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ENG 3090-099: Literary Masterworks

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ENGLISH 3090G--LITERARY MASTERWORKS (Honors)

Spring 2001
Section 99: W 1800-2030
Coleman 307

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COURSE OBJECTIVES
What are "Masterworks" and who says so? What is "Western Culture" and how did it get this way? As we read and enjoy canonized literary works of the European tradition--from Lysistrata to poems by W.B. Yeats, we will address these questions. Analyzing narratives, poetry, and drama by Aristophanes, the Pearl Poet, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Molière, Voltaire, Austen, Chekhov, and Yeats, we will reflect upon the relation of traditional culture to an increasingly diverse (and some say post-literate) world.

Eastern's General Education curriculum is designed to help students develop and improve their abilities to read and write, to reason, and to analyze. It aims to impart knowledge of science and history and awareness of multicultural issues and social responsibility, as well as to encourage aesthetic consciousness and intellectual curiosity. As an upper-division course that meets general education requirements, "Literary Masterworks" will help advanced undergraduates develop knowledge of important works of literature and the Western cultural tradition. It will also encourage critical thought and intellectual questioning as to the goals of education and the nature of culture.

TEXTS
Austen, Emma (ed. Parish); Cervantes, Don Quixote (ed. Jones);
Jacobus, The Compact Bedford Introduction to Drama;
Pearl Poet, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (trans., ed. Stone);
Voltaire, Candide (trans. Butt); Yeats, Collected Poems (ed. Finneran);
(Each student should also have a Handbook of usage and a collegiate desk dictionary.)

DR. Z.'S OFFICE HOURS
Tuesdays, 4:30-5:45 (1630-1745); Wednesdays, 4:00-4:45 (1600-1645);
Thursdays, 10:00-10:45 & 2:00-3:15 (1400-1515); Additional Hours by Appointment

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE
WEEK I
Wednesday, 10 Jan.: Introductions: Cultural Literacy and the Canon
Course and Assignments; Sign up for Drama Presentations
Introduction to Greek Drama.

WEEK II
Wednesday, 17 Jan.: Aristophanes, Lysistrata, Drama; read play and commentaries for today.
Drama Presentation
Assignment of Paper I due 21 February and Paper II due 20 April.
Sign up for oral reports and presentations.
WEEK III
Wednesday, 24 Jan: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (read text and commentaries).
Report(s):

WEEK IV
Wednesday, 31 Jan: Cervantes, Don Quixote (Complete at least first 20 chapters.)
Report(s):

WEEK V
Wednesday, 7 Feb.: Don Quixote (Complete Part One for this date).
Report(s):

WEEK VI
Wednesday, 14 Feb.: Shakespeare, Othello, Drama (read play and commentaries for today.)
Drama Presentation:

WEEK VII
Wednesday, 21 Feb.: Paper I due in class on this date--be prepared to share your paper with the class (Paper Workshop at 6:00).
Mid-Term Exam at 7:00 (bring exam booklets to class).

WEEK VIII
Wednesday, 28 Feb.: Molière, The Misanthrope, Drama (read play & commentaries for today).
Drama Presentation:
Discussion of Mid-Term Exam; Paper I Revisions due in class.

WEEK IX
Wednesday, 7 March: Voltaire, Candide (have the text read for this date).
Report(s):
Discussion of Paper I; Review of Paper II assignment.

WEEK X
SPRING BREAK--NO CLASS MEETING

WEEK XI
Wednesday, 21 March: Austen, Emma; read at least "Volume One" (1st 18 chapters) by this date.
Report(s):

WEEK XII
Wednesday, 28 March: Emma (complete the novel by this date.)
Report(s):
One-paragraph Prospectus for Paper II due in class on this date.

WEEK XIII
Wednesday, 4 April: Chekhov, The Cherry Orchard, Drama (read play and commentaries).
Drama Presentation:
Discussion of Paper II Prospectuses (Schedule conferences.)

WEEK XIV
Wednesday, 11 April: Poems by W.B. Yeats
Poetry Presentations:

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WEEK XV
Wednesday, 18 April: Yeats concluded
PAPER II DUE IN CLASS
RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS AS SCHEDULED

WEEK XVI
Wednesday, 25 April: RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS AS SCHEDULED

CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM:

GRADE CALCULATION
Mid-Term Exam--10%; Paper I =15%;
Paper II (including Prospectus) and Research Presentation--30%;
Cumulative Final Exam--20%;
Class Preparation and Participation (including quizzes and oral presentations)--25%

ENGLISH 3090G: WRITTEN AND ORAL ASSIGNMENTS

I. JOURNAL: Each class member should keep a notebook or journal in which both initial and considered responses to reading assignments and class discussion are regularly recorded. From time to time, you will be asked to write written responses in class, and you should insert them into your journal when they are returned. Additionally, you should keep a list of terms and other words to add to your vocabulary. I will not grade your journal--it is a tool for you to use in mastering the work of the course.

II. ORAL PRESENTATIONS: During the semester, each student will participate in two oral presentations to the class, in addition to a final research paper report. Presentations may include reports focused on some specific aspect of historical background, intellectual context, or theme in a text assigned for the course. Such reports may address some way the questions of why the work has become canonical and how it reflects and/or has influenced the development of western culture.

