

Eastern Illinois University
New Course Proposal
English 2009G, Literature and Human Values

1. Catalog Description

- a) English 2009G
- b) Literature and Human Values
- c) (3-0-3)
- d) F,S
- e) (Lit&HV 1 Power, Lit&HV 2 Faith, Lit&HV 3 Love, Lit&HV 4 Race)
- f) A study of some of the universal, recurring issues facing the individual, as they are dealt with in a selection of literary texts from diverse cultures. 1) Labor, Class, Power; 2) Faith, Survival, Progress; 3) Love, Hate, Obsession; 4) Race, Age, Gender.) Prerequisite: ENG 1002G
- g) Prerequisite: English 1001G, English 1002G
- h) English 2009G is a writing- intensive course.

2. Student Learning Objectives

- a) In successfully completing English 2009G, students will
 - 1) focus on a specific group of values within the context of a diverse collection of texts that represent plural traditions, historical eras, and literary genres, and will be required to respond critically in class and in writing assignments (writing, speaking, critical thinking).
 - 2) assimilate, abstract, and articulate ideas from a series of different reading experiences (writing, speaking, critical thinking).
 - 3) explore the ways in which humans—individually or in groups—determine their needs and make choices about what to believe or reject. Because these texts are collected from a large body of multicultural and national literatures, students will become sensitive to a variety of questions concerning values, ethics, and traditions of various cultures. They will be provided with “a critical understanding” of “cultures and traditions . . . that are different from their own” (citizenship).
 - 4) write papers and essay exams throughout the semester (3000-4000 words) on the literary texts in the course (writing, critical thinking).
- b) Additional student learning objectives. Students will:
 - 1) explore 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 2009G 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 and Human Values is a multi-section course which, in each of its four sections, addresses specific aspects of the human condition and human values through the study of literary texts in English. This thematic approach allows instructors and students to examine texts which reflect a variety of historical periods, genres, and national literatures, including significant representation of third world texts, while focusing on a group of specific values shared by all the texts.

1. Labor, Class, Power

Units 1-3/Weeks 1-3.

Labor

Readings: Thomas Carlyle, sections from *Past and Present*
 Louisa May Alcott, selections from *Work*
 Karl Marx, selections from *The Communist Manifesto*
 Richard Wright, "The Man Who Went to Chicago"
 Katherine Anne Porter, *Noon Wine*
 Joyce Carey, *Mister Johnson*
 Marge Piercy, selected poetry
 Studs Terkel, selections from *Working*
 V. S. Naipaul, *A Bend in the River*
 Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*

Discussion: the condition of working men and women in industrial and pre-industrial societies. The pressures, rewards, and prejudices associated with work. The changing relationship of workers and the ruling classes. (Is work a universal condition or culturally determined? Who works and why? To what degree do workers control their own fates?)

Writing: first essay (4 pages). Suggested topic: a comparison of the work ethics implicit in texts from diverse cultures.

Units 4-7/Weeks 4-7.

Class

Readings: Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*
 Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* ("Barbarians, Philistines, Populace")
 Henry James, "The Real Thing"
 George Bernard Shaw, *Major Barbara*
 Katherine Anne Porter, "Flowering Judas"
 John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*
 Margaret Atwood, selected poetry
 Li-Young Lee, selected poetry
 James Ngugi, *The River Between*

Discussion: Class distinctions defined. Self-help and class mobility. Social change in democratic and non-democratic systems. (On what principles are class distinctions formed in industrial and pre-industrial societies -- heredity, class, education, capital, culture? Who alters the status quo?)

Writing: second essay (4 pages). Suggested topic: a comparison of the idea of class in one text to a current political/social problem.

Units 8-11/Weeks 8-11. Power
 Readings: William Blake, selected poetry
 W. B. Yeats, selected poetry
 Tillie Olsen, "I Stand Here Ironing"
 Doris Lessing, "One Off the Short List"
 Akira Kurosawa, *Rashomon* [film]
 David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly*
 Gabriel Garcia Marquez, selected short fiction
 Salmon Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*

Discussion: The ideological tensions between the individual and society, the individual and culture. Freedom and the individual. Freedom and progress. (Who determines the role of the individual in society? What price do we pay for independence?)

Writing: third essay (4 pages). Suggested topic: an analysis of the need for power in our personal lives.

Units 12-15/Weeks 12-15. Labor, Class, Power: Integrated Textual Study
 Readings: Shakespeare, *Macbeth*
 John Dos Passos, *42nd Parallel*
 Akira Kurosawa, *Ran* [film]
 Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

Discussion: A recapitulation of discussion issues presented above. (What have we learned about who we are and are not as individuals in our socio-economic system? Is change possible?)

Writing: fourth essay (4 pages). Suggested topic: an analysis of how literature shapes the self and the world.

