

# LIT 3300–501: Western Literary Tradition

## SYLLABUS

Spring 2017

Thursdays 7-9:45pm

Location: CB1 1.102

### Contact Information:

Dr. Terje Saar-Hambazaza

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Office: JO 5.109

Office hours: Wednesdays 3-4pm & by appointment

### Course Description:

The Western Literary Tradition course investigates the concepts of “tradition” and “canon” and introduces students to some of the major works that have become authoritative or deeply influential in Western culture. From Homer to Chekhov to Scandinavian writing, we will learn about the importance of these texts. Moreover, we will consider the meaning of the concepts of “western culture” and “tradition” and how it has evolved over time. In this course, you are invited to ask questions about literary works and their authoritative nature. How have these literary works influenced our past? What has allowed them to become canonical? How do literary texts challenge society and its culture, even while drawing ideas from it? How do they continue to shape audiences and their expectations long after the first publication? Course requirements include two examinations, a written analysis, five short response papers, and an attendance/participation. You cannot expect to pass this class if you do not attend and complete all of the required work.

### Learning Objectives:

1. Interpretative Skills - Students will be able to describe and apply basic methodologies of interpreting literary texts.
2. Communicative Ability - Students will demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills through well-supported analysis of course-related material.
3. Knowledge Base - Students will demonstrate a broad knowledge of major periods and genres of literature.
4. Students will be able to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of a range of representative works from the history of Western literature.
5. Students will be able to demonstrate the defining characteristics of Western literature based on the study of representative writers.

### Course Requirements and Policies:

[UT Dallas Policies and Procedures: <http://coursebook.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/>]  
Attendance & Participation Policy

Attendance is absolutely crucial to your success in this course. Attendance will be taken during every class meeting and it is your responsibility to make sure that you have signed the attendance sheet. You are not permitted to sign the name of another student.

Falsifying student identities is considered plagiarism and will be dealt with according to the university’s policies. Each student is allowed one (1) excused absences, no questions asked (emergencies will be considered on a case-by-case basis). Save them for when you really need them; these absences are designed to accommodate such things as family

emergencies, illnesses, car troubles, etc. Unexcused absences beyond the first excused absence will adversely affect your grade.

Your success in this course is a function of your level of engagement. I am interested in the quality of your remarks rather than the quantity. Hence, your thoughtful, attentive, and active participation is essential. If you sleep, engage in non-class-related activities, or interfere with your classmates' ability to learn you will be counted absent for that day. Be on time - class will start promptly. Leaving early will count as an absence.

Participation in this course does not include doing work unrelated to this course during class, sleeping in class, or using computers or other personal electronic devices for personal messaging, research, or entertainment.

#### Late Work

I do not accept late work or schedule makeup exams.

#### Personal Communication Devices

Electronic devices, such as computers and cell phones, are NOT ALLOWED in class. I will make an exception for e-readers if you have purchased your books in an electronic format. Turn off all cell phones and other personal communication devices before the start of class and do not use them during class.

#### Classroom Protocol, Decorum, etc.

Please arrive to class on time. Arriving late to class disrupts the flow of the lecture and is distracting to the professor and to your fellow students. Your attendance grade will be affected if late arrivals become a pattern (determined by the professor).

All written work and class discussion for this course must employ gender-neutral, nonsexist language, and rhetorical constructions. Such practice is part of a classroom environment according full respect and opportunity to all participants by all others.

#### Email Use

Please use your UT Dallas email account when contacting the professor.

#### Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that students demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in their scholastic work.

As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings. Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalogue for details).

#### Office of Student AccessAbility

It is the policy and practice of The University of Texas at Dallas to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. However, written notification from the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please discuss it with me and allow one week advance notice. Students who have questions about receiving accommodations, or those who have, or think they may have, a disability (mobility, sensory, health, psychological, learning, etc.) are invited to contact OSA for a confidential discussion. OSA is located in the Student Services Building, SSB 3.200. They can be reached by phone at 972-883-2098, or by email at studentaccess@utdallas.edu.

#### Comet Creed

The UT Dallas student body voted this creed on in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same: "As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

**Course Readings (all required):**

- ✧ Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. E. V. Rieu (Penguin Classics), ISBN: 9780143039952
- ✧ Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, trans. E. V. Rieu (Penguin Classics), ISBN: 9780140441123
- ✧ Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays*, trans. E. V. Rieu (Penguin), ISBN: 9780140444254
- ✧ Aristotle, *Poetics* (Penguin), ISBN: 9780140446364
- ✧ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Simon & Schuster), ISBN: 9781451669411
- ✧ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Penguin), ISBN: 9780141439518
- ✧ Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Penguin), ISBN: 9780142437209
- ✧ Henrik Ibsen, *Four Major Plays, Volume I* (Signet Classic), ISBN 9780451530226
- ✧ Anton Chekhov, *Plays* (Penguin), ISBN: 9780140447330
- ✧ J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* (Scholastic), ISBN: 9780439708180
- ✧ Additional course readings as PDF files on eLearning

**Course Assessment:**

(max. 100 points)

