

ENGL 2332.11: World Literature I: Before the 17th Century
Fall 2017, Three Credit Hours

Meeting Days/Times: MWF 12:00-12:50
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Course Description:

ENGL 2332 focuses on readings from around the globe before the 17th century to analyze and evaluate the philosophical insights and aesthetic values of writers of various cultures. Written assignments are based on themes and concepts in the works studied. This course will explore world cultures through the study of world religions.

Course-Level Aims and Outcomes:

ENGL 2332 has the following set of course-specific objectives:

Component Area IV: Language, Philosophy, Culture:

Reading works of literature from ancient, classical, medieval, and Renaissance authors, students in ENGL 2332 (World Literature I: Before the 17th Century), become familiar with the ideas, beliefs, and creative productions of cultures from antiquity through the 17th century. Students in the class are encouraged to recognize not only the differences between these cultures and their own but also the similarities. Because the course requires a substantial amount of reading, discussion, and writing about literature and culture, students improve their critical skills: analysis, evaluation, synthesis of materials, and argumentation. They become familiar with the critical approaches and idiom appropriate to the study of literature and are expected to use those approaches and vocabulary in making arguments about the works.

Critical Thinking Skills:

In reading and writing about ancient, classical, medieval, and Renaissance literature, students will pose critical questions about the works such as the following: How does a work reflect conditions in its culture? What values are supported or challenged by the work? Do such values differ from or align with values in today's world? How does the work create a sense of unity and completeness? In addressing questions like these, the students will analyze components such as plot, setting, character, and style; evaluate these features as they establish and reinforce

important themes; and synthesize and defend their conclusions about them in discussions and writing about the texts. In their critical arguments, the students will be required to provide specific textual evidence to support their generalizations. Although the students will be developing their critical reading and writing skills in the specific study of literature, they will be encouraged to apply these skills to issues beyond the study of literature in their own lives.

Communication Skills:

The course requires not only that students develop their critical reading and writing abilities but also that they articulate their critical conclusions in writing and oral presentations; class presentations may also include such visual media as handouts, power points, and art work appropriate to the discussion. To establish credibility in communicating their arguments about the literature, students will be required to use the critical approaches and vocabulary that they acquire in the course. Although the students will be developing communication skills in the specific study of literature, they will be encouraged to apply the principles of communication that they develop in this class—clarity, organization, and the use of language appropriate to their audiences—beyond the study of literature to rhetorical situations in their own lives.

Personal Responsibility:

Students will read works from ancient, classical, medieval, and Renaissance cultures. But they should realize that the experiences that the authors write about are not so very different than their own: Although the fantastic heroes from epics and romances, the tragic and comic characters from the drama, and the personae of lyric poems have fictional, sometimes fantastic experiences, they invariably face dilemmas, moral decisions, risks, and challenges common to the students themselves in the modern world. In discussions and writing assignments, students will be asked to consider the choices, actions, consequences, and ethics of the decisions that the characters make. They will be encouraged then to apply the lessons of the literature to decisions in their own lives, with the aim of making them more responsible, critically skeptical, and independent. On the practical level, students will be held responsible for attending class, completing assignments on time, and fulfilling all of the course requirements laid out contractually in the course syllabus.

Social Responsibility:

Literature from antiquity to the Renaissance features social topics such as justice, civic order, the rights of different peoples, man's relationship with the environment, and the relationship of individuals and communities. In reading works from the earlier cultures, students will recognize the diversity of opinion and approaches to such issues. Because one of the primary objectives of the course is to foster an appreciation for the values of cultures beyond their own, the students will be encouraged to consider themselves as citizens of both local and global communities and to understand the importance of engaging social issues and taking civic responsibility in both communities. This understanding will be addressed in class discussions and writing assignments;

instructors may also require team projects in which students work together toward a common presentation goal.

Unit-Level Aims and Outcomes

Each unit in this course is structured around a series of readings and other media designed to increase familiarity with a major world religion and its culture. Accordingly, each unit will reinforce a consistent set of aims and outcomes. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Identify core beliefs and practices of major world religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- Interpret sacred texts from each tradition and identify major themes within sacred texts.
- Compare and contrast the religious traditions covered in the class in terms of beliefs, practices, and the major themes in each religion's sacred texts.
- Formulate his or her own understanding of the relevance of religion and religious literature to society.
- Express his or her understanding of course material coherently in writing, in the form of discussion posts and expository essays.

Textbooks:

Puchner, *Norton Anthology of World Literature*, Shorter 3rd Edition. ISBN: 978-0-393-91960-8

The Bhagavad Gita. ISBN: 9780199538126

The Upanisads. ISBN: 9780199540259

The Bodhicaryavatara. ISBN: 9780199540433

The Dhammapada. ISBN: 9780199540259

The Qur'an. ISBN: 9780192831934

Grading Plan:

This course will evaluate your progress toward our main objectives through a series of focused discussions and formal essays. The weighting of each of these elements is as follows:

Reading Quizzes: 20%

Essay One: 20%

Essay Two: 20%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

According to department policy, no extra credit is offered.

