

Oakland University  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Department of English  
English 1700, CRN: 43353/43354  
Fall 2018

Prof. Doris Plantus  
535 O'Dowd  
Class Room: 376 SFH/302 PH  
Class Time: MWF 8:00-9:07/12:00-1:07

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by appointment

**Course Description:** This course introduces students to a variety of texts and genres in the modern period, beginning roughly from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the 1950s. Features of the period include general rejection of previous expectations, in favor of experimentation with the literary form, advancements in science, trends in art, world politics, linguistics and philosophy, as well as gender, culture, and critical theory. This course will focus on the texts representative of the dynamics of literary modernism.

The class format will combine lecture, discussion, oral quiz questions, and Moodle assignments, that is, distributing and collecting assignments by download or upload to Moodle.

PLEASE READ THE SYLLABUS CAREFULLY. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO SIGN INDICATING YOU HAVE UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED THE TERMS FOR THE COURSE.

*This course satisfies the university general requirement in literature*  
General Education Learning Outcomes:

The student will demonstrate:

- knowledge of how literature is an expression of culture—We will do this by examining works of fiction in the social and historical contexts in which they were written.
- knowledge of literary form—We will do this by considering the different forms of fiction (short story, novella, novel, drama) and by attending to the particular elements of fiction (point of view, characterization, setting, plot)

***Specific course objectives:***

Knowledge of philology to discern and appreciate meaning at level of sentence and word

How to apply literature and its interdisciplinary parts to the enhancement of any and every major

How to apply this course, its content, and discussion to the real world, making this course particular to life outside of college as it is general to college education

How to develop intuition for problem solving through the exploration of literature

***Cross-Cutting Capacity: critical thinking***

Other Course Objectives: *Teaching students how to think, rather than what to think.*

The most fundamental attribute of modernism in its broadest sense is an expressionistic rebellion against previous and prevailing norms. The goals of this course include understanding and appreciating the significance of modernist literature's rejection of classic models previously determined by tradition and form in the arts, and challenges to collective perceptions underwritten by science and religion. Writers on the leading front of modernism demanded a reevaluation of acceptable views by counter-proposing style and form, content and context, responses to realism, and the role and purpose of the artist. We will (re)discover the way language expresses ideas and responds to culture, language, philosophy, gender, knowledge, society, and history, and explore the way reading literature is not limited to personal enrichment alone, but contributes to the exercise of critical and interdisciplinary thinking skills.

Texts:

*TBA*

\*\*I am sympathetic to the cost of procuring books, however, you should at no cost hold off purchasing your books. We tend to move through material at a good clip, and sometimes students are still waiting on books to arrive when a quiz is already imminent. Try local libraries if you like; most of the books should be readily available. Be aware that not having access to any given text during the scheduled reading will disqualify you from taking the exam. If you are having trouble, please let me know right away.

**\*\*I strongly discourage the use of electronic texts on hand-held devices, particularly cell phones. If students are granted the option of electronic texts, they must sit in the front of the class.**

### **Course Requirements**

Class Participation — Discussion (20% of course grade) Students are expected to come to class well-prepared for each day's discussion of assigned readings. Participation is just that, an ongoing verbal engagement with the reading material and your classmates' responses. Questions, clarifications, and observations are all examples of such engagement. **Oral quizzes will take the place of in-class written ones, and other in-class assignments may be spontaneous.** Discussions, however, are intended to provide the opportunity for reinforcing knowledge, hence, students should strive to comment thoughtfully. I will determine your participation grade based on both the regularity and quality of your participation. Please do not underestimate the importance of this class component; reading/memorization of texts is only part of learning, and learning is the ultimate objective. Because we meet for only an hour, three times a week, the lectures will be brisk, but intense. Students are expected to engage questions when called upon. In an effort to certify that all students are reading and reacting to the material, we will have Oral Questions a regular feature of each class. Because the class is short, any written assignments, including quizzes, will be take home (Moodle-based, subject to approval).

