

Eastern Illinois University
Course Proposal
ENG 2011G, Literature, the Self, and the World

1. Course Description

- a) English 2011G
- b) Literature, the Self, and the World
- c) 3-0-3
- d) F,S
- e) LitS&W 1 Poetry, LitS&W 2 Fiction, LitS&W 3 Drama)
- f) An in-depth study of significant works of literature in English from diverse times and places and of the ways in which they depict possibilities of meaning, identity, and action in the world. 1: Poetry, 2: Fiction, 3: Drama. Prerequisite: English 1002G.
- g) Prerequisite: Prior credit or concurrent enrollment in ENG 1000 or ENG 1001G/1091G.
- h) English 2011G is a writing- intensive course

2. Student Learning Objectives

- a) In successfully completing English 2011G, students will
 - 1) focus on three distinctive approaches to knowledge-- poetry, fiction, and drama-- through which men and women in diverse times and places have sought to find meaning in the world, to articulate a sense of identity, and to undertake or examine significant human action. They will respond critically in class and in writing assignments to these approaches (writing, speaking, and critical thinking).
 - 2) assimilate, abstract, and articulate ideas from a series of different reading experiences (writing, speaking, critical thinking).
 - 3) consider the ways in which humans—individually or in groups—determine their needs and make choices about what to believe, practice, or reject.
 - 4) develop an appreciation for the value of the arts in past and present cultures.
 - 5) hone their writing skills on papers and essay exams throughout the semester.
- b) Additional student learning objectives. Students will
 - 1) explore the nature of intellectual and aesthetic matters related to the study of literature.
 - 2) develop an understanding of the relationships among the various genres of literature.
 - 3) consider the value of expression and creativity, especially in literature and literary analysis.

3. Course Outline

English 2011G is divided into 15 units, to be distributed evenly during a 15-week/50 minute course (45 classes) or a 15-week/75 minute course (30 classes).

Literature, the Self, and the World is a multi-section course which, in each of its three sections, addresses specific aspects of the human condition and human values through the study of literary texts which reflect a variety of historical periods, genres, and national literatures while focusing on a group of specific values shared by all the texts.

1. Poetry

Unit 1/Week 1: The Context of Poetry

An introduction to the concept that poetry is a distinctive form of discourse, a realm of language use involving various conventions and expectations that shape the kinds of meanings a reader might find in poems. Students will be encouraged to become conscious of the ways in which they approach poems and of possible differences among their approaches to poetry and their approaches to other forms of discourse.

Reading: William Carlos Williams, "This Is Just to Say"
selected "found" poems (poems made from prose sources)

Discussion: How do you recognize a poem when you see one? What's involved in reading a poem? Pound's triad: logopoeia, melopoeia, phanopoeia. What makes a poem cohere? How does lineation shape meaning? form: Regular forms v. free verse. Reading for metaphor: literal and figurative language. Reading for multiple meaning: complexity v. simplicity, ambiguity v. certainty.

Writing: two "found" poems

Units 2-3/Weeks 2-3: Finding the Language

A consideration of some of the problems of fitting language to human experience. The poems under examination are concerned with such matters as reasons for the use of language to represent experience, ways in which language can shape our response to experience, ways in which language can make experience more (or less) immediate.

Reading: Margaret Atwood, "Spelling"
Thomas Campion, "There is a garden in her face"
Richard Crashaw, "To the Infant Martyrs"
"Upon the Infant Martyrs"
Emily Dickinson, "It was not Death, for I stood up"
Marianne Moore, "Poetry"
William Shakespeare, "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun"
"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"
Wallace Stevens, "Study of Two Pears"
Jean Toomer, "Face"
William Carlos Williams, "Portrait of a Lady"

Discussion: Which comes first, language or experience? What kinds of power are invested in the act of representing human experience in words? How can language distance one from reality? How can language bring one closer to reality? Is there such a thing as an objective language of fact? Is all representation inherently partial and subjective? How is gender related to such matters? What do we make of the

long poetic tradition of the "male gaze," the use of language to describe women's appearances? Why is the equation of language and power a matter of particular importance to women poets?

Writing: first response (1-2 pages)

Units 4-7/Weeks 4-7: Poetry and Meaning

A consideration of sources of meaning in the world, with special emphasis on the relationship between poetic art and the natural world. The poems under examination provoke questions about that relationship.

