

# Interpreting Literature: Poetry, Fiction, Drama

Loyola University Chicago, Spring 2020

## COURSE INFORMATION

Course number: ENGL 100E-023

Meeting time: TuTh 2:30PM–3:45PM

Location: Mundelein Center - Room 408 until 10 March. Thereafter on-line via Zoom.

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Ian Cornelius

Office location: Crown Center - Room 411

Office hours: TuTh 10:00AM–12:00PM and by appointment

E-mail: [icornelius@luc.edu](mailto:icornelius@luc.edu)

Pronouns: he, him, his

## TEXTS

The following text is required for this course and available for purchase at the Loyola University Chicago Lakeshore Campus Bookstore:

Puchner, Martin, and others, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature (Shorter Fourth Edition)*, Vol. 1. New York: W. W. Norton, 2019. Print.

Additional readings will be posted on Sakai.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

This course is an introduction to literature and literary studies. We read poetry, drama, and prose fiction from a diverse range of social and historical contexts, and we develop skills, concepts, and strategies for responding to and interpreting this literature. As students in this

class, you will learn how to pay attention to literary texts and how to assess interpretations of them (what should an interpretation do?). We explore the nature of doubt, certainty, and belief, the experiences of discovering, wanting, or opposing something, and relations between self and community. Texts include Homer's *Odyssey*, Sophocles's *Oedipus the King*, *Beowulf*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

This course satisfies the first tier of Loyola University's core Knowledge Area requirement in "Literary Knowledge." Each student should develop expertise in thinking and writing about the following two areas:

- **Literature as art:** To say that literature is "art" is to say that literature is the product of specialized and purposeful techniques. What are these techniques and what purposes do they intend? As a student in this course, you will explore the techniques employed in several types of literature – poetry, drama, and prose fiction – and develop strategies for responding to the skillful and purposive dimensions of literary art.
- **Literature and culture:** To pair literature with "culture" is to underline the cultural specificity of literary art. Techniques and purposes of literature vary from one culture or historical period to another. As a student in this course, you will explore how cultural contexts and identities shape the creation of literature and interpretations of it.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings are from *The Norton Anthology of World Literature (Shorter Fourth Edition)* unless noted otherwise. If there is a need to revise this course schedule, I will announce the change and post the revision on Sakai. The official LUC academic calendar is available here: [www.luc.edu/academics/schedules](http://www.luc.edu/academics/schedules).

date	topic	assignment
Tu 1/14	Introduction	none
.....	POETRY .....	.....
Th 1/16	Homer, <i>Odyssey</i>	book 1; read the syllabus
Tu 1/21	"	books 5–8; forum post (A) and reply (B)
Th 1/23	"	books 9–12
Tu 1/28	"	books 16, 17, 19, 21; forum post (B) and reply (A)
Th 1/30	"	books 22–24; <b>first paper due</b>
Tu 2/4	<i>Beowulf</i>	lines 1–2199; forum (A; B)
Th 2/6	"	lines 2200–end
Tu 2/11	Chaucer, <i>Canterbury Tales</i>	General Prologue; forum (B; A)
Th 2/13	library research; "	Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale
Tu 2/18	"	Selections in Middle English (pdf); forum (A; B)

date	topic	assignment
.....	DRAMA .....	.....
Th 2/20	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i>	read all
Tu 2/25	"	read all; forum (B; A)
Th 2/27	<b>midterm exam</b>	study, study, study
3/2–3/6	<b>spring break</b>	
Tu 3/10	Euripides, <i>Medea</i>	read all
Th 3/12	class canceled	
Tu 3/17	Euripides, <i>Medea</i>	
Th 3/19	"	
Tu 3/24	Shakespeare, <i>Hamlet</i>	Act I; forum post (group B) and reply (group A)
Th 3/26	"	Act II; forum post (group A) and reply (group B)
Tu 3/31	"	Act III; forum (B; A)
Th 4/2	"	Act IV
Tu 4/7	"	Act V; forum (A; B)
.....	PROSE NARRATIVE .....	.....
Th 4/9	Cervantes, <i>Don Quixote</i>	pp. 1540–1600; <b>2nd paper due Fri 4/10</b>
Tu 4/14	"	pp. 1600–42; forum (B; A)
Th 4/16	"	pp. 1642–93
Tu 4/21	"	tba; forum (A; B)
Th 4/23	review	tba; <b>forum portfolio due</b>
Sat 5/2	<b>Final exam,</b> <b>4:15PM–6:15PM</b>	study, study, study

