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ENG 2601-002

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English 2601                                      Spring 2009
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Texts:
- Norton Anthology of Western Literature 8th ed.
  Homer, Iliad and Odyssey
  Burgess, transl. Song of Roland
  Hanning and Ferrante (trans) Lais of Marie de France
  Boccaccio, The Decameron (Musa and Bondanella, trans)
  Grene and Lattimore (trans) Greek Tragedies vol 3
  Rabelais, Gargantua
  Virgil, Aeneid (Fagles)

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/index.html

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. 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.

Requirements: 3 exams 40% (10/10/20)
2 essays 30% (10, 20)
WebCT, in-class writing assignments 20%
participation and group presentation 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.

WebCT: Each week, you’ll be required to post at least one response to a reading assignment. Your response must be posted at least 60 minutes before the class for which the assignment is due, and you must be present in that class to receive credit. Plan on writing a thoughtful 1-2 paragraph response in the course of which you: 1. respond to the comments of at least one other student (unless you’re the first to post); 2. make some observation about what you’ve read and develop your idea; and 3. quote at some point from the reading, providing page number in parentheses after your quotation. You might focus on a question I suggest in class, or one from the list at the end of the syllabus, or make an observation of your own. If you fail to gain access to WebCT for reasons beyond your control, bring a typed 1-page response to the appropriate class period. If illness or personal emergency keeps you from being in class on the day for which you have posted, either post again later that week or talk to me so you won’t be penalized for problems beyond your control.

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.

Tentative Syllabus
I. Ancient World: The Greeks
Mon Jan 12: Intro to course
for Wed Jan 14: Homer, Iliad (separate volume), Books 1-2. Post to WebCT #1,
Fri. Jan 16: Iliad, Bks 6, 8, 9. Post to WebCT if you didn’t for W.

Mon. Jan 19: no class
Wed Jan 21: Iliad Bks 16, 18, 19. Post to WebCT #2 W or F

Mon Jan 26: Homer, Odyssey, Bks 1-4 (2 optional; separate volume).
Wed Jan 28 Odyssey, Bks 5-8 (8 optional)

Mon Feb 2: Odyssey, 13, 14, 16, 19 (15, 17-18, 20 optional). Post to WebCT #3 M or W
Fri 6: Hand in essay #1. Responses to Homer (hand-out); Sappho in anthology.

Mon 9: Sophocles, Oedipus (anthology)
Wed 11: Euripides, The Bacchae (Grene and Lattimore)
Fri 13: no class.

Mon 16: Euripides. Post to WebCT #4 M or W
Wed 18: Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* (anthology)  
Fri 20: Exam on the Greeks.

II. Ancient World: The Romans  
Mon 23: Virgil, *Aeneid* Bk 1 (separate volume, Fagles). Post to WebCT #5 M, W, or F  
Wed 25: Virgil, Books 2, 3  
Fri 27: Virgil, Book 4  

Mon March 2: Virgil, Books 6, 8. Post to WebCT #6 M, W, or F

The Middle Ages  
Wed 4: Song of Roland (separate volume), laisses 1-130  
Fri 6: Roland laisses 130-298 (178-267 optional).  

Mon 9: Marie (separate volume): “Guigemar,” “Bisclavret.” Post to WebCT #7, M, W, or F  
Wed 11: Marie “Yonec,” “Eliduc”  
Fri 13: Dante (anthology), cantos 1-5

Spring break

Mon 23: Dante cantos 6-12.  
Wed 25: Meet in groups to talk about assigned cantos.  
Fri 27: Group presentations on Dante cantos 13-18

Mon 30: Group presentations on Dante cantos 19-25  
Wed April 1: Group presentations on Dante cantos 26-30  
Fri 3: no class. Review for exam.

Mon 6: Dante cantos 31-34

The Renaissance  
Wed 8: Exam: Rome and Middle Ages.  
Fri 10: Petrarch (anthology and hand-out), pp. 1897-1908. Hand in 5-item annotated bibliography on possible paper topic.

