

ENGLISH 265W.01
READINGS IN LITERATURE OF THE
WESTERN WORLD
FALL 2007
(THREE SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS)

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CLASS DAYS AND TIMES: MWF 9:00 A.M. TO 9:50 A.M.
LOCATION: EVANS 417

OFFICE HOURS: MWF 11:00 A.M. TO 12:00 A.M., AND BY APPOINTMENT

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 265W, Readings in Literature of the Western World (writing-enhanced), features literature written in Europe and the Americas. These cultures and their literatures have been shaped predominantly, but by no means exclusively, by classical Greek, Roman and Judeo-Christian values.

The readings in this class have not only reflected and critiqued Western values over time, but have, in part, constructed and deconstructed them. Like any literature class, this course works best as a collaboration between professor and student: I will provide contexts and structure for the class; you will create the class with collaborative discussion about the works and ideas.

In order to establish your credibility as literary critics, you will acquire a number of useful critical terms in this class—the “lingo” that we use in making arguments about literature intelligently and economically.

I will assess your understanding of the works and ideas with reading response journal papers, reading quizzes, and examinations featuring essays.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 164W and English 165W.

Course value: Three semester credit hours.

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course aims primarily to

- give you a broader understanding and appreciation of literature from the Western World
- develop your skills in expressing yourself in writing
- encourage you to analyze and critically evaluate arguments and points of view

3. POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Homer (transl. Rieu), *Odyssey*. Penguin 0-14-044556-0 (paper)
Virgil (transl. West), *Aeneid*. Penguin 0-14-044457-2 (paper)
Anonymous (transl. Borroff), *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Norton 0-393-97658-0 (paper)
Cervantes (transl. Starkie), *Don Quixote*. Handout.
Voltaire (transl. unknown), *Candide*. Dover Thrift 0-486-2668-93 (paper)
Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Dover Thrift 0-486-28061-6 (paper)
Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*. Dover Thrift 0-486-26464-5 (paper)
Kerouac, *On the Road*. Penguin 0-14-004259-8 (paper)

You must purchase or otherwise procure the prescribed texts for this class. Get your books right away, before the bookstores return unsold copies to their distributors.

To assure me that you have, in fact, procured the books for this class, I ask that you show them to me on or before Monday, August 27; in the meantime, you are still responsible for all reading assignments from the works.

You must bring the appropriate book to class every day.

B. COURSE REQUIREMENTS (WITH APPROXIMATE RELATIVE VALUES) *

1. Reading Response Journal: 30% collectively
2. Daily Reading Quizzes: 20% collectively
3. Three Unit Essay Examinations: 15% each
4. Participation: 5%. To do well with this grade, *engage* the class: Show that you care about the materials and the assignments. Come to class; come to class on time; come to class having read the materials, eager to discuss the works. Avoid complacency. Try to break the habit of automatically answering, "I don't know" when I direct a question toward you. You probably *do* know, if you give the question a couple of moments' thought. Show me also that you are taking careful class notes.

C. OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXTRA CREDIT

None. There are too many other ways to succeed in this class.

D. ATTENDANCE POLICY (NON-NEGOTIABLE)

Since you have decided to take this class at this time, I presume that you *want* to be here. Accordingly, I expect that you attend class *every* day. Life being what it is, however, you are allowed *five* absences before your final grade begins dropping incrementally. After those five, an *A* becomes a *B*, a *B* becomes a *C*, and so forth. The clock begins ticking as soon as your name appears on my roster.

Except in the case of a university-excused absence (for which I should receive formal documentation), I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. Please—no doctor's notes, hospital vouchers, death certificates, court summons, or long tales of woe!

An extended illness does not excuse you from this policy; my rationale is that if you are too ill to attend all classes, you should withdraw from your courses and try them again when you can attend without distraction or dis-ease.

If you have a job or other extracurricular distractions that will prevent your attending class regularly and submitting all assignments on time, please take another class and try this one again in a later term.

* To receive credit for the course, you must submit/complete all of these major requirements.

E. LATE ARRIVAL, EARLY DEPARTURE

Arriving late is both disruptive and impractical. So for the protection of your fellow students (and myself), I count every two instances of tardiness as one absence. You are tardy if you arrive after I begin making announcements or lecturing. If you arrive too late to take a reading quiz, you will not be allowed to take the quiz.

Do not leave class early unless you provide me with a formal note *before class begins* explaining the reason for leaving. If you stay less than half the class, of course, you are absent for the day.

F. MAKE-UP POLICY

An absence does not excuse you from taking an examination or from submitting a written assignment on time. Because of the difficulties for me in keeping track of the daily performance of some hundred students, there are no make-ups for reading quizzes; if you miss a quiz because of an absence, you will receive a “0” (but you will be allowed to drop one reading quiz grade at the end of the term).

You should try always to avoid missing an examination date, of course. In the rare case that you must miss such a day, however, give me substantial notice; I’d rather not hear about your absence after the fact. We will arrange for you to make up the examination before the next class period of attendance.