Grading Scale:

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

F: 0-59

Explanation of Assignments:

Reading Quizzes:

Reading quizzes will test your reading comprehension through a series of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. These quizzes will demand thorough and deliberate reading. I encourage you to take careful reading notes and to review them before class.

Essays:

You will be asked to write two short essays. Each will focus on a single sacred text and will reflect on its major themes through a close reading of key passages. Prompts for each essay will be circulated one week prior to each essay's due date. The minimum length for short essays is 750 words.

Essays will be due via Blackboard's Safe Assign submission system and will not be accepted via any other means. Please be advised that the submission box will close promptly at 5 PM CDT on the date the paper is due. Late essays will not be accepted.

Exams:

Your midterm and final exam will ask you to compare and contrast the treatment of a single theme across multiple texts through a combination of close readings of individual texts and global analyses.

Please note that all formal written work must be typed and formatted according to MLA guidelines. All papers must be in black, 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Papers that do not meet the length requirement and/or formatting guidelines will be penalized one letter grade.

Class Policies:

Submission of Work & Late Work:

All major assignments must be submitted via the appropriate application following the appropriate protocols by the stipulated due date. Work may not be submitted by any other means.

Late work will not be accepted.

Exceptions will be made only in the cases of university-sponsored events, documented religious observances, and documented disabilities that require specific modifications to major assignments. Students in these categories must provide me with appropriate documentation at the beginning of the term if accommodations are to be made.

Email Protocols:

I do not correspond via email about academic performance, attendance, or matters communicated clearly via the syllabus and course announcements. For inquiries of general interest to the class, please use the Virtual Office. For queries of a personal or private nature, please schedule a meeting via the following link calendly.com/dr-jmpayton.

University Policies:

[Academic Honesty](#)

[Students with Disabilities](#)

[Religious Holy Days](#)

[Academic Grievance Procedures](#)

Visitors in the Classroom: Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis. These must be cleared with me in advance. Visitors must not distract or disrupt the class.

Instructor Evaluations:

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

Course Schedule:

Please note that our daily schedule is subject to change. Changes to the reading schedule will be made in class. Changes to major assignments will be made in class and announced via Blackboard announcements.

Important Dates: September 8th is the last day to drop a course without receiving a “Q” and is the last day to be eligible to receive a full refund. November 10th is the last day to drop a course with a “Q.”

Week One:

8.23: Course introduction.

8.25: Student introductions.

Week Two:

8.28: Hinduism: An Introduction.

8.30: Bhagavad Gita, Chapters 1-9.

9.1: Bhagavad Gita, Chapters 10-18.

Week Three:

9.4: Labor Day—No Class.

9.6: Upanishads: Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

9.8: Upanishads: Isa Upanishad.

Week Four:

9.11: Buddhism: An Introduction.

9.13: Bodhicaryavatara, Chapters 1-5.

9.15: Bodhicaryavatara, Chapters 6-10. **Essay One Due.**

Week Five:

9.18: Dhammapada, Chapters I-XIII.

9.20: Dhammapada, Chapters XIV-XXVI.

9.22: Select koans (TBA).

Week Six:

9.25: Daoism & Confucianism: An Introduction.

9.27: Daodejing (NAWL 782-790).

9.29: *Analects* (NAWL 771-780).

Week Seven:

10.2: Discussion.

10.4: Exam review.

10.6: **Midterm Exam.**

Week Eight:

10.9: Judaism: An Introduction.

10.11: Genesis 1-4, 6-9.

10.13: Genesis 11-12, 17-18, 21-22.

Week Nine:

10.16: Job 1-21.
10.18: Job 22-42.
10.20: Proverbs 1-15.

Week Ten:

10.23: Christianity: An Introduction.
10.25: Gospel Introductions (Selections TBA).
10.27: Matthew 5-7; Matthew 13, Luke 15.

Week Eleven:

10.30: Romans 1-8.
11.1: Romans 9-16.
11.3: Colossians 1-4. **Essay Two Due.**

Week Twelve:

11.6: Islam: An Introduction.
11.8: Qur'an, Surahs 1-2.
11.10: Qur'an, Surahs 55-56

Week Thirteen:

11.13: Qur'an, Surahs 109, 112.
11.15: Hadith, Selections (TBA).
11.17: Sunna, Selections (TBA).

Week Fourteen:

11.20: Flex period.
11.22: Thanksgiving Break—No Class.
11.24: Thanksgiving Break—No Class.

Week Fifteen

11.27: Discussion.
11.29: Exam overview.
12.1: Last Day of Classes. Course Evaluations.

Week Sixteen: Final Exams (Date TBA).