Mon 13: Petrarch. Bring in Petrarchan song lyrics. Post to WebCT #8 M, W, or F  
W 15: Boccaccio (separate volume), pp. 1-33.  
Fri 17: Boccaccio, pp. 69-106. Hand in 1-page proposal for essay #2.

Mon 20: Fri 17: Boccaccio, pp. 131-147. Post to WebCT #9 M, W, or F  
Wed 22: Cervantes, *Don Quixote*.  
Fri 24: Cervantes. Hand in essay #2.

Mon Ap 27: Cervantes. Post to WebCT #10 M, W, or F  
Wed Ap 29: Cervantes  
Fri May 1: Review. Hand in final version, essay #2.

There will be a cumulative final exam during exam week.
Response questions: focus on a SINGLE question or choose your own issue:

**Characterization:** What is the main character like (physically, mentally, gestures, speech, values)?
What parallels or contrasts do you see between two characters?
Focus on a minor character and discuss why he/she’s there

**Setting:** How is the setting described? Is there a contrast set up between two settings?
Significance of title?

**Narrative method:** What is the narrator’s relation to the action? Why is he/she telling the story? How is his/her values shaping what he/she notices?

**Plot:** What conflicts do you see? (within a character? Between characters? Between a character and the environment?)
How does a character change during the course of the work?
Is there a crucial moment or turning point when someone makes a big mistake or does something right?

**Symbolism and imagery:** Is there an object or moment that works symbolically, or a pattern of imagery or a key word that recurs?

**Context, theme:** What historical events would it be helpful to know about?
Look up one allusion and explain its significance.
To what extent does the ending tie up loose ends?
Is there an authorial mouthpiece? If so, what are his/her values?
Is the ending “happy?” For whom? Who gets left out?
Are there problems in the way gender, race, sexuality, or class?
To what extent does the work as a whole reinforce values you share or don’t share?

**For poems:** FIRST: read in terms of punctuation, not line breaks. Read once to yourself, then read out loud.
Get an overall sense of who speaker is, situation, and message. Then look up words you don’t know. Take into account ALL the word’s listed meanings before deciding how it works in context. For your posting, I suggest you focus on a single poem and examine ONE of the following:

**Speaker:** Who is the speaker? To whom is the speaker speaking (if anyone in particular)? In what situation or context? Any hints about what’s happened immediately before the poem’s opening? Does the speaker’s tone or ideas change during the course of the poem?

**Tone:** What is the speaker’s attitude toward the audience and topic (tone)? Any irony or sarcasm? Is there a gap between what the speaker is saying and what you sense the poet wants to get across?

**Structure:** Does the poem fall into parts? How do they build on or contrast with each other? What binaries do you notice? Is it open or closed form? How does structure relate to the poem’s meaning?

**Sound:** Note use of sound, rhythm, rhyme as they relate to the poem’s meaning.

**Diction, imagery, figurative language:** Any repeated words? Words particularly rich in meanings or connotations? Clusters of related images (lots of disease references for example, or military)? What lines do you find particularly dense or confusing?

**Theme:** what does the poem as a whole seem to be saying?
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 vultures 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,
Hurled 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

\[ \text{Chaos} \]

\[ \text{Nox} = \text{Erebus} \]

\[ \text{Love} \]

\[ \text{Ether} \]

\[ \text{Hemera} \text{ (day)} \]

\[ \text{Ouranos} = \text{Caea} \text{ (heaven)} \]

\[ \text{Zeus} = \text{Hestia} \text{ (hearth)} \]

\[ \text{Poseidon} = \text{Hades} \text{ (underworld)} \]

\[ \text{Zeus} = \text{Hera} \text{ (marriage, maternity)} \]

\[ \text{Aphrodite} \text{ (beauty, love, virgin)} \]

\[ \text{Ares} \text{ (war)} \]

\[ \text{Hermes} \text{ (message)} \]

\[ \text{Apollo} \text{ (sun, music, prophecy)} \]

\[ \text{Artemis} \text{ (moon, virgin, huntress)} \]

\[ \text{Hephaestus} \text{ (lame, blacksmith, = Aphrodite)} \]

\[ \text{Demeter} \text{ (harvest, fertility)} \]

The Titans

Zeus = Mnemosyne, Crohos = Rhea, Themis = Iapetus, Tethys = Oceanus, Codus = Phoebe ...