Examinations (60% of course grade) Three examinations constitute the largest portion of your grade (20, 20, 20) for this course. These exams cover material from the readings and class discussion. Check your course schedule for the specific dates. All tests will consider

a variety of formats, including, for example, essays and short-answer questions such as character identifications, literary terms, and quoted passages. Exams may also be conducted on Moodle in the form of multiple choice. Generally speaking, questions are designed to engage both memory and critical thinking. In other words, it is not enough to depend solely on memorization of text; you will be expected to demonstrate the ability to think about what the text means and how it can be applied in interdisciplinary ways. **You must take all the exams to get credit for the course.** Makeup exams will be given only in extreme circumstances, and not for social occasions. Students must initiate requests for makeups within 24 hours prior to, or after the scheduled exam.

Exam Structure: Once we see how the course progresses, I will decide on the final structure for exams. It is possible that we will break those exams up into individual tests per book. Then we can combine two authors, for the 20% share of the total for exams. It simply means that you will be tested on smaller chunks of material, but those chunks will be combined into one 20% share.

Reading Quizzes & In-class assignments, Vocabulary, Literary Summaries (20% of course grade) Reading quizzes will be take home (moodle based, multiple choice). Equally important, however, are the oral points available to students each and every class meeting. Notice that I have distributed these two kinds of point-worthy exercises in two different categories, so that students are encouraged to attend class faithfully, but also have the luxury of take home quizzes. **I will also have weekly vocabulary assignments**, either in the form of student uploads of vocab/definition, or actual vocab quizzes. To this end, students are required to keep track of vocabulary given in class, as well as their own log of words that may be unfamiliar as you read. Words really do matter.

Absence/Tardiness Faithful, punctual attendance is crucial since we will be aggressive in our coverage of the texts. More than two unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade in terms of class participation percentage and exam preparation. **More than 4 unexcused absences before midterm will be noted in Midterm grade reports.** Since reading the roll takes up too much time, students will verify attendance with a sign-in sheet. **Students who are habitually late may not sign the sheet.** Attendance is 20% of your grade, so it is absolutely imperative that you attend. If you have to miss, I need to know. If your work schedule conflicts with class, I need to know. If your vacation plans conflict with class, I need to know. **\*\*ALL ASSIGNMENTS, QUIZZES, AND EXAMS MUST BE COMPLETED FOR FULL CREDIT FOR THE COURSE.**

**Academic Conduct** Cheating on examinations, plagiarism, falsifying reports/records, and unauthorized collaboration, access, or modifying of computer programs are considered serious breaches of academic conduct and will result in disciplinary action by the University Senate's Academic Conduct Committee. The Oakland university policy on academic conduct will be strictly followed with no exceptions. See catalog under Academic Policies and Procedures.

**Adds/Drops** The University add/drop policy will be explicitly followed. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of University deadline dates for dropping the course..

**Important Dates:** Please follow this link: [http://www.oakland.edu/important\\_dates](http://www.oakland.edu/important_dates)

**Special Considerations** Students with disabilities who may require special considerations should make an appointment with the campus Disability Support Services. Students should also bring their needs to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible. Do not wait until midterm evaluations to notify me of problems.

**Classroom Conduct** Let us treat one another with courtesy and respect. The class relies upon and encourages robust discussion in the spirit of intellectual honesty and creating knowledge. Differing points of view are welcome, however, political, racial, cultural, or philosophical intolerance is not. No bashing or bullying. Neither will pretentious or patronizing behavior be accepted. Instead, as has been my tradition, we will affirm by our words, conducts, and deeds, that we are free and equal individuals in pursuit of knowledge without the need for artificial constraints such as political correctness. Good behavior is expected. This means be courteous, be kind, be respectful, and attentive. Nothing is more rude or distracting than students chatting with each other when the instructor or other students are speaking. If you have a medical condition which necessitates your leaving the room, please let me know. And if you have an appointment, please let me know in advance and sit close to the nearest door. Thank you.

**Cell Phones, laptops, electronic devices** Past experience proves that texting, paging, surfing the net, etc. is not only disruptive to class, but counter-productive to learning. All cell phones, pagers are to be put on vibrate, or better still, shut off. Laptops are not permitted in class, unless arrangements are approved. Unless you are a firefighter, or have a loved one in the hospital, or have a parent/grandparent at risk, or have children, there is no good reason to constantly monitor your texts or emails. Abuse of this policy will be strictly enforced, with a first time warning, and subsequent action, including being asked to leave the classroom. Put another way, if I observe you consulting your electronic devices, I will flag your name for that day's attendance. The second time, I will call you out in class. The third time—there will not be a third time. You will be given a choice to check your phone with me until the end of class or leave the class.

