ENG 2099G-099: Literature and Human Values (Honors)

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ENGLISH 2099G: Literature and Human Values (Honors)

Fall 2004
Wednesdays, 1800-2030
Coleman 3150

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Literature and Human Values: Labor, Power, Class
Course Objectives

In this course, we will read, discuss, and write about plays and novels, written in different times and places, that raise questions as to how societies are organized: Who orders whom around and by what authority? Which groups are respected and which groups despised? How is work assigned and whose labor is valued and rewarded? We will study ways in which language and literary form reflect, shape, or undermine the ideologies that determine social realities.

Eastern's General Education curriculum is designed to help students develop and improve their abilities to read and write, to reason, and to analyze. As a course that meets requirements in Literature and Philosophy, "Literature and Human Values" will help serious students acquire knowledge of important works of literature and insight into the literary representation of social order. It will require that students engage in critical thinking and intellectual questioning about issues of labor, class, and power. Designated "writing intensive," this course will offer opportunities to improve skills in written (as well as oral) communication; written expression will be an important basis of evaluation.

Texts
Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart; Margaret Atwood, The Handmaid's Tale;
Karel Capek, R.U.R.; Charles Dickens, Hard Times;
William Faulkner, Go Down, Moses; F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby;
Clifford Odets, Waiting for Lefty; Oscar Wilde, The Importance of Being Earnest;
(Each student should also have a Handbook of usage and a collegiate desk dictionary.)

Course Assignments
WEEK I
Wednesday, 25 August: Introduction and Assignments;
   Introduction to The Great Gatsby; In-Class Writing
WEEK II
Wednesday, 1 September: Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Have the novel read for today.)
   Assignment of Paper I
WEEK III
Wednesday, 8 September: Wilde, The Importance of Being Earnest
(Read the play for tonight; Dramatic Readings as assigned)
WEEK IV
Wednesday, 15 September: Conclude The Importance of Being Earnest
   Achebe, Things Fall Apart Read & prepare Part One for tonight.)
WEEK V

Wednesday, 22 September: Conclude Things Fall Apart.
Dickens, Hard Times: Read and prepare Part One for tonight.

WEEK VI

Wednesday, 29 September: Hard Times: Read Parts One and Two for tonight (finish the novel if possible.)

WEEK VII

Wednesday, 6 October: Hard Times concluded
Odets, Waiting for Lefty (Read play for today.)

WEEK VIII

Wednesday, 13 October: Waiting for Lefty (Dramatic Presentations
Mid-Term Exam (Bring test booklets to class.)

WEEK IX

Wednesday, 20 October: Visiting Lecture on U.S. Labor Movement
David Radavich, former president of the EIU chapter of University Professionals of Illinois (IFT/AFT, AFL/CIO)
Review Hard Times and Waiting for Lefty

Paper I: typed, polished, documented draft due in class.
(Be sure to store your paper on a diskette and/or to make two copies; the workshop copy will be marked up in class.)
Assignment of Paper II (Prospectus due 10 November)

[Thursday 21 October: Late penalties (5 pts. per day) begin for Paper I submission by any student who did not participate in Evaluation Workshop.]

WEEK X

Wednesday, 27 October: Capek, R.U.R. (Read the play for tonight; dramatic readings)
Revised Paper I due in class
(Hand in draft with editorial marks and evidence of revision, Peer & Self Evaluation sheets, & your revised version of the paper to be graded.)

WEEK XI

Wednesday, 3 November: Atwood, The Handmaid’s Tale: Read and prepare first half of novel.

WEEK XII

Wednesday, 10 November: The Handmaid’s Tale: finish reading the book for tonight.
Prospectus for Paper II due in class.
Conference Sign-Up

WEEK XIII

Wednesday, 17 November: The Handmaid’s Tale concluded; Review the Epilogue for tonight.
Discussion of Prospectus; Research Presentations scheduled

WEEK XIV

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY—NO CLASS MEETINGS
WEEK XV

Wednesday, 1 December: Read and prepare "Pantalo in Black," Go Down Moses. RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS AS SCHEDULED (Attendance required during presentations; no make-ups for missed presentations)

PAPER II (POLISHED, TYPED & DOCUMENTED) DUE FOR COMMENTS ON THIS DATE (OPTIONAL) RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS AS SCHEDULED

WEEK XVI

Wednesday, 8 December: Paper II (final version) due in class on this date. RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS AS SCHEDULED

FINAL EXAM REVIEW SHEETS

FINAL EXAM (CUMULATIVE) (Bring test booklets to your final exam.)

GRADE CALCULATION

Participation (including Drama Presentations) and Daily Preparation (including quizzes): 30%
Mid-Term Exam: 10%; Cumulative Final Exam: 20%
Paper I: 15%; Paper II (including Prospectus): 20%
Research Paper Oral Presentations--5%

COURSE JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

Keep a separate notebook or journal in which you write your responses to reading assignments and class discussion. For each work that we read, please identify in your journal those issues of labor, class, and power that you see in the text and your own thoughts about them. Identify also attitudes to the issues—the social and political views expressed in the text. In your journal, also take notes on your background reading in history, political science, and current events. From time to time, you will be asked to write responses in class, and you should add them into your journal when they are returned. You will find a journal very useful in reviewing for exams and in planning your papers and oral presentations. I will not collect or grade journals.

DRAMATIC READINGS

Groups of students will be asked to present scenes from the three plays that we are reading and to present rehearsed reading performances to the class. Groups should be prepared to explain the significance of the scenes and to comment on their interpretation of scenes and plays.