Muses

Atlas, Leto = Zeus, Apollo, Artemis, Hermes

The Olympians

Hestia, Hades, Poseidon, Zeus, Hera

Epimetheus, Prometheus, Diode = Zeus, Aphrodite


Greeks

Akhaia; (=Achaia)

Argives; (=Argos)

Danaans

(Achaeans, Myrmidons)

Gk commander-in-chief: Agamemnon; (=Clytemnestra, son Creastes, daughters Iphigenia, Electra)

Agamemnon's brother: Menelaus; (=Helen), from Sparta

allies: Odysseus; (=Penelope, son Telemachus), from Ithaka

Achilles, leader of Myrmidons

Nestor, old + wise

Helen + Clytemnestra, daughters of Leda = Zeus

Trojans

Ilium

Trojan king: Priam; (=Hecuba)

his sons: Hector; (=Andromache)

Paris; (=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)}
The canon

I. Foundationalists:
A true classic, as I should like to hear it defined, is an author who has enriched the human mind, who has really augmented its treasures, who has made it take one more step forward, who has discovered some unequivocal moral truth, or has once more seized hold of some eternal passion in that heart where all seemed known and explored; who has rendered his thought, his observation, or his discovery . . . broad and large, refined, sensible, sane, and beautiful in itself; who has spoken to all in a style of his own which yet belongs to the world, . . . in a style . . . easily contemporaneous with every age. Sainte-Beuve (1850) in Richter 1294.

When we . . . "elect" a canon of great works of art, we are removing these works from their historical context, and inserting them in an imaginary pantheon that we assume will last forever. A canonical text possesses, we believe, an authority . . . a value and a meaning that survives its contextual origins and the "test of time." --Trevor Ross

II. Anti-foundationalists:
. . . since those with cultural power tend to be members of socially, economically, and politically established classes (or to serve them and identify their own interests with theirs), the texts that survive will tend to be those that appear to reflect and reinforce establishment ideologies. However much canonical works may be seen to "question" secular vanities such as wealth, social position, and political power, "remind" their readers of more elevated values and virtues, and oblige them to "confront" such hard truths and harsh realities as their own mortality and the hidden griefs of obscure people, they would not be found to please long and well if they were seen to undercut establishment interests radically or to subvert the ideologies that support them effectively. (Construing them to the latter ends, of course, is one of the characteristic ways in which those with antiestablishment interests participate in the cultural re-production of canonical texts and thus in their endurance as well.)
--Barbara Herrnstein Smith

III. Inbetween:
In our own time most students of literature reserve their highest admiration for those works that situate themselves on the very edges of what can be said at a particular place and time, that batter against the boundaries of their own culture. --Greenblatt in Lentricchia 231

. . . the coexistence in a single text of plurality of significances from which, in the nature of human attentiveness, every reader misses some--and, in the nature of human individuality--prefers one--is, empirically, a requirement and a distinguishing feature of the survivor, centum qui perficit annos. --Kermode in Richter 1316.

At this point in our social and institutional history, I believe it is crucially important to resist homogenizing canonical works in any way. And the alternative to homogenizing works is to historicize them . . . by which I mean reading works for what they say and do in their place and time, as well as reading the difference between those meanings and the meanings which have been imputed to them by virtue of their being canonical works.
Guillory, "Canon," in Lentricchia, Critical Terms for Literary Study