

Readings in the Literature of the Western World English 265-Honors: Spring 2008

Schedule: Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00-12:20 Location: Academic Bldg. 4, Room 204
Instructor: Prof. Janet Fair Office: SAM Center, AB4, Room 210H
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E-mail: janetfair@shsu.edu Office Hours: 8:00-11:00 Tu & Th or by
appointment

Course Description:

This 3-credit hour class consists of readings in the classical, medieval, and modern masterpieces of the western world. The purpose of this course is to examine literary works from western culture that have survived the last 2000-3000 years and not only reflect the values of the western world over time but have also, in part, created those values. Prerequisites are completion of English 164 and 165 or their equivalents and permission to enroll in Honors English.

Course Objectives:

- Broadening cultural literacy and working with thematic aspects of literature
- Learning to better analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
- Enhancing writing skills, both analytical and creative
- Acquiring an interest in learning more by asking questions and seeking answers

Texts:

Homer. *The Odyssey*. trans. E. V. Rieu. Penguin, 1992. Penguin, 2003, ISBN #014449116

Heaney. *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*. W.W.Norton, 2000. ISBN #0393320979

Dante. *The Inferno of Dante*. trans. Robert Pinsky, Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux, 1994. ISBN #0374524521

Shakespeare. *Macbeth*. Folger Library, ISBN #0743477103

Camus. *The Stranger*. trans. Matthew Ward. Vintage Books. ISBN #0679720200

NOTE:

It is critical you have the Seamus Heaney translation of *Beowulf* and the Robert Pinsky translation of *The Inferno of Dante*. Be sure to get a Rieu translation of *The Odyssey* – the newer one is probably best, but the old one will do. Any translation of *The Stranger* will be fine; *Macbeth* is in already in English; however, the Folger Library edition has excellent notes. These texts are available through many sources.

Grading System:

Grades: 100-point scale: 100-90 = A; 89-80 = B; 79-70 = C; 69-60 = D; Below 60 = F

Tests and writings: 80% of grade. All major assignments are scheduled; expect five or six. The test format will be primarily essay with some objective elements. The final exam counts the same as a test grade and will focus on the last major text. See Special Assignments on next page.

Quizzes: 20% of grade. Probably 10-12, unannounced. No makeups, but 1 or 2 are dropped.

Participation: Class participation is required and can help you at the end of the semester,

Extra credit: None planned.

Supplies:

Always bring to class a pen, pencil, current text, and syllabus/schedule. No Scantrons will be needed.

Absence/Make-Up Policy:

- Absences are recorded; good attendance is rewarded at the end of the course. No absences = 2 points added to your final grade; one absences = 1 point. Automatic failure on the 7th absence. Doctor's notes do not automatically remove an absence.
- Students who miss class must get their notes from other students. Missed handouts will be given, but the class will not be re-taught.
- If you miss a test, you must provide written documentation to verify that the absences was an emergency. Make-up test are much more difficult. If you know about an absence in advance, take the test early.
- Tardies are disruptive as is leaving the class early. Tardies begin after attendance is taken. Two tardies = one absence

Special Assignments:

- A paper on one of the texts will be required and must conform to MLA style. A manual for this style is available on many Internet sites. It will be evaluated for content, mechanics, and style.
- Students will also be required to compose a 33-line minimum poem in the terza rima style of *Dante's Inferno*. Assessment will be based on originality and degree of adherence to form.

Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism is defined as identifying someone else's words or ideas as if they were your own. This can range from submitting a paper written by someone else as if it were your work, to copying words or sentences from someone else without putting them in quotation marks and properly citing the source. Please leave help notes (Cliff, Monarch, Spark, etc.) at home and never quote them in your work. For further information, go to this site: <https://www.shsu.edu/syllabus>

Americans with Disabilities Act:

If you have a disability that may adversely affect your work, you may register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. This will be kept confidential. No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. For further information, go to: <https://www.shsu.edu/syllabus>

Student Absences on Religious Holidays:

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. For further information, go to: <https://www.shsu.edu/syllabus>

Visitors in the Classroom:

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular and must not interfere with the educational process. Ask my permission beforehand.

Instructor Evaluations:

You will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation late in the semester.

Q-Drops:

A Q-drop is one made after the 12th class day but before May 10. Students are allowed no more than five Q-drops during their academic career at Sam Houston State University. Classes dropped no later than the 12th class day (February 1) receive a full refund and do not appear on your transcript or count against the Q-drop limit. Students who have used their limit must petition their dean to drop a class. If the dean refuses to grant permission to drop a class, the student will be required to remain in the class.

Finally:

1. Turn off cell phones and put away earphones before class. Inform me of emergency exceptions
2. Do not bring guides (e.g., Cliff's, Spark, Classic) to class. While they may help you with plot and character summaries, they are a poor substitute for the originals and are inadequate for passing tests and quizzes or for writing essays. Never plagiarize these sources or the internet.
3. This is not primarily a lecture class, although I will lecture periodically. You will be expected to participate in class discussions, and willingness to do so will be noted and taken into consideration at the end of the semester when grades are tallied. This may help those with borderline grades.
4. If there is a special reason to use a laptop, please let me know in advance so that we can discuss this. Otherwise, leave them at home.
5. Contact me by phone, email, or visit with your concerns or questions. I am here to help you.

The schedule of assignments and dates will be given to you separately.