- ✧ Exam 1: 30 points
- ✧ Exam 2: 30 points
- ✧ Analytical essay: 30 points
- ✧ Reader-response papers (five): 5 points
- ✧ Attendance/participation: 5 points

**Grading Policy:**

A+	98-100
A	93-97
A-	90-92
B+	88-89
B	83-87
B-	80-82
C+	78-79
C	73-77
C-	70-72
D+	68-69
D	63-67
D-	60-62
F	below 60

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Short reader-response papers**

- ☞ I am looking for original and interesting insights concerning the assigned readings. As such, I encourage you to express your original thought and display your reaction to the text you just read in these responses. You will be able to demonstrate that it is not merely the text that matters; the way you think about it is just as important to me. Hence, these responses help you prepare for the class discussion and are your opportunity to show your unique interpretation of the text.
- ☞ You may focus on formal elements or literary devices: on a particular issue, theme, setting, use of language, characterization, etc. – anything that you found especially fascinating or note-worthy in a text assigned for that day.
- ☞ These short response papers should be 1-2 pages in length, double-spaced, and submitted electronically on eLearning.
- ☞ While your responses may seem as informal pieces of writing, they should be grammatically and syntactically correct; use language precisely and, if

necessary, support your thoughts with specifics from the text using cited quotations.

- ☞ They are due before the class meets.
- ☞ You do not need a Works Cited page on your short responses; however, add a page number if directly quoting the text.

### **Analytical Essay:**

- ☞ Analytical essay is your exploration into writing an analysis of a literary adaptation. You must choose one text and its film adaptation; it may be a text and a film that we read and viewed in class.
- ☞ The essay should be an analysis of how that particular text has been adapted for new, contemporary audiences. You should not focus on which is better, the film or the book. Instead, your analysis should capture the changes that take place from page to screen. Consider these following questions as your starting point:
  - Is the adaptation a straight or a loose interpretation of the novel?
  - Can the adaptation stand alone, or is it necessary to have read the novel to understand the film?
  - Does the adaptation capture the novel's formal elements: the theme, characterization, style, tone, and plot of the novel?
  - Is the adaptation a quality film in its own right?
  - When the screenwriter and/or director changes any of the formal elements of the novel, is the overall message retained?
- ☞ Submission instructions/guidelines:
  - Your analysis should be 4-5 pages in length.
  - Your writing assignment should be a Word document that is double spaced, with 1-inch margins, in 12-pt., Times New Roman font.
  - Your paper also need to have a title and a thesis, and follow MLA guidelines for formatting, citation, and style.
  - You must proofread the paper and eliminate any mistakes in spelling, grammar, etc.
- ☞ Evaluation criteria:
  1. Your essay has a clear central idea that is supported by examples.
  2. It has a thesis statement
  3. It integrates your analysis of the adaptation
  4. It incorporate evidence (i.e., quotations, specific examples) from the text/film
  5. Introduction catches the reader's attention in some interesting way.
  6. Paragraphs and sentences have good transitions linking them so as to allow smooth reading.
  7. Sentences have different lengths and types and use proper grammatical constructions.
  8. Your essay has a conclusion.
  9. It has a title.
  10. It is neatly formatted and readable.
  11. You have proofread the essay and eliminated any mistakes in spelling, grammar, etc.
  12. Your essay shows several different types of writing, including narration, explanation, comparison/contrast, and analysis.
  13. Your essay uses MLA guidelines and has a Works Cited page.

## Course Schedule

[All reading and writing assignments are due on the days listed]

### Week 1

1/12: Syllabus; Introduction; Screening: *Star Wars* (1977)

### Week 2

1/19: Homer, *The Odyssey*, pp. 77-270

### Week 3

1/26: *The Odyssey*, pp. 271-485

### Week 4

2/2: Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*; Sophocles, *Antigone*;  
Response #1 DUE;

### Week 5

2/9: Aristotle, *Poetics*; Cervantes, *Don Quixote* (excerpts) (PDF)

### Week 6

2/16: Shakespeare, *Hamlet*; Response #2 DUE

### Week 7

2/23: EXAM #1; Film screening

### Week 8

3/2: Film screening & discussion;  
READ: Hans Christian Andersen (PDF); Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (PDF);  
Walt Disney's *Cinderella* (PDF);

### Week 9

3/9: Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*; Response #3 DUE

### Week 10

3/16: SPRING BREAK

### Week 11

3/23: Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*; Response #4 DUE

### Week 12

3/30: Adapting Literary Classics: Arthur Conan Doyle, "A Scandal in Bohemia"  
(PDF); Screening and discussion: *Sherlock: "A Scandal in Belgravia"* (BBC)

### Week 13

4/6: Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll House*; Response #5 DUE

### Week 14

4/13: Anton Chekhov, *The Seagull*;

### Week 15

4/20: Scandinavian crime fiction: Short stories of Henning Mankell (PDF)

### Week 16

4/27: J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*;  
Conclusion; Analytical essay DUE

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, May 4, 2017

#### NOTE:

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.