Students must take the final exam on the date set by the university.

## ASSIGNMENTS

### attendance, participation, and quizzes

Each class session is an exercise in literary reading. To meet course objectives, you must attend class and be prepared to engage in discussion. Arrange your schedule to be present for the entire session. If you must miss a class for any reason, or if you must arrive late or leave early, inform me in advance by email.

Periodic unannounced quizzes allow me to check that you are keeping up with course reading and understand key points from class discussion.

## **the on-line forum**

At the beginning of the semester I will divide the class into two groups, A and B. On alternating weeks, students in A and B groups will post to the forum and respond to a classmate's post. Each student will be responsible for six original posts and six responses, as shown on the course schedule.

Posts and responses are due by noon on Tuesdays. The purpose of this forum is to test out ideas before an audience of your peers, informally but in writing. I encourage you to use forum posts and responses as a springboard for contributions to our class discussion.

Except for those weeks in which I provide more specific instructions, each post should have the following basic format:

1. identify a topic of interest to you in a recent reading;
2. introduce a quotation relevant to your topic; and
3. discuss the passage you have quoted, elaborating its significance and relation to your topic.

It is not necessary to conform exactly to the formula I have just outlined, but each post should include at least one quotation and say something interesting about that quotation. Your weekly post may grow out of class discussion, or address something we did not discuss in class. Aim for about 150 words and write something that you would want to respond to.

Responses may be shorter than original posts, but they should be substantive. Offer another perspective on the passage quoted by your classmate or extend the idea by connecting it to a different passage in the text.

At the end of the semester I will ask you to collect your four favorite forum posts, edit them for grammar and style, and add a short introductory cover letter. This portfolio will be graded separately.

## **class presentation and annotated bibliographies**

Each student will make a brief presentation to the class, on a literary work or author included in our textbook but not on this syllabus. Presentations should be supported by slides and outside research. On the day of your presentation you will submit presentation slides and an annotated bibliography via Sakai. Aim to speak for 5–8 minutes. Usually a presentation will be followed by class discussion; the best presentations invite thoughtful response from your peers. Further details and instructions are posted to the “Assignments” tab on Sakai.

## **papers**

There are two short papers. These are exercises in formal expository writing and interpretative argument. I will circulate prompts at least one week before the due dates listed on the

syllabus. The first paper should be one page in length; the second should be two or three pages in length.

Papers should be double-spaced in a common 12-point font such as Times New Roman. Printed copies are due at the beginning of class. An identical electronic copy should be uploaded to Sakai in Microsoft Word or PDF format.

Students are encouraged to talk with me in office hours about their ideas and writing process, and encouraged to seek help from the writing center. To make an appointment at the writing center, visit this page: [www.luc.edu/writing](http://www.luc.edu/writing).

If illness or another event in your life prevents you from completing an assignment on time, you must alert me promptly by email. Do not wait for me to contact you. I will usually accommodate late work, provided that you have a legitimate reason for requesting an extension. Unexcused late work will be marked down.

## **exams**

There will be a midterm and final exam. These test your knowledge and understanding of course materials and skill as a reader and interpreter of literature. The midterm exam will ask you to identify and discuss passages. The final exam will include an essay.