Reading: Elizabeth Bishop, "The Fish"
 William Blake, "Ah Sun-flowers"
 "The Sick Rose"
 Robert Frost, "Design"
 Allen Ginsberg, "Sunflower Sutra"
 Thomas Hardy, "An August Midnight"
 "The Convergence of the Twain"
 Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Spring and Fall"
 "Pied Beauty"
 John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian urn"
 Sylvia Plath, "Black Rock in Rainy Weather"
 Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar"
 "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"
 William Carlos Williams, "Spring and All"
 William Wordsworth, "I wandered lonely as a cloud"
 William Butler Yeats, "Lapis Lazuli"
 "The Wild Swans at Coole"

Discussion: Why do poems again and again seek to find meaning in the natural world? What are typical settings in such poems? Why is the poet in such poems typically a solitary observer? To what extent do such poems exclude the social, political, industrial world? In what ways does that larger world make itself felt? Do poems depict or, rather, create an ordered world? Is there meaning already in nature? Is the poet the discoverer of design or, rather, the designer? Why do poets again and again humanize the natural world? Can the natural world serve as a mirror of human concerns? Can a work of art do justice to nature?

Writing: first essay (5 pages)
 midterm examination

Units 8-11/Weeks 8-11: Poetry and Identity

A consideration of poems as self-portraits, as ways of articulating or exhibiting a sense of individual identity. The poems under examination provoke questions about the ways poets present themselves in words, about the authenticity of identity, and about possible differences between the self that a poet (or dramatic speaker) seeks to present and the impression a reader forms.

Reading: Rae Armantrout, "Traveling Through the Yard"
 Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool"
 Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess"
 "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister"
 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Frost at Midnight"
 Gregory Corso, "Marriage"
 Emily Dickinson, "I cannot live with You"
 "My Life had stood-a Loaded Gun"
 Paul Laurence Dunbar, "We Wear the Mask"
 T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
 Philip Larkin, "Annus Mirabilis"
 Sylvia Plath, "Lady Lazarus"
 Adrienne Rich, "Diving into the Wreck"
 William Stafford, "Traveling Through the Dark"
 Walt Whitman, excerpts from *Song of Myself*
 William Butler Yeats, "A Prayer for My Daughter"

Discussion: What does it mean to present the self in words? The differences between telling and showing: does one say who one is or show who one is? How does one define a sense of self? By one's actions? By gender? In relation to another person? In relation to history? In relation to a social or ethical code? In relation to a culture? What risks do self-portraits entail? How can one trust one's own sense of self? How can words betray one's sense of self? How can the aim of being "sincere" create difficulties? Is there something problematic about making the effort to appear to a reader to be sincere?

Writing: second and third responses (1-2 pages each)

Units 12-15/Weeks 12-15: Poetry as Action

A consideration of poems as actions, as speech acts addressed to a specific implied audience. The poems under examination provoke questions about the reasons for direct address, about relations between a poet or dramatic speaker and an implied audience, about the nature of authority in speech (as related to questions of gender, for instance), and about possible differences in response between an implied audience and a reader.

Reading: Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach"
 Emily Dickinson, "I'm Nobody--who are You?"
 John Donne, "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning"
 "Batter my heart, three-personed God"
 "The Good Morrow"
 "The Sun Rising"
 Allen Ginsberg, excerpts from *Kaddish*
 George Herbert, "The Collar"
 Geoffrey Hill, "September Song"
 Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Thou art indeed just, Lord"
 A. E. Housman, "To an Athlete Dying Young"
 Kenneth Koch, "Variations on a Theme by William Carlos Williams"
 Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"
 Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"
 John Milton, "Lycidas"
 Sylvia Plath, "Daddy"

Ezra Pound, "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter"
 Walter Raleigh, "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd"
 Ishmael Reed, "beware: do not read this poem"
 Alfred, Lord Tennyson, excerpts from *In Memoriam*
 Walt Whitman, "To a Common Prostitute"

Discussion: What is a speech act? What does it mean to do something in words? Why do poets address audiences? For what purposes? How do poets address various audiences? How does one address the dead? A parent? A lover? God? How do poets attempt to invest poetic speech with authority? How do questions of gender and class create speech situations? How do poems create their readers? What differences might exist between a poem's implied audience and an actual reader?

