

English 203: World Literature (Section 02) -- SWS

Fall 2015 TuTh 2:30 -- 3:45 Mackinac Hall D1221

Instructor: Dr. Ilse Schweitzer VanDonkelaar
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 Office: Lake Huron Hall 237
 Office Hours: MW 12-2 and by appointment

Required Texts:

The Norton Anthology of World Literature (shorter third edition), Volume 1 only; ed. Puchner et al., ISBN: 978-0393919608

Assorted readings and handouts (available via Blackboard)

Web access: You will need to have access to Blackboard to turn in some writing assignments.

Course Description and Objectives:

This course in World Literature will focus on the great epics of the ancient and medieval world. We will read (in translation) the heroic, mythological, and foundational texts of ancient and medieval global cultures, carefully and critically, asking how these works have come to define “literary classics,” and to ask whether we still define the “classic” and “epic” in the same ways. We will discuss how storytelling itself and the literary forms used for reciting, recording, and reinventing literatures changed from ancient to medieval and later cultures; we will also contextualize these works historically and culturally, using artistic pieces for comparison. Finally, as this course is designated **SWS** (Supplemental Writing Skills), we will develop and polish our writing skills by responding to a variety of in-class writing prompts, expanding these prompts into critical response papers, engaging in peer review, and revising written assignments.

This course fulfills Foundation - Philosophy and Literature; SWS requirements. Prerequisite: WRT 150.

Questions We Will Address:

- What can literature help us to better see or understand about the human condition? About diverse cultures and the intersections between them? What questions or struggles do we find in ancient and medieval works that we are still facing today?
- How do we write about literature, and what can this help us to understand about ourselves?
- How do literatures across time and space represent humankind’s relationship to the divine, to the natural world? How do they represent the individual’s place within a society?
- What is an “epic” and how does the form shift or change across time and cultures? How do authors appropriate the form for their own purposes?
- What do we observe about the practices, forms, and arts of storytelling across cultures? How has storytelling changed from its origins in the ancient world to the present day?
- How do literatures from various cultures and times represent differences in gender, class, and ethnicity?

English 203 and GVSU's General Education Program

This course is part of GVSU's General Education Program. The goal of the program is to prepare you for intelligent participation in public dialogues that consider the issues of humane living and responsible action in local, national, and global communities.

ENG 203 is designed to help you learn:

1. The introduction of philosophy or literature as a “way of knowing”: an examination of principles and questions that define the field and its contributions to human knowledge and civilization.
2. The relationship between the works discussed, the cultures in which they were created, and the human concerns they illuminate.
3. Critical analysis and interpretation of one or more primary texts as a major portion of course content.
4. Oral communication, which is the practice of effectively communicating verbally with a public audience across a variety of contexts. People with a general education are able to synthesize their knowledge of a subject with their speaking and listening skills to effectively craft a verbal presentation appropriate for a specific situation, purpose, and audience. They understand that effective verbal communication involves a dialogue between speaker and audience and use this knowledge for decision-making about the organization, development, and presentation of appropriate material. They understand that oral communication skills are essential for a knowledgeable speaker to inform, persuade, and inspire audiences.
5. Written communication, which is the practice of creating and refining messages that educated readers will value. People with a general education use thoughtful writing processes to develop effective written materials for a variety of audiences and purposes, entering larger discussions by using formats and conventions that are important to their readers.

Supplemental Writing Skills

This course is designated SWS. Completion of WRT 150 with a grade of C or better (*not* C-) is a prerequisite. SWS credit will not be given to a student who completes this course before completing the prerequisite. SWS courses adhere to certain guidelines. Students turn in a total of at least 3000 words of writing. Part of that total may be essay exams, but a substantial amount of it is made up of essays, reports, or research papers. The instructor works with the students on revising drafts of papers, rather than simply grading the finished piece of writing. At least four hours of class time will be devoted to writing instruction. At least one third of the final grade in the course is based on the writing assignments.

Coursework:

Reading, participation, and daily writing activities: Our class will be fairly light on lecture, with much of our work taking the forms of discussion and writing activities. You will be expected to complete the reading assignments prior to each class meeting, to attend class regularly, and to contribute to class discussion often. Your comments and questions to some extent determine the shape and direction of the course -- your active engagement will help me to make this class a productive, positive experience for all of us! I will keep track of the quantity and quality of your contributions to discussion, so be sure to *think* and *speak up* often. In-class writing assignments and your contributions to group-work assignments will also count toward the “participation” portion of your grade.

Response Papers: You will write TWO short response papers (3 FULL pages each) and will expand, revise, and polish ONE to turn in at the close of the semester (5 pages). Each response should have a thesis statement and should address a question or theme of interest to you, exploring how that question or theme is reflected in one text we discuss in class. Paper topics may grow out of in-class writing prompts. Assignment sheets for the response papers will follow.

Group Presentation: You will sign up to work with a group to research and present on the historical and cultural background of one text assigned for this class. Your group will help to lead the discussion of that text. Your presentation should include some visual representations of the culture described (illustrated manuscripts, art objects, clothing, architecture, etc.) We will sign up for presentations on the second day of class.

Final Exam: Held on Tuesday, December 15, 4:00-5:50. Exam will include some identifications, short answer questions, and essay questions.

