

ENG 1800: Masterpieces of World Literature, Fall 2018
Oakland University
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of English

Doctor Jennifer Gower-Toms
Section 008, 41312 , 4 credits
T, 6:30-9:50pm
167 South Foundation Hall
Office Hours: T,TH, 10:00am-noon and by appointment
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University Course Description: A survey acquainting the student with some of the great literature of the world. Satisfies the university general education requirement in the literature knowledge exploration area.

Prerequisites: None

General Education Learning Outcomes:

- Further development of critical thinking skills through detailed literary analysis (close-reading)
- Knowledge of literary form

Cross-Cutting Capacities: Critical thinking and cultural analysis are crucial both within and outside the classroom. Further development of critical thinking skills through detailed literary analysis allows you to apply these critical thinking skills across several disciplines.

My Course Description:

What constitutes a “masterpiece of world literature”? What are the characteristics of a masterpiece, and who decides upon this criteria? These are among the questions we will tackle in this course. We will study authors from varying cultures and perspectives writing in differing genres (poetry, the short story, the essay, drama, the novel, film and the graphic novel). We will learn to “close-read” (or critically analyze) the literary and cinematic text to discover its relationship to the culture that produced it. We will consider not just the work’s meaning, but how the work produces that meaning in the reader.

Registrar’s Important Dates: <https://www.oakland.edu/registrar/important-dates/#tab-2>

Required texts:

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* ISBN: 9780486404295

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* ISBN: 9780375714573

Dave Eggers, *The Circle* ISBN: 9780345807298

*All other required reading, like the poems, short stories and essays, are posted on Moodle.

*Please print out the materials posted to Moodle and bring these copies to class.

Course Breakdown:

Weekly close-reading assignments: 10%

In-class assignments: 10%

Paper one: 10%

Midterm exam: 20%

Paper two: 15%

Final exam: 20%

Participation: 15%

Letter Grading System (implemented Fall 2018):

A = 4.0 C+ = 2.3 F = 0.0

A- = 3.7 C = 2.0

B+ = 3.3 C- = 1.7

B = 3.0 D+ = 1.3

B- = 2.7 D = 1.0

Course Assignments:

- Close-reading assignments: Each week, you will submit via Moodle a writing assignment about one of our weekly texts. This is called a close-reading assignment because you will be asked to carefully and minutely analyze the author's language choices and form. You will choose a portion of the assigned reading and provide a detailed analysis of at least two substantial paragraphs in length. Your close-reading assignments must be submitted by *11:55pm on Monday night*. The purpose of this assignment is to allow you to practice the most important skill necessary to succeeding in this course. It also gives you the opportunity to hone your close-reading skills before tackling major assignments, like exams and papers, which will ask you to demonstrate your ability to close-read a text. Finally, these weekly assignments will provide you with discussion material and therefore help you to earn participation points. Close-readings will not be assigned on the weeks in which papers are due or during the week of exams. Be sure to follow the due dates for close-reading assignments on Moodle.
- Papers: My paper assignments will ask you to posit and develop a specific interpretation of one of our texts. You will gather textual evidence—quotes from the work—to support your interpretation. You'll use your close-reading skills to analyze this evidence and link it to your thesis, or interpretation, to compose a critical analysis of the piece. Professional writing skills

and critical analysis are required in every field. I will provide comments that will help to improve your compositional as well as analytical skills. Papers will be submitted in hard copy form at the beginning of class.

- Exams: Both your midterm and final exams will have the same make-up: definitions, passages and an essay. The definition questions will ask you to explain literary terms and important historical events, movements or phenomenon that impacted the production of a specific text. For the passages section, you will be given a series of lines that you will identify from our list of works. You will then answer a number of prompt questions asking you to consider the passage's significance from a specific angle. Finally, the essay requires that you write a carefully-considered answer to a prompt that speaks to a text or texts' major themes and cultural context discussed in lecture.
- Participation: Please note going into the semester that participation is 15% of your final grade. There are a number of ways to earn participation points. The first is to offer up observations, comments or questions during class. Meeting me during my office hours to discuss our texts, to pose questions or to help prepare for papers and exams is also a form of participation. You may also improve your participation grade by asking questions or sharing observations via email. On the other hand, you will lose participation points by using your cell phone in class or otherwise failing to adhere to the course policies detailed below. Importantly—and please make a note of this—your participation grade is affected by your number of absences over the course of the semester.

Course Policies:

- Expectations: I expect you to come to each class prepared and with questions to pose or observations to share. Literary analysis is an on-going, collaborative and active process requiring our participation, discussion and close attention to detail. In other words, I expect you to be active readers and students. I expect you to be courteous of others and myself and to adhere to the course policies explained below. Finally, I expect you to be attentive during class.
- Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. If you miss class sessions, you will miss important information and discussion. Also, we will spend a substantial portion of our class periods working on literary analysis and participating in in-class work. Your participation grade will depend upon your active involvement in these activities and your everyday engagement in class discussion. As explained above, your participation grade will suffer significantly if you accrue an excessive number of absences. If you are late to class and miss attendance, it is your responsibility to see me after class to be marked present.
- Class conduct: Please arrive to class on time and stay for the entire class period. Late arrivals and early departures interrupt class discussions and are thus inconsiderate to your classmates and to myself as your instructor. Disruptive or inconsiderate classroom behavior will not be tolerated; students behaving inappropriately will be asked to leave. If you sleep in class, you will be asked to leave and you will be marked absent for the day.
- Technology: Cell phone usage is not permitted in class; this includes text messaging. Inappropriate laptop usage will negatively affect your grade because a lack of attention to class discussion, activities and course material will result in a less than satisfactory performance in the

course. Therefore, please use your laptop for note-taking and appropriate research only. Do not wear headphones during class.