2. Faith, Survival, Progress

Units 1-3/Weeks 1-3. Faith
 Readings: John Milton, *Paradise Lost*
 John Donne, selected sonnets
 George Herbert, selected poetry
 John Millington Synge, *Riders to the Sea*
 Langston Hughes, selected poetry
 Amy Hempel, "Reasons to Live"

Discussion: Historical contexts and genre; concepts of revelation and belief; how fear and suffering are informed by belief and spirituality; relationship between culture and belief systems. How do these texts represent the nature of belief in individuals and among groups?

Writing: Based on readings and discussions, analyze what seem to be the needs of the individual in determining his or her spiritual identity (4 pages).

Units 4-7/Weeks 4-7. Survival
 Readings: Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*
 Anton Chekov, *The Cherry Orchard*
 Gabriel Garcia Marquez, "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World"
 James Ngugi, *Weep Not, Child*
 Mike Nichols, *Silkwood* [film]

Discussion: Historical contexts and genre; challenges to human survival; courage as a relative concept. In what ways does loyalty become a means to survival?

Writing: Select a major character and evaluate that character's approach to survival (4 pages).

Units 8-11/Weeks 8-11. Progress
 Readings: Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography*
 George Orwell, *1984*
 Adrienne Rich, *Diving Into the Wreck*

Discussion: Historical contexts and genre; relationship between individual growth and cultural progress; relationship between progress and freedom. Who determines when change is also progress?

Writing: Do Franklin, Orwell, and Rich explore "common ground" when they explore the nature of progress? (4 pages).

Units 12-15/Weeks 12-15. Faith, Survival, Progress: Integrated Textual Study
 Readings: Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*
 Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*

Discussion: Historical contexts and genre; significance of science and myth in our definitions of faith, survival, progress; relationships among individual faith, survival strategies, and cultural "growth." Is faith essential to progress?

Writing: Student-generated topic, based on course readings and discussions, with instructor approval (4 pages)

3. Love, Hate, Obsession

Units 1-3/Weeks 1-3. Love
 Readings: William Shakespeare, selected sonnets
 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
 Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*
 James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"

Discussion: Historical contexts and genre; kinds of love; motivations for love: devotion, passion, pity; manifestations of love; role of gender, race, age on experience of love. How does love for another change the way an individual sees himself or herself?

Writing: Choose two characters and construct a dialogue between them in which they discuss their views on love (4 pages).

Units 4-7/Weeks 4-7. Hate
 Readings: William Blake, selected poetry
 War Poetry: e.e. cummings, Herman Melville, Denise Levertov
 Margaret Atwood, selected poetry
 Peter Shaffer, *Amadeus*
 Spike Lee, *Do the Right Thing* [film]

Discussion: Historical contexts and genre; kinds of hate and motivations for hatred: betrayal, envy, fear; manifestations of hatred; role of class, race, gender in experience of hatred. What is the relationship between violence and hatred?

Writing: Choose two texts and examine the constructive and destructive ways in which individuals choose to confront hatred.

Units 8-11/Weeks 8-11. Obsession
 Readings: William Shakespeare, *Othello*
 Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*
 Edgar Allen Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado"
 Flannery O'Connor, *Wiseblood*
 Elizabeth Bowen, "Demon Lover"

Discussion: Historical contexts and genre; types of obsession; relationship between obsession and reason; motivations and manifestations of obsession. How does obsession alienate an individual from his or her environment?

Writing: We generally conceive of obsessive behavior as irrational. In what ways do these texts allow us to see obsession from different perspectives? (4 pages).

Units 12-15/Weeks 12-15. Love, Hate, Obsession: Integrated Textual Study
 Readings: Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*
 Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*

Discussion: Historical contexts and genre; distinguishable "lines" between love/hate, hate/obsession, love/obsession. Does a culture try to construct these "lines?" Why and how do individuals "cross" these lines?

Writings: Student-generated topic, based on course reading and discussion, with approval of instructor (4 pages).

4. Race, Age, Gender

Units 1-3/Weeks 1-3. Race
 Readings: Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*
 Frederick Douglas, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*
 Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
 Jean Toomer, *Cane*
 Toni Morrison, *Beloved*; *The Bluest Eye*

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

Discussion: The sources and impact of ethnic and racial prejudice. Racial identity as a source of alternative world views. The relationship of race and gender. How does race define individual experience? How do writers of color adapt Western literary models to their own needs?

Writing: first essay (4 pages). Suggested topic: an analysis of racial or ethnic identity as expressed in two of the assigned texts.

Units 4-7/Weeks 4-7. Age
 Readings: William Shakespeare, *King Lear*
 Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*
 Yeats, selected poetry
 Jane Anne Phillips, "Souvenir"
 Lee Grant, *Tell Me a Riddle* [film]

Discussion: The insights and sorrows of the aging. The relationship between the elderly and their heirs. Sexuality and aging. (How does approaching death affect one's view of life?)