### **Class Format**

Lively, meaningful, and thoughtful discussion is paramount to this class. I will provide background material in terms of historical and literary-historical contexts for the readings, but the analysis of all passages must be cultivated and sustained by the class. Students are expected to read all assignments carefully and be prepared to answer questions, many towards oral points that factor into the 20% category of attendance and participation, as well as the 20% category for quizzes. Because the reading list is aggressive, it is imperative that everyone make time to read selections with attention. Worth mentioning is the interdisciplinary approach we will include in our study of literature. This means that we will explore ideas across other disciplines and find segues, connections, relevance, wonder, intrigue, and sometimes, truth. Do not conclude that discussions are “off topic” because they are interdisciplinary.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

While I appreciate the complex demands of a literature class, I stress the importance of regular attendance, arriving on-time and staying until the end of the session. Cell phones

should be on vibrate or put away, and texting is strictly prohibited. In addition, chatting and napping will not be tolerated. If you are too tired to stay awake in class, change your sleeping habits, or your schedule. University study expects that students are mature and here to learn. Maturity means creating the best possible scenario for success. Eat your breakfast and lunch at home or elsewhere. If this is impossible, please be courteous and discreet. Do not engage in elaborate menus that are generally disruptive to those around you. This is a classroom, not a restaurant. If these conditions cannot or will not be observed, the class should be dropped. Students will find a signature space at the end of this syllabus that acknowledges and accepts the conditions set forth. Certainly occasions might arise that create a conflict with attendance, in which case students are asked to discuss their situations with me, preferably in advance. Failure to communicate absences will compromise a student's grade to the extent that make-up exams or assignments may not be offered. Excessive absences may well result in no grade for the course.

### **Schedule**

The class schedule, below, indicates general reading assignments. The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments to this schedule should that be necessary. Because we must remain flexible, I have not expanded on the schedule, but rather organized the material in terms of weeks. Some days we may fall behind, so I tried to leave a buffer. In any event, the reading schedule is aggressive, averaging around 100 pages a week for the novels with poetry and short story less demanding. Students should keep up with readings as assigned. A copy of the syllabus will be available on MOODLE, so students should know how to access the site.

The basic weekly approach will be to introduce the author and book, then demonstrate good approaches to the reading assignments. Learn to organize your reading time so you are not going to fall behind. Obviously, we are not going to dissect every page; nevertheless, you need to be consistent in your reading. Take notes, write down words you don't understand and look them up. Write down questions you may have and bring them to class. This is an important course for what it has to offer, regardless of your major. I am prepared to give you every last cent's worth of your tuition, but you must be equally invested to learn.

I will discuss the quiz/exam dates the first week of class, and add those into a copy of this syllabus on Moodle.

**\*\*Do not wait until the last week of classes to let me know you are leaving on a cruise. At the same time, do not structure the class around vacations. Students are expected to commit to the course, and not tailor the course to individual schedules. Students must take every exam in order to get credit for the course. If you are making plans, consult our schedule first, and do not assume you can make alternative arrangements on a short notice.**

About me:

I am a very passionate and energetic professor who relies on critical thinking and interdisciplinary method in the way I teach. Because I am dedicated to the highest caliber of instruction, I will give my full measure to conveying ideas and concepts, using examples

from history, pop culture, philosophy, mechanics, music, art, cooking, or agriculture, for example. I also depend on lots and lots of humor. My background is very diverse so I am able to provide a rich array of analogies or materials that work to analyze and appreciate the literature. One need not like a subject in order to benefit from it☺. My particular interests include language and translation, ancient texts of every kind, music, art, astronomy, mechanics, history, and problem solving. The greatest thing I can do for you is teach you *how* to think, and not *what* to think. In exchange for your time and attention, I will teach you how literature can enrich your life, inspire and delight your mind, make you a critical thinker, and cultivate the kind of aesthetic so important to the human condition. Of course, my style is not for everyone, but I do expect your respectful attention in class to me, as well as to your class mates.

One more thing—Please sign and date a copy of this syllabus and upload it to Moodle.

Welcome!

Reading Schedule TBA