# **GRADING**

## **grade schema**

This course employs the ‘quintile system’, as follows:

letter grade	minimum percentage
A	86.6
A-	80
B+	73.3
B	66.6
B-	60
C+	53.3
C	46.6
C-	40
D+	33.3
D	20
F	0

## grade components

course component	points
participation	30
on-line forum	30
first paper	20
second paper	40
class presentation	30
portfolio of forum posts	30
quizzes	30
midterm exam	30
final exam	60

## grading standards for papers and exams

**A** Full understanding and command of course material; perceptive and innovative interpretation of literature. Writing is persuasive, with a precisely articulated argument, correct and effective presentation of evidence, effective organization, and near flawless grammatical presentation.

**A-** As above but with minor lapses in one or a few areas.

**B** Good understanding and command of course material; solid literary interpretation and argument. Writing has few flaws in organization and grammar. **Alternatively**, work shows commendable originality and very good understanding of course material, but with lapses in organization and grammar.

**C** Basic understanding of the course material. Ineffective use of textual evidence. Errors in logic, organization or grammar impair the intelligibility or persuasiveness of the argument.

**D** Minimum credit. Lacks understanding of course material or initiative in literary interpretation. Writing has persistent lapses in coherence, evidentiary support, organization and/or grammar.

**F** Does not adequately address assignment or course objectives.

## POLICIES

### course materials

Every student must acquire physical copies of the textbook and bring it to class. Write in your books: this improves memory, comprehension, and your ability to participate in class discussion. Your notes will also be a valuable resource in preparation for essays and exams.

Readings distributed via Sakai as pdfs should be printed. Course materials distributed via Sakai should not be shared outside this course without the instructor's written permission.

## **academic integrity**

Loyola University Chicago takes seriously the issues of plagiarism and academic integrity. Plagiarizing a paper will result in a grade of "zero" for that exam/paper, and the incident will be reported to your dean. If you are uncertain what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the university guidelines on this issue. If you are still uncertain, please ask me. Below is an excerpt from the English Department's statement:

"The English Department wishes to make it clear here that no distinctions should be made between the following acts and that all should be regarded as serious and wrong:

- Copying from a published or on-line source, or a source in any medium, without proper documentation
- Purchasing a pre-written paper
- Letting someone else write a paper for you or paying someone to do so
- Submitting as your own someone else's unpublished work, either with or without permission"

The full statement is available here (follow the link to "the use and misuse of sources," under "Helpful resources"): <http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml>

Additional information here:

[http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml)

## **communication**

Learning to respect the rights and opinions of others is an important part of education. Students in this course will refrain from profanity and insults and allow classmates to voice their views without fear of ridicule.

Students are always welcome to speak with me during my regular office hours. Outside of office hours email is the best way to reach me. I make every effort to respond to email messages within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends. I ask that you also respond promptly to any messages I may send.

An additional note on names and gender pronouns: using appropriate names and gender pronouns honors and affirms individuals of all gender identities and gender expressions. Misgendering and heteronormative language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Therefore, during our first class, as we introduce ourselves, you may choose to share your name and gender pronouns. If you do not wish to be called by the name listed on the roster, please inform the class. If you prefer to introduce yourself by name only,

without pronouns, that is also completely fine. The goal is to create an affirming environment for all students.

## **accommodations and assistance**

Please contact me early in the semester if you have a documented disability that will require special accommodations in this course. I will make every effort to make accommodations as directed by the Student Accessibility Center (<http://www.luc.edu/sac/>). Additional assistance is available from the following campus offices:

Coordinated Assistance & Resource Education (CARE)  
<http://www.luc.edu/dos/services/coordinatedassistanceresourceeducationcare/>  
773.508.8840

Ethics Hotline  
<http://luc.edu/sglc/aboutus/>  
855.603.6988

Wellness Center  
<http://www.luc.edu/wellness/>  
773.508.2530

## **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

By remaining in this course, students agree to accept this syllabus and abide by the guidelines outlined in it. Students will be consulted should there be a necessary change to the syllabus.

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version 2.2 (COVID accommodations), published 21 March 2020