ENGLISH 101A (001)

INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY STUDIES

Biology2 – 350

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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 (epic poetry and ballads), drama, 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)
- William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (Vintage)
- Tom Stoppard, *Arcadia* (Faber)
- *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.)

**Jan 3:**
Introduction

**Jan. 5:**
Introduction to Drama

**Jan., 10 & 12:**
*Oedipus Tyrannus*

**Jan. 17 & 19:**
*Doctor Faustus*

**Jan. 24 & 26:**
The *Odyssey*, Books 9-12 (pages 62-128)

**Jan 31 & Feb. 2:**
*Beowulf*, Parts X-XV (pages 37-57), Parts XIX-XXIV (pp. 67-92), Parts XXXI-[XXXIX] (pp. 113-151)

**Feb. 7 & 9:**
Selections from *Paradise Lost*: Book I (lines 1-49), Book III (lines 56-182), Book IX (lines 412-916). (*CP*, pages 1 – 11)

**Feb. 14 & 16:**

**Feb. 20 – 24:** READING WEEK

**Feb. 28 & Mar. 1:**

**Mar. 6 & 8:**

**Mar. 13 & 15:**
*As I Lay Dying*

**Mar. 20, 22 & 27:**
*Arcadia*

**Mar. 29:**
Wrap-up
GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

- Two short response papers will account for 10% of your final grade (i.e., 5 marks each) (see below).
- One shorter comparative essay (approximately four type-written, double-spaced pages) will be worth 25% of your final grade.
- One longer essay, or creative option, will be worth 30% of your final grade. Essays should be approximately 5-6 typewritten, double-spaced pages; creative options may be longer.
- 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* 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* and the Alice Munro story, “Miles City, Montana.” These will be due on the Thursday before we discuss these works in class.

Your response may be set up as a short essay (2-3 typewritten pages, double-spaced), in which you may choose to respond as you wish; or you may specifically respond to 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.

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.

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: Thursday, February 2, 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*.

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, March 29, 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.

1. Organizing your essay around three points, compare and contrast the epic hero with the tragic hero. You should support your ideas be 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. Discuss the presentation of God in at least three of The Odyssey, Beowulf, Doctor Faustus, Paradise Lost. Do you think that these works show a change or development in attitudes towards God? If you wish, relate this change or development to what you perceive to be modern attitudes towards God, but don't make modern attitudes the focus of your essay.

3. Discuss the nature of sin and evil as it is presented in at least three of the following works: The Odyssey, Beowulf, Doctor Faustus, Paradise Lost. Do you think that these works show a change or development in attitudes towards sin and evil? If you wish, relate this change or development to what you perceive to be modern attitudes towards sin and evil, especially post-9/11, but don't make modern attitudes the focus of your essay.

4. Discuss the relationship between the natural and the supernatural in The Odyssey and “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.” Organize your essay around a comparison of the two works.

5. This assignment is in two parts. Do (a) and (b).
   (a) In As I Lay Dying, William Faulkner omits the burial of Addie in Jefferson. Rewrite this episode as it might have been presented in the novel. You should use a variable first-person narrative (involving at least two voices). If you wish, you may create a voice that is not in the original novel, but you should use at least one from the novel. (I'd recommend five or six double-spaced essay pages, but I'll give you some leeway.)
   (b) Write a commentary (approximately three double-spaced pages) on your work. Among other things, you may discuss what you set out to do, some of the choices you made (e.g., choice of narrators, diction, style), the extent to which you tried to imitate the original, and how successful you think you were.

6. This assignment is in three parts. Do (a), (b) and (c).
   (a) You have set yourself the task to rewrite the temptation and fall of Eve as a Greek tragedy. Give a brief scene-by-scene outline of your play. Who will be on stage for each scene, and what aspect of the plot will each scene cover? (You should require no more than three sentences for each scene.)
   (b) Select one scene, and either write it out completely, or write out a portion of it. (Note: This should be your own work; do not rely too much on Milton's words.) (Three or four double-spaced pages should suffice.)
   (c) Write a commentary (approximately three double-spaced pages) on your work. Among other things you may discuss what you set out to do, some of the choices you made, the extent to which you tried to imitate the style and structure of Greek tragedy, and how successful you think you were.
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://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.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://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties, check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties: [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm](http://www.adm.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://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.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.