PAPER I ASSIGNMENT

PAPER I (800-1000 words/ 3 to 4 typed double-spaced pages) is due on 20 October. Paper I is an essay analyzing some specific issue of labor, class, or power in any one or two works assigned for the course. As appropriate, you may refer to other works (literary or non-fictional) by the author you are discussing, historical background works, or works of political or social theory. Be sure to credit ideas that you use in your analysis. Be sure to quote accurately, indicate all quotes and paraphrases, and document accurately (use the MLA system).
PAPER II ASSIGNMENT

PAPER II, due 8 December is a researched analytical study (1000--2000 words) discussing an important issue of labor, class, or power in the contemporary United States, in the light of issues raised in works read this semester. Can you make connections, for instance, between depictions of social hierarchy in texts assigned for the course and existing American social structures? Can you compare the assignment of and rewards for work in societies depicted in works read and in the U.S.? How does the distribution of social and economic power represented in assigned novels and plays compare with the situation in the United States today?

Your topic must be very specifically focused, and your analysis must be based on informational reading and research. Find several substantial and serious articles and/or books published in the last five years that raise questions about the social issue that interests you. For example, you may be interested in the status of working people as treated in Hard Times and Waiting for Lefty. If so, you would locate and read books and articles on the past and current status of American labor, and discuss issues raised in the literary works in the light of the information you find about the actual situation of working people and the union movement today.

Consult journals in political science and sociology or serious general magazines such as The Atlantic Monthly, Harper's, The Nation, The New Republic, The New York Review of Books. I will provide a sample list of books that might prove useful, and, of course, you will make use of the usual research techniques to locate materials.

Please keep in mind that electronic media materials must be documented as conscientiously and accurately as any other material. Be aware also that is necessary to ascertain the authority, reliability, accuracy of all materials and that it may be particularly difficult to do so in the case of electronic media. Be sure to evaluate as well as indicate the source of information and to process material from electronic sources as critically and creatively as you do books or articles that you read and then use in writing your essays and reports: DOWNLOADING IS NOT RESEARCH.

The specific focus of the paper will be determined by each student in consultation with me. A prospectus (one fully-developed paragraph [5 to 7 sentences], typed and double-spaced) is due on 10 November. The prospectus should clearly identify the issue to be discussed, the approach to be taken, and the point of view to be argued; it should also indicate literary works and non-fictional books and articles that will be referred to in the paper. (The prospectus will be graded.)

RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATION: During the last two weeks of the semester, each student will present the material of his/her final research paper, according to an assigned schedule. The presentation should be carefully timed to last the prescribed number of minutes.

English 2099G: COURSE POLICIES

STANDARDS & POLICIES: Class attendance, punctuality, preparation, and participation are expected and required. You are presumed to be professionals-in-training responsible for attending class regularly and participating in discussion. It is particularly important not to miss any classes in a course that meets once a week.
English 2099G Policies continued:

Students are responsible for all material covered in class and announcements or assignments made in class as well as for all assignments on the syllabus. Assignments are to have been completed by class time on the date for which they appear on the syllabus; the books in which the assignments appear should be brought to class. Unannounced quizzes on assigned material may be given at any time. There will be no opportunities to "make up" missed reports or quizzes. Daily preparation and participation in class discussion are important and will count significantly in the final grade.

Midterm and Final Exams should be written on test booklets, available at the Union Book Store. Please write tests in ink and on the appropriate booklets. There will be no opportunities to make up a missed test or exam other than in cases of documented medical emergency; (signing in at Health Service does not constitute documentation of a medical emergency).

ALL PAPERS AND OTHER WRITTEN WORK must be handed in on the date due.
1. Work turned in late without advance clearance will not be accepted.
2. Clearance does not constitute an "excuse." Work turned in late with clearance will be penalized, usually at the rate of 5 points per day of lateness.
3. Any lateness may delay the grading and return of the paper, perhaps until the end of the semester. BE SURE TO KEEP A COPY OF EVERY PAPER YOU HAND IN. IN THE CASE OF A MISSING PAPER, THE STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPLYING A COPY.

A NOTE ON THE PRESENTATION OF PAPERS: Papers must be legibly printed or typed (double-spaced) on heavy or medium-weight white 9 x 11 paper. Computer print-outs must be letter-quality and dark and clear; continuous-form sheets must be separated and edges removed, pages must be numbered and clipped or stapled together in order. There should be adequate margins. Each paper must have a separate title sheet that includes the title of the paper, course title, instructor's name, student's name, and date of submission. Repeat the title at the top of the first page of text.

DOCUMENTATION: Use the MLA system to cite both primary and secondary sources used in your papers. Consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6th edition. Inform yourself about documentation convention: for electronic media information and materials. All such materials must be documented, and citation forms are illustrated in recent handbooks; go to the Writing Center for assistance. Electronic-media materials must be evaluated for quality at least as scrupulously as print materials. Please remember that you must absorb and process all materials: downloading is not research.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: All written work (papers, exams, tests, quizzes) must represent your own ideas and your own style. Downloading, copying, paraphrasing, or imitating the work of others constitutes plagiarism. Make sure that all of the written work you hand in is original and independent. Please make sure that you understand the meaning of plagiarism and the policy of the English Department:

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 the grade of F for the course.

STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please note that arrangements must be made through the Office of Disability Services; you should, therefore, contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.