what the humor in these stories has in common with that of contemporary situation comedies. What are ways in which Boccaccio’s stories can be said to be characteristic of Renaissance interests and concerns? Are these concerns still relevant today? What seems to be medieval vs. what seems to be Renaissance?


Th. Jan. 27—Wrap up discussion on Tales. 

Montaigne and the Art of the Essay

T. Feb. 1—Discussion of Montaigne.


T. Feb. 8—Exam I. 
Unit Two

Castiglione and Machiavelli: How to Win Friends or Just Win

Th. Feb. 10—Discuss Castiglione’s extraordinary popularity during this period in a genre that may be unfamiliar to you: the Renaissance dialogue.

T. Feb. 15—Discuss the vast difference in tone between Machiavelli’s letter and his Prince. What are the different rhetorical conditions? Regarding both the Courtier and the Prince, consider the following: Is popularity power? Is fear power? How do we see these ancient strategies at work in our world today? Read Ariosto, pp. 1965-2040.

Th. Feb. 17—Wrap up Castiglione and Machiavelli. Read Ariosto.

Ariosto: Master of Crazy Love

T. Feb. 22—Ariosto’s epic romance Orlando Furioso has something for everyone: it could be an academy award winner if made into a contemporary movie. It has heroes who are brave, bold, and crazy in love; it has women who are both bold and good and bold and evil. It has excellent magic and the world’s best horse ever—Bayard. It has overtones of religious strife that are uncannily reminiscent of that in our world today. In other words—yes, it has the right stuff to endure as a literary masterpiece. So—what do we think about it? And where in popular culture today do we see references to imagery, values, and storylines reminiscent of those in Orlando? What, by the way, is Ariosto recycling?


T. Mar. 1—Carpe Diem poems. Th. Mar. 3—Carpe Diem poems and catch-up day.

T. Mar. 8—Response Paper due. Review for Exam II. Th. Mar. 10—Exam II Read Merchant of Venice

T. Mar. 15—Spring Break Th. Mar. 17—Spring Break

Unit Three

Shakespeare Recycles the Continental Renaissance

T. Mar. 22—Discuss papers/topics. As we begin Merchant, identify two or three characteristics of Renaissance literature that you have seen earlier in the semester—imagery, themes, plot devices? Where do you begin to see how Shakespeare recycles elements of Continental Renaissance literature?

Th. 24—Library Research Exercise.

T Mar. 29—Wrap up Merchant. Preliminary reports with annotated bibliographies are due. Read Othello.
Th. Mar. 31—Begin *Othello*. Consider the prejudices of his Renaissance audiences upon which Shakespeare builds his tragedy. What are the stereotypes that his particular audience would recognize? How is Shakespeare criticizing his audience's beliefs by pushing them to their extremes in the tragic outcome of the play?

T. Apr. 5—Continue discussion of *Othello*. Recall that you should be drafting your research paper. Be sure to schedule conferences as needed. Read *Much Ado*.

Th. Apr. 7—As we begin *Much Ado*, again, please identify two or three characteristics of Renaissance literature that you have seen earlier in the semester. Are there examples of Shakespeare's recycling in this play that are even more obvious than those in the other? What are the storylines that seem to endure in terms of human interest? Recall that you should be drafting your research paper. Be sure to schedule conferences as needed.

T. Apr. 12—*Much Ado*, film.

Th. Apr. 14—*Much Ado*, film.
Sign up for Final Presentations.


Th. Apr. 21—Final presentations.

T. Apr. 26—Final presentations.

Th. Apr. 28—Final presentations. Research papers are due. Review for Exam III (Final).

**Final Exam (Exam III):** Wed., May 4, 8:00 to 10:00am.