Writing: fourth response (1-2 pages)
 second essay (5 pages)
 final examination

2. Fiction

Units 1-3/Weeks 1-3. Living by Fiction

Fiction as a source of meaning and individual identity and as a model of human action.

Reading: Cervantes, *Don Quixote* (Trans. J. M. Cohen, Penguin)

Discussion: What purposes does fiction serve? How can fiction structure a sense of self? How can fiction structure a sense of the world? How can fiction structure a sense of human potential? How do we make stories of our selves? Are all models of the world fictions?

Writing: first response (1-2 pages)

Units 4-8/Weeks 4-8: Fiction and Cultural Belief

Fiction as a critique of a culture's beliefs and as an exploration of possibilities and limitations of individual identity and ethical action. The texts under examination range from the ironic consideration of provincial domestic life in Austen to the scathing examination of modern industrial culture in Dickens and Hardy to the presentation of clashes between Ibo and Zulu culture and British colonialists in Achebe and Gordimer.

Reading: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
 Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
 Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*
 George Eliot, *Middlemarch*
 Nadine Gordimer, "The Train from Rhodesia"
 Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*

Discussion: If you wanted to study a culture, what would you look for? How do narratives present and evaluate cultures? Explicit v. implicit evaluation. What

cultural beliefs shape human identity and action in narratives? What does it mean to be a person in, say, the world of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*? How does gender determine the possibilities? What cultural beliefs shape your identity and actions? To what extent are narratives representative of cultural conditions? What gives a narrative the quality of being representative? To what extent do narratives make statements not only about the experiences of their characters but about a whole culture?

Writing: second response (1-2 pages)
first essay (5 pages)
midterm examination

Units 9-15/Weeks 9-15: Fiction and American Identity

According to novelist Ralph Ellison, the search for identity is "the American theme" in fiction. Students will consider reasons for the theme's pervasiveness in American fiction, the forms a search for identity might take, the problems that might lie in its way, and the relation of individual identity to cultural forces.

Reading: Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*
Willa Cather, "Paul's Case"
William Faulkner, *Light in August*
Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
Flannery O'Connor, "Everything That Rises Must Converge"
J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*

Discussion: Why would someone suggest that the search for identity is "the American theme"? What forms might the search for identity take? How might one define one's identity? By one's actions? By gender? In a private way, in relation to another person? In a public way, in relation to history? In relation to a social or ethical code? In relation to color? In relation to a culture, as a participant or as an outsider? What problems might lie in the way of the search? To what extent, if any, can one construct one's own identity? To what extent might American cultural beliefs determine or limit one's possibilities?

Writing: third and fourth responses (1-2 pages each)
second essay (5 pages)
final examination

3. Drama:

Units 1-3/Weeks 1-3: Drama in the Ancient World

A consideration of origins: the beginnings of Greek drama in religious ritual; Aristotle's concept of drama as imitation; tragedy and comedy as structures of meaning, identity, and action; tragedy and comedy as contrasting models of human possibility.

Reading: Aeschylus, *Oresteia* (*Agamemnon*, *The Libation Bearers*, *The Eumenides*)

Aristophanes, *The Clouds*
Aristotle, *Poetics*

Discussion: What is drama? Aristotle's concept of mimesis. How did Greek drama begin? The movement from religious ritual to dramatic performance. Elements of Greek drama: amphitheatre, stage, chorus. Features of tragedy and comedy. What are the different purposes of tragedy and comedy? What is catharsis? How do tragedy and comedy offer fundamentally different models of human identity and action?

Writing: first response (1-2 pages)

Units 4-5/Weeks 4-5: The Beginnings of Modern Drama

A consideration of the medieval origins of modern drama: the drama of the Mass; the human condition as the central drama of the universe in medieval morality plays; the shift from sacred to secular performance and subjects.

Reading: *Everyman*
The Wakefield Master, *The Second Shepherds' Play*

Discussion: The development of modern drama. Its origins in the Mass. The development of morality plays as dramatic representations of the human condition. The development of mystery plays and the juxtaposition of sacred history and secular comedy, as in *The Second Shepherds' Play*.

Writing: second response (1-2 pages)

Units 6-9/Weeks 6-9: Shakespearean Drama: Comedy, Tragedy, Romance

Reading: William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*
King Lear
The Tempest

Discussion: What models of the world and of human identity and action do we find in Shakespearean comedy, tragedy, and romance?

