

MYSP 2016
Comparative World Literature
Course Syllabus

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Introduction:

Critical reading and analysis are important skills for students to have when entering college and even the work force. The world literature course will offer students the ability to further these skills while reading texts from various parts of the world. The texts used in the course will be analyzed based on their historical context and time period it was written in. The course will use *Candide* by Voltaire, *The Overcoat* by Nikolai Gogol, *Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* by Jorge Borges. Each of these texts offer a unique and profound perspective on history and human nature and have all had immense influence on readers during the time periods it was published in. In addition to reading and analyzing these texts, students will learn about the Enlightenment, Romanticism, and the Surrealism movement and understand how these texts fit into these time periods. By comparing the themes and techniques used by the authors, students will learn to understand the purpose of the text and the underlying meanings.

Course Objectives:

- The course will provide students with strategies to read critically and analyze passages.
- Students will learn about various intellectual and art movements in history that have influenced much of world literature.
- The course will allow students to make relevant connections and understand the context of the texts.
- Analyze language, style, and technique through close reading.
- Write a well-organized argument with evidence from the texts.
- To encourage students' interest in literature and language and close reading in texts outside of the course.

Class Structure:

The classroom will be a positive and fun environment for students to learn about world literature and further their analytical skills. I plan use PowerPoint presentations to teach about the different periods as well as provide context for the texts. Copies of the texts will be handed out to students to read and be used in close readings and discussions.

Active listening and participation is expected of students during class discussions and critical reading activities. I will ask questions that students will answer based on their own interpretations of the literary works. Group activities will be common as well where students will discuss their findings in small groups and interact with each other. To further the students' command of terminology and concepts, students will engage in short writing assignments based on the texts in the class.

Final Project:

For the final project for this seminar, students will have to recreate and perform a short play based on either *Candide* by Voltaire or *The Overcoat* by Gogol. Each of these texts have been converted into plays before and the students can decide on their own scenes to act out for the audience. Through the play the students will demonstrate their understanding of the themes present in the text and will have to portray the unique characters in the text through dialogue, movements, and tone.

Tentative Schedule:

Day 1: Introductions

The Enlightenment (1715-1789)

-Key Elements

Background on Voltaire

Voltaire's *Candide* or *Optimism*- Part 1

-Adam and Eve

-Lisbon Earthquake

-Catholic Inquisition

Day 2: Voltaire's *Candide*- Part 2

-What *Candide* critiques

Thesis Statements: Writing one based on *Candide*

Romanticism (1800-1830)

-Key Elements

Day 3: Background on Gogol

Gogol's *The Overcoat*

-Personification

-Critique of institutions

-Freudian and Marxist Interpretations

Close Reading

-Literary techniques

- Quotations
- Language

Day 4: Manifestos- Dadaism, Futurism, Surrealism

- Artworks

Background on Borges

Borges' *Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*

- Historical accuracy
- Knowledge

Close Reading

Day 5: Close Reading

All Texts

Final Project

- Choosing story and scenes

Day 6: Final Project

- Finalizing everything