If you are absent on the day on which a journal assignment is due, you must get the response to me in *physical* form on the due date (except in the most unusual circumstances, I do not accept materials in electronic form). Give it to me sometime before the due date, or send it by way of a trusted friend.

G. READING QUIZZES

To assure me that you have made an honest attempt to read the assigned materials—in this *literature* class—I will give you a quiz for every substantial reading assignment.

H. EXAMINATIONS

Three unit essay examinations will assess your grasp of readings and class discussions. The final of these unit examinations will *not* be comprehensive.

I. GRADING

We follow a standard ten-point grading scale in this class.

Sometime shortly before the midterm drop date (Wednesday, October 10), I will make up a spread sheet with your averages so that you know where you stand in the class to that point. While I would never encourage anyone to drop a class, except in a case in which excessive absences make your passing impossible, the spread sheet average will help you make a better-informed decision about your possibilities for success in the course.

I will post grades confidentially on line no later than 9:00 a.m. on Monday, December 17, the deadline set by the Office of the Registrar.

J. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

For definitions, I refer you first to the Sam Houston State University policy statement about academic dishonesty in Paragraph 5.3 of the “Code of Student Conduct and Discipline” in the official *Student Guidelines*. Please read through the short description very carefully.

Plagiarism (a word that comes from the Latin term for plundering) is literary theft, the intentional or sometimes merely careless stealing of someone else’s words or ideas and the passing them off as one’s own

without giving due credit to the original author. Plagiarism not only defeats the very purpose of the educational process—to make an independent thinker and writer of you—but also constitutes academic fraud. Any written assignment convicted of plagiarism will fail; in serious and clearly deliberate cases, the student will fail the course and face the appropriate dean for further disciplinary action. *Don't do it.*

Unintentional plagiarism is plagiarism nonetheless.

To avoid the temptation to plagiarize, do not ever consult outside sources when writing journal responses.

Any student convicted of cheating on an examination or quiz will fail the examination or quiz and will be subject to university disciplinary action: *Don't do it.*

K. NOTE ON NOTES: NOTES, DIGEST GUIDES TO

Usually such character summaries, critical commentary, establishing contexts which are not always help in SparkNotes, SHSU main web

Do not, however, *substitutes* for the work of literature in order to pass any have to read the

Of course, to avoid draw language or ideas from these guides in writing assignments. (I own copies of all these and can almost always spot plagiarism.)

And please—as a matter of respect to your professor, your fellow students, and the venerable Homer, Virgil, Cervantes, Twain, et alia—do not ever bring such a guide into the classroom. Agreed?

L. CLASSROOM COMPORMENT

Please observe the customary classroom courtesies. I will merely paraphrase the University's policy statement here: Students will avoid any classroom conduct that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and thus impedes the missions of the University. Please turn off or mute your cellular phone before class begins. Do not use/check a text-messaging device. You may not open a lap-top computer in class. Remove iPod "buds" and other such ornaments. You should not eat in class; use tobacco products; make derogatory remarks about fellow students or the class (your professor has a remarkably good sense for hearing whispers); read newspapers or do work for other classes; sleep (ouch); talk with fellow students (or to yourself!) at inappropriate times; wear inappropriate clothing; or engage in any other form of distraction.

If you engage in disruptive or otherwise inappropriate behavior in the classroom, I will ask that you leave the room. Continued behavior of this sort will result in dismissal from the class and referral to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

M. ADDENDA



CLIFF'S NOTES, MONARCH SPARKNOTES, AND OTHER SUCH LITERATURE

resources provide useful plot and cultural backgrounds, and some You may find them helpful for and understanding the texts, easy. You may, for example, find available on line through the page.

read such digest guides as primary works themselves; a not a paraphrase or summary. In quiz or examination, you will original works.

plagiarism, you should never

Students with Disabilities: Sam Houston State University responsibly observes the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a disability that may adversely affect your work in this class, please register with the SHSU Counseling Center and talk with your professor about how he can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center, however. Contact the Chair of the Committee for Continuing Assistance for Disabled Students and Director of the Counseling Center, Lee Drain Annex, by calling (936) 294-1720.

Observance of Religious Holy Days: 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. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself or herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s) early in the term.

Visitors in the Classroom: I always welcome visitors in the class-room—a chance for *you* to show off. But the visitor must not disrupt the classroom with his or her attendance.

Instructor Evaluation: The University asks that you complete a course/ instructor evaluation form toward the end of the term. So if you bide your time patiently, you will have the opportunity to turn the tables on your professor by evaluating *him*.

E-Mail Policy: I am always happy to answer questions or address concerns by e-mail (eng_pwc@shsu.edu). But in e-mailing, please address me (“Dear Professor Child”), and identify yourself clearly. (Thank you.)

And Finally: I reserve the right to make minor changes in the syllabus.