ENGL/MODL 221-502: World Literature
Texas A&M University
Fall 20xx
Lectures: TR 12:45-2:00 pm (Zach 119C)
Instructor: Apostolos Vasilakis, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: TR 11:00-12:30 pm

Catalog Course Description: 221. World Literature. (3-0). Credit 3. Representative works in translation of major authors and texts from various cultures to A.D. 1500, including such authors as Homer, biblical writers, Greek dramatists, Sappho, Virgil, Marie de France, Dante, Lao Tzu, and works like Gilgamesh and The Bhagavad Gita. Cross-listed with MODL 221.

Prerequisite: None

Course Description: This course will examine some of the major texts of world literature directing our analyses around a core group of central ideas. Looking at the texts in this focused manner, we will investigate the evolutions and transitions in the literary tradition, spanning from Greek antiquity to the 12th century. During this course we will see how a number of writers from different cultures (Homer, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Virgil, Dante, and Boccaccio) situate their stories within their own historical reality, and how they address and explore questions about what it means to be human, to make choices, to love, to act, to be.

Learning Outcomes:
At the end of the semester, students will be able to do the following:
- Articulate key concepts and identify major authors and works in the literary tradition from antiquity to the 12th century
- Demonstrate critical thinking about principal themes and ideas in world literature.

Core Curriculum Objectives:

Critical Thinking Skills (CTS): The course will enhance critical thinking skills through consistent reading and class discussion of key ideas in various literary traditions in world literature.

Communication Skills (CS): The course enhances communication skills through small and large group discussion of ideas, issues, questions, and themes central to course reading.

Personal Responsibility (PR): The course will enhance personal responsibility through engagement with moral and thorny ethical issues that arise in class readings.

Social Responsibility (SR): The course enhances social responsibility by providing students with a cross cultural understanding of how history, region, and broader social forces have shaped the distinctive literary traditions from around the world.
Assessment of Core Objectives

CTS: The evaluation of critical thinking skills will be based on exams and class participation and may include written work. Exams will be designed to allow students to demonstrate their ability to evaluate and synthesize key ideas from the assigned reading. Classroom discussion will focus on helping students better understand the nuances and complexities of literary works from around the world.

CS: The course will help students learn how to develop a greater understanding of written and visual texts from Greek antiquity to the 12th century, that may involve guided writing assignments in which they will receive feedback, exams in which students will be expected to effectively convey key ideas from the course succinctly and clearly, and classroom discussion in which students will learn how to express questions and thoughts about the subtleties of each text under examination. Material from this course will include written texts and such visual representations as photographs, illustrations, films, or theatrical performances.

PR: The course material throughout the semester will offer students an opportunity to reflect upon personal responsibility through such topics as the relationships between men and women, the evils of power and greed, quest for self-knowledge and virtue, the politics of loyalty and revenge, and issues surrounding war and violence. Students will explore these topics through group discussion, writing assignments, and exams.

SR: The assessment of social responsibility will be based upon an end-of-the-semester short writing assignment in which students will be asked to reflect upon how their knowledge of literatures from previous historical periods and world cultures outside of their own has changed in light of the new information that they now possess. Students will be expected to demonstrate how key insights from the course have helped broaden their understanding of how history, culture, and philosophical outlooks have shaped the literary traditions of world literature.

**Grading:** The two papers will constitute 40% of your grade; the midterm examination, 20%; the final examination 30%; and 10% for class participation.

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**Requirements:**

- For absentee policy see: [http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07](http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07)
- You are expected to keep up with the course readings. Your participation grade (10%) is based on several factors, including preparation of the reading assignment and active involvement in class discussion (asking about pertinent issues, responding to instructor’s questions, and engaging in debate with classmates).
• Students will submit two papers (20% each). The papers should focus on one or more of the texts we read in the course and offer a close reading and analysis of the text. This could mean: an analysis of a specific character; an analysis of a specific incident; an analysis of the author's use of language; an analysis of a particular theme (for example: love, the relationship between fate and free will, etc); or a comparison of two different texts based on a specific concept. Each time we start reading a new book I will provide you with specific suggestions that you can use as a topic for your papers. The process of writing the papers includes: a) a one page proposal or introduction in which you present and summarize the thesis and the main points of your paper; b) the complete and final version of your paper with a clear introduction, main analysis, and conclusion. Papers will be graded based on clarity and persuasiveness of argument, knowledge of the text, and appropriate use of grammar/spelling/syntax.

• There will also be a midterm (20%) and a final examination (30%) based on the readings and lectures. The midterm and final examinations will be made of short and or long answer questions that cover reading and lecture material. For the midterm examination, students are responsible for all the material covered up until the day of the exam. For the final examination, students are responsible for all the material covered after the midterm examination.

Academic Integrity: “An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.” You are expected to be aware of the Aggie Honor Code and the Honor Council Rules and Procedures, stated at http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu

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Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute providing comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, B-118 Cain Hall (845-1637). For additional information visit http://disability.tamu.edu.

Required books (available in the University Bookstore):
Homer: The Odyssey
Sophocles: Philoctetes
Aeschylus: The Persians
Aristophanes: Lysistrata
Virgil: The Aeneid
Dante: The Inferno
Boccaccio: The Decameron

Additional required material:
Old Testament: Selections from Genesis (Xerox)
CALENDAR

Week 1 TH Introduction

The Odyssey (read books 1-4).
The Odyssey (books 5, 9-15).

Week 2 TH The Odyssey (books 18-20).
The Odyssey (books 21-24).
The Odyssey.

Week 3 TH Philoctetes (read entire play).

Philoctetes.

Philoctetes. [First Paper Proposal Due].

Week 4 TH The Persians (read entire play).
The Persians.

Week 5 TH Genesis (read 1:1, 1:2, 1:3).

Genesis (read 1:4).

Week 6 TH Lysisirata (read entire play) [First Paper Due].

Lysisirata.

Week 7 TH Lysisirata.

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Week 8 TH The Aeneid (read books 1-6).
The Aeneid (read books 7-8, 12).

Week 9 TH The Aeneid.
The Aeneid Continued.

Week 10 TH The Inferno (read cantos I-VI, X-XIII).
The Inferno (cantos XV, XVII, XIX, XXI) [Second Paper Proposal Due].

Week 11 TH The Inferno (cantos XXIII-XXVI, XXVII).
The Inferno (cantos XXXI-XXXIV).

Week 12 TH The Inferno.

Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 13 TH The Decameron (read Preface and Introduction).

The Decameron (read First Day/First Story--First Day Conclusion) [Second Paper Due].

Week 14 TH The Decameron (read Second Day/Introduction-Second Day/Sixth Story).

FINAL EXAMINATION. On the final exam there will be one question in which students will be asked to reflect upon how their knowledge of literatures from previous historical periods and world cultures outside of their own has changed in light of the new information that they now possess. Students will be expected to demonstrate how key insights from the course have helped broaden their understanding of how history, culture, and philosophical outlooks have shaped the literary traditions of world literature.