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ENG 3090C-099: Literary Masterworks

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“Literary Masterworks”

Here are some of the questions we will be discussing over the course of the semester:

- What makes a novel a “masterwork”? Who gets to say one novel is a masterwork but another isn’t? And what if we disagree?
- What particular kind of storytelling is the fiction we now call the novel? How does it differ from the epic or a tragedy? What do time and place have to do with the way a story gets told—and even with what stories do or do not get told at all? How do the reader’s time, place, and personal circumstances (age, gender, and race, for example) influence what gets read and understood?
- How can fiction help or challenge us in finding answers to our personal and collective questions about our lives and the world in which we live?

Textbooks (and order of readings)
- Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*
- Ellison, *Invisible Man*
- Shakespeare, *King Lear* (Hunter edition)
- Smiley, *A Thousand Acres*
- Anya, *Bless Me, Ultima*
- Walker, *The Color Purple*

Requirements/Policies:
1. A final comprehensive essay examination (25% each)

2. Short writes and class participation (15%)

3. Group activities (including questions, informal papers, and oral reports) (30%)
4. An 8-10 page research essay based on one of the two informal group papers (30%)—topic to be approved by 3/22 and essay due 4/10) (An unexcused late essay will be graded down one-half letter grade for each class period that it is late.)

5. **Plagiarism**: Here is the English Department policy—"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 course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office." Included under plagiarism is the irresponsible handling of documentation—i.e., when the writer intends to misrepresent the use of another author's material.

6. **Attendance**: Class participation is essential to becoming a better, more able, and responsible reader, writer, and collaborator. In general, if you have a problem, please call me or come in to my office to see me as soon as possible. More than three unexcused absences will lower your short write/class participation grade to an F. As outlined in the student catalogue, I will consider an absence excused only for "reasons of illness, emergency, or university activity." Please provide me with a brief memo when an excused absence occurs. Also, please be on time—a significant pattern of tardiness also will lower your class participation grade.

7. **Disabilities**: 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.

8. **Office Hours**: Please feel free to drop in during my scheduled hours—or to request an appointment. If you have questions, be sure to ask them—in class or after. Chances are that if you have a question, someone else has the same question!