Writing: first essay (5 pages)
midterm examination

Units 10-12/Weeks 10-12: Drama and Social Culture

The drama of social "realism"; the shift from a drama of nobility and royalty to a drama of bourgeois life; the dramatic representation of social institutions and their relations to individual identity and action.

Reading: Moliere, *Tartuffe*
William Wycherly, *The Country Wife*
Henrik Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*
Anton Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard*

Discussion: How does drama change when its subjects no longer concern nobility and royalty? What becomes of traditional distinctions between tragedy and comedy? To what extent do these plays make statements not only about the experiences of their characters but about a whole culture? How do these plays present and evaluate cultures? Explicit v. implicit evaluation. How do they show the influence of cultural institutions on individual and family life? What cultural beliefs shape human identity and action in these plays? What does it mean to be a person in, say, Ibsen's world? How do these plays address social problems? Why do they emphasize "realism" in staging and performance practice?

Writing: third and fourth responses (1-2 pages each)

Units 13-15/Weeks 13-15: Drama and Estrangement

The shift from dramatic realism to the modern theatre of alienation; the assertion or rejection of identity and meaning in an antagonistic world.

Reading: Bertolt Brecht, *Mother Courage*
 Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*
 Athol Fugard, John Kani, Winston Ntshona, *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*

Discussion: What becomes of traditional distinctions between tragedy and comedy? In what ways do these plays resist the impulse toward "realism"? How do staging and performance alter our sense of theatre? Brecht's epic theatre. Drama as allegory or parable. Beckett and the absurd. Drama as performance: Brecht's songs, Beckett's comedians, Fugard, Kani, Ntshona and role-playing. How do these plays present the struggle for identity in hostile worlds? Is *Mother Courage* a figure to admire? Despise? Are Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon noble? Pitiful? Is *Sizwe Bansi's* triumph over apartheid, a victory that requires the surrender of his own name, a real victory? A hollow one?

4. Evaluation of student learning

a. Achievement of student learning will be evaluated based on the following:

- 1) two to four essays, at least one revision 50%
- 2) four shorter response papers 20%
- 3) a final exam 20%
- 4) class discussion/presentations 10%

b. English 2011G satisfies the criteria for a writing- intensive course.

5. Rationale

a. English 2011G will be in the Humanities segment of the General Education program. In this course, students examine the ways in which men and women through the ages have through poetry, fiction, and drama addressed the human experience as they attempt to find meaning in the world, to articulate a sense of identity, and to examine significant human action. Students will be challenged to respond critically, to assimilate and abstract ideas from a series of different reading experiences and genres, and to write about those ideas.

b. The prerequisites for English 2011G are English 1001G and English 1002G.

6. Implementation

a) The course will be taught by members of the English Department.

b) The texts for English 2011G are

Poetry

Alexander Allison et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Norton, 1983).
Donald Allen and George Butterick, eds., *The Postmoderns* (Grove, 1982)

Fiction

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Heinemann, n.d.)
Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Penguin, 1972)
R. V. Cassill, *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction* (Norton, 1990)
Cervantes *Don Quixote*, trans. J. M. Cohen (Penguin, 1951)
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (Norton, 1977)
Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (Penguin, 1969)
George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Penguin, 1965)
Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (Vintage, 1989)
William Faulkner, *Light in August* (Vintage, 1967)
Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (Penguin, 1978)
J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (Bantam, 1984)
Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Penguin, 1983)

Drama

Aeschylus, Oresteia, trans. Richard Lattimore (U of Chicago P, 1969)
Alexander Allison et al., eds., *Masterpieces of the Drama* (Macmillan, 1986)
Aristophanes, *Four Major Plays* (Airmont, 1968)
Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Preston H. Epps (U of North Carolina P, 1967)
Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (Grove, 1954)
Bertolt Brecht, *Mother Courage*, trans. Eric Bentley (Grove, 1963)
Everyman (J. M. Dent)
William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. Alfred Harbage (Pelican 1958)
Much Ado About Nothing, ed. Josephine Bennett (Pelican 1958)
The Tempest, ed. Northrop Frye (Pelican, 1959)

c) There will be no supplementary materials or laboratory experiences required.

d) The course will be first offered in Fall 2000.

7. Community College Transfer

A community college course may not be judged equivalent to this course.

8. Date approved by the department: 10 April, 2000

9. Date approved by CAHCC: 19 April, 2000

10. Date approved by CAA: 19 October, 2000

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