

**COURSE SYLLABUS SPRING SEMESTER 2008**  
Eng 265H: Readings in Literature of the Western World (3 hours)  
TTh 11:00-12:20 (EV 356)

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Office Hours: Th 2:00-3:00  
and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Eng 265H is an intensive reading and writing course that focuses on generically diverse literary texts from the ancient world through the Middle Ages. Over the semester, we will concentrate on analyzing, understanding, and enjoying these texts, while exploring the historical and cultural contexts in which they were written. Through a combination of group discussions and lectures, we will discuss a variety of textual aspects, including theme, imagery, character development, narrative structure, genre, *et cetera*; the focus of the course, though, will be on the quest, particularly on how it plays out in a variety of literary genres. Other, related topics will naturally emerge. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the material by actively participating in class discussions, leading a class discussion, writing a midterm and final exam, and developing ideas in a thesis assignment (one page) and final paper (7 pages). Prerequisites: a passing grade in Eng 164 and Eng 165 or their equivalents. Students must be in the honors program to take this class.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- \* To enhance understanding of assigned texts by learning literary terminology.
- \* To develop written, analytical, and critical skills through oral communication and written assignments.
- \* To gain a deeper appreciation of literary texts and of the cultures in which they were written by exploring how these texts reflect larger historical contexts, theirs as well as our own.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

The texts we are reading this semester are in translation, and no two translations are alike. For this reason, students will only be allowed to use the following editions.\* It is each student's responsibility to obtain books at the beginning of the semester to avoid problems later on.

1. *Gilgamesh*. Trans. Herbert Mason. Mariner Books. ISBN: 061-827-5649.
2. Homer. *Odyssey*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux. ISBN: 037-452-5749.
3. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Trans. Marie Borroff. W.W. Norton. ISBN: 039-397-6580.
4. \*William Shakespeare. *Macbeth*. Signet Classics. ISBN: [any edition is fine for this text]

**GRADING:**

	<b>Percentages</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>
Participation:	10%	Daily
Class Discussion Guide:	20%	Sign-up
Midterm Exam:	20%	Tues., March 4
Thesis Assignment:	10%	Tues., April 1
Paper (w/ graded thesis assignment):	20%	Tues., May 6
Final Exam:	20%	TBA

**Grading rubrics are available on Blackboard. Grades will always be distributed in class, never on Blackboard or via e-mail or phone.**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES:****Attendance Policy:**

Attendance is mandatory. If a student misses more than four classes (excused or unexcused), the student's final grade will be penalized 5% per additional absence. Students are responsible for obtaining missed materials or assignments from their colleagues and should check Blackboard for any announcements or handouts.

**Reading:**

Learning how to read closely and critically is essential to understanding literature. Students should arrange their schedules to allow ample time for reading (and re-reading) all of the material by the appropriate due dates. Students are encouraged to write comments in the margins of books. Students are also strongly encouraged to keep an open mind when approaching these difficult texts and to make a genuine effort to appreciate them.

**Writing:**

All papers must be typed and free from grammatical errors and typos. Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade (10%) and will not be accepted after the beginning of the following class.

Exams: Both exams will allow students to showcase their knowledge of objective information by responding to identifications and demonstrate critical skills by writing a fully developed essay. A make-up exam will **only** be administered when documented, extenuating circumstances are presented and only then at the professor's discretion. The final exam is cumulative.

Papers: Students will submit a Thesis Assignment (an introductory paragraph with thesis) that will serve as the basis of a longer paper. Failure to submit the Thesis Assignment will result in a 0% on the assignment **and** a 0% on the paper. If students wish, they may participate in out-of-class peer review sessions of their papers with colleagues. Those who do participate and who submit a completed (and thoughtfully written) peer review handout with the final paper will receive an additional 2% on the paper grade. (Having a Writing Center tutor complete the handout will not count). This is a gift.

**Detailed handouts on each writing assignment are / will be posted to Blackboard**

**Writing Center:** Sam Houston's Writing Center, located at 111 Farrington, is open M W Th 8-7, Tu 8-10, Fri. 8-3, and Sun. 2-7. Writing tutors will work with students to help them generate, organize, or revise a draft of any assignment. Drop by or call 936-294-3680 to schedule an appointment. To learn more about their services, visit their website at <http://www.shsu.edu/~wctr/>. Students should utilize their "resources and handouts" link regarding any questions about the writing process. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the information is accurate.