- Late work: You will lose .4 points per day for late assignments. If you submit a 4.0 assignment one day late, this grade will immediately drop to a 3.6. Likewise, an assignment that would have earned a 3.6, had it been turned in on time, would drop to a 2.8 if it were two days late. Papers must be turned in at the beginning of class; you will lose points if assignments are not turned in or submitted at the appropriate time.

- Academic Misconduct / Plagiarism: According to "Student Code of Conduct", "all members of the academic community at Oakland University are expected to practice and uphold standards of academic integrity. Academic integrity means representing oneself and one's work honestly. Misrepresentation is cheating since it means the student is claiming credit for ideas or work not actually his or her own and is thereby seeking a grade that is not actually earned. All academic misconduct allegations are forwarded to the Dean of Students Office and adhere to the student judicial system". *In the event that I discover plagiarized material in your work, I must report this infraction to the Dean of Students office.* Please review the university's policies on academic dishonesty at <<https://oakland.edu/deanofstudents/policies/>> so that you are aware of the consequences of this most serious academic crime. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, it is imperative that you come talk to me before submitting your work. Once your work has been submitted, you cannot turn in a second draft and your materials will be judged by the academic standards determined by our university.

- Email and office hours: I encourage you to visit my office if you have questions or concerns about the course. If you are unable to attend my posted office hours because of scheduling conflicts, I should be able to schedule a meeting outside my regularly scheduled times. You can also email me with specific questions and comments. Discussions about our assignments and exams are much more effective when these conversations take place during office hours. I may not be able to respond to your email the day you send it, so do not expect an immediate response. I do not check my email after 8:00pm.

- Moodle Help: Walk in appointments are available from weekdays 8:00am to 5:00pm at 430 Kresge Library. To ensure that someone will be available for help, please make an appointment by calling (248) 805-1625. To get immediate help, call (248) 805-1625 weekdays 8:00am to 8:00pm and 8:00am to 1:00pm on Saturdays. You may also contact the Moodle staff via an online form. Please see Search under the "Help" tab on the Moodle home page.

- Notice for Disabled Students: Please contact our university's Disability Support Services. DSS is located in 103A North Foundation Hall. You may reach support services at this number:

- (248) 370-3266. Please feel free to speak with me regarding any concerns you may have.

- OU Writing Center: If you need additional instruction in composition or if you would like help composing, organizing and formatting your written work, please contact the Writing Center at their office in 212 Kresge Library. You may also contact them by phone (248) 370-3120 or email (ouwc@oakland.edu).

ENG 1800 Masterpieces of World Literature Reading Schedule, Fall 2018

*Schedule is subject to change.

*Readings must be completed by the date listed on the reading schedule.

*Readings must be completed before class.

9/11: Introduction to course; Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool" (American, 1960); Emily Dickinson, "I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—" (American, 1896); Elizabeth Bishop, "Sestina" (American, 1956); William Shakespeare, "When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes" (English, 1609)

9/18: Walt Whitman, "I hear America Singing", "America" (American, 1867); Langston Hughes, "I, Too" (African American, 1925); Allen Ginsberg, "America" (American, 1956); Claude McKay "America" (Jamaican American, 1921); Sherman Alexie, "On the Amtrak from Boston to New York City" (Native American, 1990); Margaret Atwood, "Footnote to the Amnesty Report on Torture" (Canadian, 1980); Gloria Anzaldúa, "To Live in the Borderlands Means You" (American, 1987)

9/25: Alice Walker, "Everyday Use" (African American, 1973); Kate Chopin, "The Story of an Hour" (American, 1891); John Updike, "A & P" (American, 1962)

10/2: Flannery O'Connor, "The River" (American, 1955); Gabriel Garcia Márquez, "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" (Columbian, 1968); Haruki Murakami, "The Elephant Vanishes" (Japanese, 1993); **paper one due**

10/9: Kazuo Ishiguro, "Nocturne" (English, 2009); Franz Kafka, "In the Penal Colony" (Czech Republic, 1919); Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (American, 1892)

10/16: Midterm Exam

10/23: Maxine Hong Kingston, "No Name Woman" (Chinese American, 1976); Jonathan Swift, "A Modest Proposal" (Anglo-Irish, 1729); David Sedaris, "Go, Carolina" (American, 2000)

10/30: Henrik Ibsen, "A Doll's House" (Norwegian, 1879)

11/6: Robert J. Flaherty, *Nanook of the North* (American, 1922)

11/13: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (American, 1915)

11/20: Dave Eggers, *The Circle* (American 2013); pages 1-235 at page break

11/27: *The Circle*, finish

12/4: Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* (Iranian, 2000); **paper two due**

12/11: **Final exam, 7:00-10:00pm**