Presentations will include interpretative reading of illustrative passages of poetry, drama, or narrative. For reports on dramatic works, students will combine forces for dramatic readings of selected scenes. Drama reports will include some commentary as well as rehearsed readings of excerpts from the play (other classmates may be asked to take minor roles). Individual reports on narrative or poetry should be planned for 10 to 15 minutes; drama presentations will last 30 minutes or more.

Be sure to time and practice your report. For commentaries, use notes on cards rather than sheets of paper; stand up straight, and make eye contact; For dramatic readings, be sure you are very familiar with the dialogue and its meaning, and then act.

In your introductions and other comments, you may refer to secondary sources as you wish, but be sure to mention by name any sources that you use; be sure to communicate clearly to the class the source of all information and opinions. Presentations must be given on the assigned date--no make-ups will be possible.
Assignments continued

III. PAPER I (800-1000 words) is due on Wednesday, 21 February: Paper I is an essay focusing on some specific and significant aspect of theme and/or technique in one (or two) canonical European work(s) included on the course syllabus. You may, if you choose, write on a work that you have chosen for an oral presentation. Your essay may address questions qualities, themes, concerns that reflect or may have helped shape our culture and how and why the work has proven influential. Please consult with me about the approach you take.

IV. PAPER II (1200-2000 words), due Wednesday 18 April, is a researched study of literary works by an author (of your choice) who was awarded a Nobel Prize for Literature, OR, a detailed argumentative nomination of a twentieth-century author of your choice for a Nobel Prize in Literature.

The first-option paper should address the issue of whether the Nobel Committee succeeded in choosing a writer whose works will prove lasting in the long term and why. The second should demonstrate why works of an author of your choice merited or merit the award of a Nobel Prize.

Read at least one and preferably several major works by the author you choose and consider whether they are likely to survive into the future, as compared to others and as considered in the context of place and time. Consider also whether and how the qualities, themes, concerns of the author’s works have shaped or influenced Western culture. Paper II topics must be approved by me—please consult. A one-paragraph (polished and printed) prospectus is due in class on 28 March.

V. RESEARCH REPORTS: During the final two weeks of the semester, each student will make a formal oral presentation based on the work of the research paper.

VI. IN ALL PAPERS: Formulate and develop a clear argumentative thesis and support critical observations with specific references to and quotations from the text(s) you discuss. As appropriate, refer to other works by the author you are discussing—other authors; you may consult works of history, philosophy, political or literary theory. Be sure to quote accurately, indicate all quotes and paraphrases, and document carefully (using the MLA system). In making use of electronic media, remember that downloading should not be confused with research. Material from computer sources must be assimilated, processed, and documented as thoroughly as material from print media. ALL PAPERS must be clearly and legibly (darkly) printed: see Course Policies for requirements.

COURSE POLICIES

STANDARDS & POLICIES: Class attendance, punctuality, preparation, and participation are expected and required. Students are responsible for all material covered in class and all 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 day’s assignments are contained should be brought to class.

A SPECIAL NOTE ON ATTENDANCE: This section of English 3090 meets once a week; it is therefore imperative that students miss no class meetings. Each class meeting constitutes one week of the course. Remember that "class participation" counts towards the course grade; a participation/preparation score will be assigned each student for each class meeting other than the first, and absence will necessarily result in a "0" for the day’s participation as well as on any graded work due or done in class. Unannounced quizzes on assigned material may be given at any time. There will be no opportunity to make up missed quizzes.

A NOTE ON PREPARATION: Since this course meets only once a week, the assignments are long. Students who take this class must read entire novels and other complex texts "on their own," and sustain concentration and interest over a week’s time. Maturity, discipline, independence, and self-motivation are required.

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English 3090 Course Policies (continued):

ORAL REPORTS MUST BE PRESENTED ON THE ASSIGNED DATE. All students are expected and required to listen attentively to and be prepared to comment on the reports and presentations of their classmates. Failure to present reports on the assigned date will result in a grade of "0."

EXAMS: There will be no opportunities to make up a missed exam or oral report other than in cases of documented medical emergency; (signing in at Health Service does not constitute documentation of a medical emergency).

Major Tests and the Final Exam should be written on test booklets, available at the Union Book Store. Please write tests in ink and on the appropriate booklets.

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 computer-printed (or accurately typed) on heavy or medium-weight white 9 x 11 paper. Leave adequate margins. Each paper must have a separate title sheet which 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. Papers must be stapled or clipped.

Be sure to hand in CLEAR AND DARK LETTER-QUALITY COPIES--NO PALE or DOT-MATRIX COPIES WILL BE ACCEPTED. ALSO, MAKE SURE THAT PAGES ARE SEPARATED, NUMBERED, AND CLIPPED TOGETHER IN CORRECT ORDER.

ONLY PAPERS THAT ARE NEAT AND IN CORRECT FORM CAN BE ACCEPTED.

DOCUMENTATION: Use the "new" MLA system to cite both primary and secondary sources used in your papers. The system is fully explained and illustrated in the latest edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. Each student should have access to a copy.

Inform yourself about documentation conventions 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 be 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.

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