Writing: second essay (4 pages). Suggested topic: explain why the view of old age represented in one of the works is difficult to accept.

Units 8-11/Weeks 8-11. Gender
 Readings: Euripides, *Medea*
 Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*
 Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*
 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*
 George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*
 Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House*

Discussion: Sexuality and gender. Variations of female experience. Growing up female. Male/female relationships. (How do gender roles affect the individual? Have sex roles changed?)

Writing: third essay (4 pages). Suggested topic: explain what constitutes maturity for a female character from one of the assigned texts.

Units 12-15/Weeks 12-15. Race, Age, Gender: Integrated Textual Study
 Readings: Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* ("The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale")
 Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
 Louise Erdrich, *Tracks*

Discussion: A recapitulation of discussion issues presented above. (How do race, age, and gender define us as individuals? To what degree are we bound by our culture's preconceptions about race, age, and gender? Can we use literature to break free of these preconceptions?)

Writing: fourth essay (4 pages). Suggested topic: an analysis of how race and gender or age and gender are related in one of the assigned works.

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) hourly examinations 20%
 - 3) a final exam 20%
 - 4) class discussions/presentations 10%
- b) English 2009C satisfies the criteria for a writing -intensive course.

5. Rationale

- a) English 2009G will be in the Humanities segment of the General Education program. In this course, students examine the ways in which human values are represented and articulated through fiction, non-fiction, drama, poetry, and film. By focusing on a specific group of values for an entire semester within the context of a diverse collection of texts which represent plural traditions, historical eras, and literary genres, students will be challenged to respond critically, to assimilate and abstract ideas from a series of different reading experiences, and to write about the very nature of "value" in their own world.
- b) The prerequisites for English 2009G 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 2009G: Labor, Class, Power, are:

Alcott, Louisa May. *Work*. Schoken, 1977.
 Cary, Joyce. *Mister Johnson*. New Directions, 1989.
 Dickens, Charles. *Hard Times*. Penguin, 1969.
 Dos Passos, John. *The 42nd Parallel*. Signet Classics, 1983.
 Kurosawa, Akira. *Rashomon* [film]. Embassy Home Entertainment, 1980.
 Marx, Karl. *The Communist Manifesto of Marx & Engels*. Penguin, 1985.
The Norton Anthology of Poetry, 3rd ed. 1986.
 Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. Penguin, 1981.
 Shaw, George Bernard. *Major Barbara*. Penguin, 1950.
Short Fiction; Classic and Contemporary. Prentice Hall, 1989.
 Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Penguin, 1976.
 Terkel, Studs. *Working*. Ballantine, 1985.

The texts for English 2009G: Faith Survival, Progress, are:

Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Signet, 1980.
 Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of the Species*. Macmillan, 1962.
 Franklin, Benjamin. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. Modern Library, 1981.
Masterpieces of the Drama. 5th ed. Macmillan, 1986.
 Nichols, Mike. *Silkwood* [film]. MVC Distributors, 1983.

Ngugi, James. *Weep Not, Child*. Heinemann, 1964.
Norton Anthology of Poetry. 3rd ed. 1986.
 Orwell, George. 1984. NAL, 1984.
 Rich, Adrienne. *Diving Into the Wreck*. Norton, 1973.
Short Fiction; Classic and Contemporary. Prentice Hall, 1989.
 Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*. WSP, 1982.

The texts for English 2009G: Love, Hate, Obsession, are:

Bronte, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Signet, 1979.
 Kundera, Milan. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Harper & Row, 1984.
 Lee, Spike. *Do the Right Thing* [film]. MVC Distributors, 1989.
Masterpieces of the Drama. 5th ed. Macmillan, 1986.
Norton Anthology of Poetry. 3rd ed. 1986.
 Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Signet, 1985.
Short Fiction; Classic and Contemporary. Prentice Hall, 1989.
 Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*. Harper & Row, 1989.

The texts for English 2009G: Race, Age, Gender, are:

Bronte, Charlotte, *Jane Eyre*. Signet, 1980.
 Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. Penguin, 1951.
 Douglass, Frederick. *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. Macmillan, 1962.
 Eliot, George. *The Mill on the Floss*. Bantam, 1987.
 Erdrich, Louise. *Tracks*. Harper & Row, 1989.
 Grant Lee, *Tell Me A Riddle* [film]. MVC Distributors, 1979.
Masterpieces of the Drama. 5th ed. Macmillan, 1986.
 Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. NAL, 1988.
 _____, *The Bluest Eye*. WSP, 1972.
Norton Anthology of Poetry. 3rd ed. 1986.
Short Fiction; Classic and Contemporary. Prentice Hall, 1989.
 Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. Penguin, 1986.
 Toomer, Jean. *Cane*. Norton, 1987.
 Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Bantam, 1981.
 Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. HBJ, 1963.

c) There will be no supplementary materials or laboratory experience 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 _____

Departmental contact person: Dana Ringuette x2428 _____