ENGLISH 101A (001)

INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY STUDIES

ML 246

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

English 101A provides an introduction to the university-level study of English literature. It covers such areas of enquiry as literary history, genre, criticism, analysis and theory.

This course begins with two foundational Greeks texts, selections from Homer's *Odyssey* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*. The texts in English, which include works by British, American and Canadian authors, are covered in roughly chronological order. These texts represent a variety of genres: poetry (mainly epic poetry and ballads), drama (tragedy and comedy), short stories and novel. Some assignments, as well as the exam, will give you the opportunity to analyse individual works, as well as make comparisons between two or more works.

OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce you to some basic terms and concepts that will help you as you continue your studies of English literature.
- To give you practice and training in reading, interpreting and analysing individual pieces of literature with greater insight, and in making comparisons among them.
- To help you articulate your responses to literature and to write more effectively
- To increase your enjoyment of reading (I hope).

TEXTS:

The following texts are required:

- Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus, with The English Faust Book* (Hackett)
- Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Dover)
- *English 101A: Courseware Package* (available in the bookstore)
The following text is recommended:
(* or any of the earlier editions)

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

(Note: CP is the Courseware Package.)

Sept. 10: Introduction

Sept. 12: “I wandered lonely” (CP); Introduction to Drama

Sept. 17 & 19: Oedipus Tyrannus

Sept. 24 & 26: Doctor Faustus

Oct. 2 & 4: The Odyssey, Books 9-12 (pages 62-128)

Thanksgiving Day—Oct. 8

Oct. 9 & 11: Beowulf, Parts I-II (pages 6-12), Parts X-XV (pp. 37-57), Parts XIX-XXIV (pp 67-92), Parts XXXI-[XXXIX] (pp. 113-151)


Oct. 29 & 31: Huckleberry Finn

Nov. 6 & 8: The Importance of Being Earnest


Nov. 20 & 22: Two Stories by Alice Munro: “The Moons of Jupiter,” “Miles City, Montana.” (CP)

Nov. 26 & 28: Catch-up
GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

- Three short response papers will account for 15% of your final grade (i.e., 5 marks each) (see below).
- One shorter comparative essay (approximately four typewritten, double-spaced pages) will be worth 20% of your final grade.
- One longer essay will be worth 30% of your final grade. Essays should be approximately 5-6 typewritten, double-spaced pages.
- One 2 ½ hour final exam will account for the remaining 35% of your final grade

*In addition, I will add up to 3% for participation in class. I will deduct up to 3% if your attendance is noticeably irregular. One number grade (1%) may be subtracted for each day that a paper is late, unless an extension has been granted in advance.

RESPONSE PAPERS:

If your surname comes alphabetically between A and L inclusive, you will write a brief response to the selections from *The Odyssey, The Trampwoman's Tragedy,*” and to the Alice Munro story, “The Moons of Jupiter.” If your name comes between M and Z inclusive, you will write on the selections from Beowulf, “The Witch of Coos,” and the Alice Munro story, “Miles City, Montana.” These will be due on the Thursday before we discuss these works in class, although I recommend that you do them as soon as possible because they don’t rely on anything that we do in class.

Your response may be set up as a short essay (approximately 2 typewritten pages, double-spaced), in which you may choose to respond as you wish; or you may specifically respond to any or all of the following questions. If you respond in essay style, these questions may give you some sense of direction:

- Summarize the plot in one or two sentences. Was it easy or hard to write this summary? Why or why not?
- Did you enjoy the story? What did you enjoy about it, and what didn't you enjoy?
- Did you find it easy or hard to read? What gave you difficulty, or what puzzled you?
- What two or three features of the story struck you as being note-worthy?
- Suggest two or three issues from the story that you would like to discuss in class.
- Include anything else that comes to mind.

The main purpose of this assignment is to generate ideas for class discussion. While I expect your response to be effectively written, I'm more interested in your ideas. For this assignment, don't shy away from being controversial, if you wish.
ESSAY TOPICS AND DUE DATES:

General Notes

1. You will need to find a suitable way of selecting and organizing the material of your essay and of focussing your ideas in a clear direction. Give special attention to your introductory paragraph, which should identify the main topic or set of issues which your essay will treat, identify the direction of your essay, and interest your reader.

2. Provide evidence for the generalizations that you make. Try to strike a strong balance between general argument and specific illustration. Use quotations to support your ideas, but don't over-quote. Introduce quotations so that your reader knows why you are including the quotation.

