

BUTTE COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

ENGL 52H - Honors Great Works of Literature

3 Unit(s)

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 2 or concurrent enrollment and Admission to the Honors Program

Recommended Prep: NONE

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

51 hours Lecture

This course is an Honors level introduction to some of the world's great novels, poetry, drama, and essays, including some of the oldest texts of our past. The primary focus will be on analyzing complete works from a variety of genres, eras, and countries. We will place the texts into context, ascertain what they say to the reader, and identify the tools the authors use to convey their message. Brief works of literary criticism will provide the basis for a wide range of critical approaches such as social, historical, mythological, gender, psychological, cultural, etc. Graded only.

II. OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Analyze and critically think about texts, placing them in their historical, social, and cultural context.
- B. Identify and apply critical approaches and concepts that will be useful for ascertaining what the texts say to the readers and the devices they use to say it.
- C. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in seminar discussions.
- D. Demonstrate advanced writing skills and critical creative thinking in composing a minimum of 5,000 words in analytical papers and reading responses.
- E. Generate creative, original responses to course material.
- F. Evaluate the continuity of themes and ideas in the works, determining whether similar themes appear in works from various eras, countries, and cultures.

III. COURSE CONTENT

A. Unit Titles/Suggested Time Schedule

Lecture	
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Hours</u>
1. Great Eastern and Western Teachers	6.00
A. Teachers and Narrators of the past.	
B. The enduring influence of texts written by pupils and followers.	
C. First literary texts of the East and the West.	
D. The literary legacies of East and West.	
2. Greek Prose and Drama	8.00
A. The birth of democracy and its influence in the creation of our modern states. The characteristics and importance of Western thinking.	
B. The birth and importance of drama. Drama for catharsis, social and cultural cohesiveness, and education for civic life.	
C. Greek understanding of human nature. The Greek legacy in psychology. Mythology as a reflection of the hidden guilt of a culture. Greek influence in judicial institutions and principles.	

3. Humanism in the World	7.00
A. Classical letters, individualistic and critical ethos, the value of inquiry.	
B. Italian influence on the production of literature and literary criticism. The universal use of Latin as the language of diffusion. The invention of movable type.	
C. Aristotle, Horace and the production of vernacular literature imitating the classics.	
D. The apex of the Christian world view in the West, and the turn from a God-centered literature to one focused on humanity.	
4. Material Progress, The Rise of the Middle Class, and Literature	10.00
A. Material Progress and its Discontents. Interest in human rights.	
B. Romantic idealism and its flaws. Enthusiasm for the wild and the grotesque. Poetic tributes to nature and human sensibility. Poetry as world-building.	
C. The oblique presentation of the plight of women, both married and single	
D. Money, social class, self-knowledge, and identity.	
E. The importance and popularity of the novel. Imaginative truth. The study of self. Reading as a means to growth and as escape.	
F. Darwin's evolution and the importance of substantiated cognition.	
5. Cultural Hybridity	10.00
A. Geography, climate, and the shaping of human character.	
B. Vestiges of the oral tradition in some racially and culturally hybrid settings.	
C. Post-colonialism and hybridity. From Colonial experience to the complex pleasures of multiple cultural ideas and alliances.	
D. Vibrancy and decay under the torrid sun.	
E. The seductive and deconstructive power of Caribbean Spanish.	
6. The Novel Today	10.00
A. Answering immutable human questions in a fast-paced technological world.	
B. The mind: logical, scrutinizing, innovating, and lyrical, but obtuse and delusional, incapable of heeding our ineradicable interdependence on one another and on the natural world. The continuous power of the vestigial brain stem.	
C. Ethics, reason, modern consciousness, and human survival.	
D. The improvised and divided human self.	
E. The dilemmas, temptations, and responsibility of freedom in modern societies.	
F. The intricacies and challenges of gender and desire in today's societies.	
Total Hours	51.00

IV. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

- A. Lecture
- B. Group Discussions
- C. Guest Speakers
- D. Collaborative Group Work
- E. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- F. Discussion
- G. Reading Assignments

H. Multimedia Presentations

V. METHODS OF EVALUATION

- A. Oral Presentation
- B. Homework
- C. Class participation
- D. Final Examination
- E. Essays and research papers
- F. Class Discussion

VI. EXAMPLES OF ASSIGNMENTS

A. Reading Assignments

1. Read Garcia Marquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera* and take into consideration what Thomas Pynchon says about Marquez's writing being at once "classical and familiar, opalescent and pure, able to praise and curse, laugh and cry, fabulate and sing and when called upon, take off and soar, as in his description of a turn-of-the-century balloon trip." Come to class prepared to answer the following questions: What literary devices does Garcia Marquez use to achieve these effects Pynchon points out? How are these writing qualities likely to impact readers here and in other countries?
2. Read Aeschylus's *The Eumenides* and identify the steps Athena follows to attain the aim of convincing all concerned, particularly the Furies, of the merits of renouncing revenge as a corrective in society. Come to class prepared to discuss Athena's main points and rhetorical devices.

B. Writing Assignments

1. In a well-documented and properly structured essay of 6 to 8 pages, analyze one of the characters in Jonathan Franzen's *Freedom*, such as Joey Berglund or his mother Patty, and determine to what extent he/she serves as an example of the dilemmas and responsibilities of freedom in modern society.
2. In a formal and well-documented essay of 4 to 6 pages, analyze one or two specific passages from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and connect the analysis of the details to the theme(s) of the work. Assess the importance of the details to the theme you have identified, and demonstrate the way Shelley makes these specific points contribute to the general effect of her masterpiece.

C. Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Choose one or two of the assigned authors, and research specific circumstances of their lives and time that might have influenced their literary productions. Select the most relevant data to further inform and develop your analyses of the authors and their texts. Prepare a short presentation on your findings.
2. Select two or more of the assigned literary works and research their historical and cultural contexts, using the information to deepen your analyses of those works and to expand your knowledge of the historical period. Be prepared to offer the results of your inquiry in class participation.

VII. RECOMMENDED MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION

Textbooks:

- A. Donna Tartt. *The Little Friend*. Vintage, 2002.
- B. Jhumpa Lahiri. *Unaccustomed Earth*. Vintage, 2009.
- C. Confucius. *The Analects*. Penguin, 2012.
- D. Garcia Marquez, Gabriel. *Love in the Time of Cholera*. Vintage, 1988.
- E. Eugenides, Jeffrey. *Middlesex*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2012.
- F. Powers, Richard. *The Echo Maker*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2012.
- G. Franzen, Jonathan. *Freedom*. Picador, 2012.

H. Aeschylus. The Oresteia. Penguin, 1988.

I. Shelly, Mary. Frankenstein. Penguin, 1985.

Materials Other Than Textbooks:

A. Films such as The Namesake, Water, The House of the Spirits, Pride and Prejudice, Frankenstein, Mrs. Dalloway, Persuasion.

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