**Incompletes:** Any student who seeks an incomplete for a course must have passed a minimum of 50% of the course requirements with a C or better and have extenuating circumstances (e.g. documented health problems) that prevent the student from completing the course. Incompletes cannot be given simply to keep a student from receiving an F for the course.

For more information on the following policies, visit [www.shsu.edu/syllabus/](http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/)

**Academic Dishonesty:**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experience both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action, including a final grade of F in the class. The university and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Put simply, plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of someone else's ideas or words without giving that person credit; plagiarism is also the purchasing or borrowing of a paper or assignment.

**Classroom Rules of Conduct:**

Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Cellular telephones must be turned off before class begins and iPods, etc. put away. Students are prohibited from making offensive remarks, sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, doing work for other classes, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Such inappropriate behavior in the classroom will result in a directive to leave class immediately, and the student will receive an absence for the day; those students who are especially disruptive will also be reported to the Dean of Students for immediate disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

**Visitors in the Classroom:**

Students who wish to bring visitors to class must discuss it with the professor in advance. Visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance.

**Professor Evaluations:**

Students will be asked to complete a course evaluation form near the end of the semester.

**Americans with Disabilities Acts:**

Any student who has a disability that may adversely affect his or her work in this class is encouraged to register with the Counseling Center and to talk with the professor about any necessary accommodations. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. Note: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center. Contact the Chair of the Committee for Continuing Assistance for Disabled Students and Director of the Counseling Center, Lee Drain Annex, or call 936-294-1720.

**University Policy Regarding Student Absences for Religious Holy Days:**

Any student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day must make up any coursework (exam, assignments, *et cetera*) within a reasonable amount of time, to be determined by the professor; moreover, any student who will be absent for a religious holiday must inform the professor no later than the twelfth day of classes.

**Nota Bene:** This syllabus is a contract; your continued enrollment implies agreement with and adherence to the requirements of the course.

**COURSE OUTLINE:** this outline is tentative; deviation should be expected.

**Week One: January 17: Course Overview**

Th: Introduction to the Course

**Week Two: January 22-24: Mesopotamia and the Transmission of *Gilgamesh***

T: Ancient Mesopotamia; *Gilgamesh* (Book 1)

Th: *Gilgamesh* (Books 1-2)

**Week Three: January 29-31: Epic**

T/Th: *Gilgamesh* (Books 3-4)

**Week Four: February 5-7: Greek Mythology and History**

T/Th: Greek Pantheon, House of Atreus, Trojan War, & Mycenaean & Archaic Greece

**Week Five: February 12-14: Epic-Romance**

T/Th: Homer. *Odyssey* (Books 1-6)

**Week Six: February 19-21: Epic-Romance**

T/Th: Homer. *Odyssey* (Books 7-12)

**Week Seven: February 26-28: Epic**

T/Th: Homer. *Odyssey* (Books 13-18)

**Week Eight: March 4-6:**

**Midterm Exam Tues., March 4**

Tu: Mid-Term Exam

Th: Discussion of Thesis Assignment

**Week Nine: SPRING BREAK**

**Week Ten: March 18-20: Epic-Romance**

T/Th: *Odyssey* (Books 19-24)

**Week Eleven: March 25-27:**

T: Discussion of Final Paper

Th: No Class [39<sup>th</sup> Annual CEA Conference]

**Week Twelve: April 1-3: Romance**

**Thesis Assgnt Due, Tues., Apr 1**

T: Middle Ages, Arthuriana, & British Library MS Cotton Nero Ax

Th: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Part 1)

**Week Thirteen: April 8-10: Romance**

T/Th: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Parts 2-3)

**Week Fourteen: April 15-17: Romance-Renaissance Tragedy**

Tu: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Part 4)

Th: Renaissance Tragedy

**Week Fifteen: April 22-24: Tragedy**

T/Th: *Macbeth* (Acts 1-3)

**Week Sixteen: April 29-May 1: Tragedy**

T/Th: *Macbeth* (Acts 4-5)

**Week Seventeen: May 6-8:**

**Final Paper Due Tues., May 6**

T: Final Exam Review

Th: No Class [42<sup>nd</sup> International Congress on Medieval Studies]

**FINAL EXAM TBA (See Final Exam Schedule)**