3. Before you submit your paper, be sure to proofread it, carefully checking for errors in typing, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Consider your readers: Will they have any trouble following your ideas?

4. I prefer you to base your ideas on your own careful and thoughtful reading of the texts. Feel free to use ideas from class, and a good dictionary is a most useful resource, but please do not consult secondary sources about the works themselves unless you see me first. You may consult dictionaries and certain encyclopedias, and I encourage you to use ideas from other classes such as psychology, philosophy, anthropology, etc.

5. Give your essay a descriptive title that includes the title of the work(s) that you will be considering. Also include your name and course number on the first page. A separate title page is not necessary. All page references to the works go in parentheses at the end of your sentence but before the period. A Works Cited list is required, even if you have quoted from only one source. I will give you some information on how to use the MLA style to cite works in anthologies and editions of plays. The Little, Brown Compact Handbook contains excellent sections on documenting sources, as well as problems with grammar, punctuation, etc.

6. I mark essays holistically, taking into consideration content, organization, and style and correctness.

ESSAY 1:
Due: Tuesday, October 16, 2012
Length: Approximately four typewritten, double-spaced pages (1000 words).

Write an essay on one of the following topics. The topics emphasize comparisons. They also emphasize arguing from a specific point of view. Your title page should include an outline.

1. Argue EITHER that Oedipus and Dr. Faustus are both responsible for their downfalls, OR that they are both victims of greater forces.

2. By what devices were Elizabethan dramatists able to limit, and even eliminate, the Greek Chorus? Your essay should refer to the role of the Chorus in Oedipus Tyrannus, and should discuss Doctor Faustus.
3. Someone once said that the Greek stage was designed mainly for the ear, the Elizabethan stage mainly for the eye. Explain what you think is meant by this comment, and then argue either for or against it. Refer to Oedipus Tyrannus and to Doctor Faustus. (If you wish, you may limit yourself to one scene from each play, showing how it may have been presented to its original audience.)

4. Select either two shorter scenes from Doctor Faustus or one longer scene, and compare it to the original prose source in The English Faust Book. What advantages and/or disadvantages does the dramatist have over the prose writer. Do you think, on the whole, that drama has a more powerful impact than prose? Why or why not? (You may think specifically of these two works, or more generally of your experiences with these forms of literature.)

ESSAY 2:

Due: Thursday, November 28, 2012 (earlier, if you can)
Length: Approximately five to six typewritten, double-spaced pages (1250-1500 words); creative options may be longer.

Do one of the following topics. Establish a clear thesis, and organize as much as possible around a comparison of the works. Again, your title page should include an outline.

1. Organizing your essay around three points, compare and contrast the epic hero with the tragic hero. You should support your ideas by referring to at least one epic hero (Odysseus, Beowulf) and at least one tragic hero (Oedipus, Dr. Faustus). Note that you may refer to all four heroes.

2. How do at least three of the following works show a change or development in attitudes towards God and the gods: The Odyssey, Oedipus Tyrannus, Beowulf, Doctor Faustus? If you wish, relate this change or development to what you perceive to be later attitudes towards God, including modern ones. Be sure to establish a thesis.

3. Many of the classic works of literature are considered moral because they show the consequences of an act (or acts) of sin. Discuss this statement with reference to at least three of the following works: Oedipus Tyrannus, Beowulf, Doctor Faustus, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. Try to organize around a comparison of the works. Note that you need not agree with the definition of the term moral contained within the statement.

4. Compare and contrast the presentation and implications of supernatural and fantastic elements in at least three of the following works: The Odyssey, Beowulf, Doctor Faustus, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. If you wish, you may, in addition, refer to either "The Wife of Usher's Well" or "The Witch of Coos."

5. A famous 20th-century poet, W. H. Auden has written, "The sea voyage is a pain which must be accepted as a cure, the death that leads to rebirth." Apply this statement to either or both of The Odyssey and The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. Apply it also to the river journey in Huckleberry Finn. Try to organize around a comparison of the works.
THE FACULTY OF ARTS REQUIRES THAT WE NOTIFY YOU OF THE FOLLOWING:

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Check [www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity) for more information.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4: [http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm) When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing academic offenses and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline: [http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties, check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties: [http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm](http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm)

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition), or Policy 71, Student discipline, may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes that he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student Appeals: [http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://wwwadm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)

**Note for Students with Disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.