Grading Breakdown by Assignment:

Participation / daily writing assignments / group work: 30%

Response papers: 20% (10% each)

Revised paper: 20%

Group presentation and discussion lead: 10%

Final exam: 20%

A = 94-100	A- = 90-93	B+ = 87-89	B = 84-86	B- = 80-83	C+ = 77-79
C = 74-76	C- = 70-73	D+ = 67-69	D = 64-66	F = 0-63	

Communication and Blackboard:

Any updates and notices (change of venue, change in assignment, instructor absence, etc.) will go out over email and will be posted on the Blackboard site. PLEASE CHECK EMAIL AND BLACKBOARD REGULARLY! I promise to make my best attempt to get this information to you as soon as possible.

Other Policies...

Respect: The classroom (this includes our online class space!) is a place of respect, civilized discussion, and open-mindedness. We will likely disagree with each other from time to time about

literary interpretations (among other things), but we will learn to do so respectfully and sensitively. Please be aware your tone online and in person.

Attendance: is expected. I will take attendance at the start of each class. Arriving more than 20 minutes late will be counted as an absence. ****EVERY** component of your grade draws upon the material we explore in class discussion and in lecture, so be here!****** If you miss class, it is **YOUR** responsibility to find out what content you missed, preferably by first asking your classmates. Any absences beyond three will result in a deduction of 3% from your final grade, *per day*. I do not distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences... if you run into a situation where you must miss multiple classes, talk to me.

Computers and cell phones: **You may use a laptop to take notes**, read the handouts posted on Blackboard, and find information relevant to our discussion. You may **NOT** use your laptop for Facebooking, watching cat videos, or otherwise wasting time or distracting yourself during class. If this becomes a problem, I will disallow laptops in class for everyone. **No cell phones out or open during class**. Lectures and class discussions **may not be** recorded in any fashion by students.

Late work: Assignments are due at the start of class on the due date OR when indicated on Blackboard. One letter grade will be lost for every calendar day that an assignment is late (i.e. if the paper is due on Monday the 1st and you turn it in Wednesday the 3rd, the grade will be reduced by 2 letters). Class activities and quizzes cannot be made up at a later date.

FERPA: Because of FERPA regulations, I cannot discuss your grade via phone or email. If you would like to discuss your academic standing and progress in this class, I am happy to meet with you during my office hours.

Plagiarism: IF YOU ARE CAUGHT PLAGIARIZING, you will face academic sanctions including possible failure of this course and a letter sent to the appropriate campus offices. We will discuss what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty in this course, but if you have any questions or uncertainty about the issue, PLEASE ASK ME. I’m happy to talk about it.

Students with Disabilities:

If you need academic accommodations because of a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact Disability Support Resources at 331-2490. Furthermore, if you have a physical disability and think you will need assistance evacuating this classroom and/or building in an emergency situation, please make me aware so I can develop a plan to assist you.

Course Schedule

****PLEASE REGARD THIS SCHEDULE AS SOMEWHAT FLUID. I may move some readings and assignments around or eliminate some if we fall behind, or due to weather****

T, Sept 1 -- Introductions and discussion

Th, Sept 3 -- *Gilgamesh* (handout) -- the walls of Uruk

T Sept 8 -- LABOR DAY RECESS

Th, Sept 10 -- *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, tablets 1-4 (pp. 33-58)

T, Sept 15 -- *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, tablets 5-9 (pp. 58-74)

Th, Sept 17 -- *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, tablets 10-11 (pp. 74-88)

T, 22 -- Poetry of Ancient and Medieval China (readings TBA)

Th, 24 -- Poetry of Ancient and Medieval China (readings TBA)

T, 29 -- *The Odyssey*, books 1, 5 (pp. 178-188; 230-242)

Th, Oct 1 -- *The Odyssey*, books 9-11 (pp. 271-302)

T, Oct 6 -- *The Odyssey*, books 12, 21-23 (pp. 312-322; 422-453)

Th, Oct 8 -- selections from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (pp. 649-664)

F, Oct 9 -- **FIRST RESPONSE PAPER DUE via Blackboard (noon)**

T, Oct 13 -- *The Shanameh* (pp. 960-963; 967-970; 976-985) (Group Presentation)

Th, Oct 15 -- *The Shanameh* (cont'd)

T, Oct 20 -- *Beowulf* (pp. 885-908) (Group Presentation)

Th, Oct 22 -- *Beowulf* (pp. 919-928)

T, Oct 27 -- *Beowulf* (pp. 940-960)

Th, Oct 29 -- *The Thousand and One Nights* (pp. 1173-1187) (Group Presentation)

F, Oct 30 -- DEADLINE TO WITHDRAW (5pm)

T, Nov 3 -- *The Thousand and One Nights* (pp. 1187-1197)

Th, Nov 5 -- **SECOND RESPONSE PAPER DUE on Blackboard at noon**; peer review in class (your choice of which paper to submit for review... bring three copies)

T, Nov 10 -- *Divine Comedy* (Group Presentation)

Th, Nov 12 -- *Divine Comedy*

T, Nov 17 -- *Divine Comedy*

Th, Nov 19 -- *Divine Comedy*

T, Nov 24 -- *Ramayana*, intro and books 2, 3 (pp. 686-718) (Group Presentation)

W, 25 -- THANKSGIVING RECESS BEGINS at NOON; no class

T, Dec 1 -- *Ramayana*, book 6 (pp. 719-726)

Th, Dec 3 -- *Popol Vuh* (pp. 1905-1920)

T, Dec 8 -- Catch-up day. **FINAL, EXPANDED RESPONSE PAPER DUE** via Bb at noon.

Th, 10 -- Final Thoughts and Evaluations

FINAL EXAM: December 15, 4-5:50