

Eastern Illinois University
New Course Proposal
English 3010G, Literary Masterworks

1. Catalog Description

- a) English 3010G
- b) Literary Masterworks
- c) (3-0-3)
- d) F, S.
- e) Lit Masterworks
- f) An analysis of a group of masterworks from the Western cultural tradition that shape for us the identity of the culture and period to which they belong and that represent the great diversity within the tradition.
- g) Prerequisites: English 1001G and English 1002G.
- h) English 3010G is a writing -intensive course.

2. Student Learning Objectives

- a) In successfully completing English 3010G, students will
 - 1) explore and write about the diversity of cultural perspectives and human values as evidenced by great writers working in a wide range of historical eras and cultural traditions (writing, speaking, critical thinking).
 - 2) assimilate, abstract, and articulate ideas from a series of intellectual and aesthetic experiences (writing, speaking, critical thinking).
 - 3) write a series of substantial papers and exams treating the literary texts read 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) discover the intellectual and aesthetic pleasure to be derived from reading great books.
 - 3) consider the value of expression and creativity, especially in literature and literary analysis.

3. Course Outline

English 3010G is divided into 3 units, to be distributed evenly during a 15-week/50-minute course (45 classes), a 15-week/75-minute course (30 classes), or a 15-week/150 minute course (15 classes). The course is structured around the close reading of literary works from several cultural and literary periods that contain significant voices in the human cultural tradition. These texts also represent themes and questions central to human experience in all ages, such as love and marriage, moral and immoral behavior, the human imagination, human optimism and pride, and human failure.

Sample Outline

Unit 1

Weeks 1-5. The Medieval Foundations for Western Literature

Introduction to the major social, philosophical, and historical contexts of the period. Discussion of the role of literature in the medieval world.

Reading: Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot* (in *Arthurian Romances*)

Discussion: What is the nature of love? To what degree is courtly love based on oriental models? on Christian models? What roles do men and women play in this system of behavior? How does love ennoble the individual? What are the benefits and limitations of love? How does courtly love suit the age that valued its ideals?

Reading: Dante, *The Inferno*

Discussion: What constitutes moral and immoral behavior for men and women in the medieval period? What are the consequences of moral and immoral behavior? How is the individual to find redemption? What is the role of art in relation to religion?

Reading: Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* (selections)

Discussion: What traditions were changing in the late medieval period? On what principles were new traditions and values being formed? What is the role of literature in a complex world? How does the artist convey human multiplicity in a variety of literary forms?

Writing: first essay (4 pages). Suggested topic: compare the nature of the ideal man/woman as expressed in two of the works assigned.

Unit 2

Weeks 6-10. Renaissance

Introduction to the major social, philosophical, and historical contexts of the period. Discussion of the role of literature in the Renaissance. How has the world changed?

Reading: Cervantes, *Don Quixote*

Discussion: What constitutes human greatness in the new age? Why does man struggle for greatness? What are the pitfalls of that struggle? What are the rewards? Why is self-reflection necessary? What role can literature play in shaping the self-conscious individual?

Reading: Shakespeare, *King Lear* and *The Tempest*

Discussion: What is the nature of human error and self-deception? What role can art play in the human search for harmony? Is redemption in this world possible?

Writing: second essay (4 pages). Suggested topic: compare the nature of human failure and redemption in Cervantes and Shakespeare; or, compare the comic and tragic spirit as represented in Cervantes and Shakespeare.

Unit 3

Weeks 11-15. Enlightenment and Romanticism

Introduction to the major social, philosophical, and historical contexts of the modern period. Discussion of the role of literature in the new age. How has the world changed?

Reading: Voltaire, *Candide*

Discussion: What gives meaning to individual life in a complicated and cruel world? How can one without self-deception and without despair live in a complicated world? What explanations have people made up to console and delude themselves?

Reading: Goethe, *Faust Part One*

Discussion: Why do people continue to seek to achieve greatness? What are the rewards and limitations of that endeavor in the modern world? Does knowledge free the individual?

Reading: George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

Discussion: What is the nature of love and marriage in the modern, industrial world? How does the democratic spirit affect this ideal? What constitutes effective human action in a modern society? What is the role of the individual in a changing world? The role of art?

Writing: third essay (4 pages). Suggested topic: analyze how one of the assigned works relates contemporary values and ideals.

4. Evaluation of student learning

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

1. three essays, at least one with revision 50%
2. weekly reading quizzes 20%
3. a comprehensive final exam 20%
4. classroom discussions/presentations 10%

b) English 3010G satisfies the criteria for a writing -intensive course.

5. Rationale

a) English 3010G will be in the Humanities segment of the General Education program. In this course, students will focus on the dominant narrative, or stories about the course of human life, and the dominant metaphors, or the structure of images, that define the intellectual and cultural context in which narrative forms occur, enabling them to achieve a grounding of their own emerging values as they integrate the contexts of these historical texts into their own experience.

b) The prerequisites for English 3010G are English 1001G and English 1002G.

6. Implementation

a) The course will be taught by English Department faculty.

b) Texts: Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, D.D.R. Owen, ed. Everyman, 1987.

Dante, *The Inferno*, Mark Musa, trans. Penguin, 1984.

Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, Norton Critical, 1989.

Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, J. M. Cohen, trans. Penguin, 1951.

Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Penguin, 1981.

Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Penguin, 1959.

Voltaire, *Candide*, Robert M. Adams, trans. Norton Critical, 1966.

Goethe, *Faust Part One*, John Prudhoe, trans. St. Martin, 1974.

Eliot, *Middlemarch*, Bert G. Hornback, ed. Norton Critical, 2000.

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

d) English 3010G will first be 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 the CAA _____

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