

MODERN WESTERN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

COLT 151xg

Tues. and Thurs. 2:00—3:20

THH 116

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There will be two discussion sections for this course.

In this survey of western literature from the 17th century through the 20th century, we will read key texts in a variety of genres, placing them in their historical, literary, and intellectual contexts. Some of the writers whose works we will read (all selected from complete works in English translation) that are included in our course textbook, *LITERATURE OF THE WESTERN WORLD: Vol. II* (Wilkie and Hurt) include: *TARTUFFE* by Moliere, *CANDIDE* by Voltaire, *FRANKENSTEIN* by Mary Shelley, *NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND* by Dostoevsky, *A DOLL'S HOUSE* by Henrik Ibsen, *THE METAMORPHOSIS* by Franz Kafka, and excerpts from *A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN* by Virginia Woolf and from *THE SECOND SEX* by Simone de Beauvoir. We will conclude by viewing the play (on video) *RHINOCEROS* by Ionesco.

Videos of the plays we are reading will be shown whenever available and slides and other visual materials of the important art movements such as Dada and Surrealism will also be presented.

I strongly urge you to read freely in this anthology, and to seek out and read other works by the authors in this and other collections. I also urge you to visit the museums, art collections, and galleries in Los Angeles and the surrounding areas. Visit the bookstores in the area and attend readings of works by new authors. Perhaps you will want to attend an opening of an art show, see a play from the vast repertoire of western 'classics' or of the more experimental "avant-garde". There are many fascinating and historic venues in this city where the works we are reading are brought to life. Be sure to keep the class informed of what exciting events you have discovered as you peruse the current newspapers and many specialized journals in art, theatre, film, and literature. Note the many book and poetry readings at the public libraries and bookstores. Here you can often meet the current authors whose works are being reviewed in current publications. Take advantage of this opportunity to explore the new forms of creation that are just emerging via the new technologies. The Internet may even lead you to participate in interactive creative experiments and in the development of other new media

of expression that these technologies are introducing. In this way you will observe first hand the way that literary and art history take form and evolve.

I hope that this survey of western literature will enable you to understand the ways in which we, of the twenty-first century, have been formed intellectually by traditions ranging from Neo-classicism, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, the Scientific Revolution, and Realism to the development of Psychoanalysis (with its influence on Surrealism), Existentialism, the Absurd and finally, Feminism. Implicitly, in the study of these ideas and artistic creations is also a critique of many of the ideological assumptions of western civilization that have led to the excesses which today result in abuses, be they of logic and science, of the irrational, or of the control and domination of both women and nature. Thus, I hope to create a critical context in which to place these traditions so that you will come away from the course with a comprehension of the underpinnings of western creativity. At the same time, I hope that you will develop a critical perspective on the “canon” (to be explored in the course) so that you will open up to a more multi-cultural approach to contemporary culture in general. Then, as you continue your studies in twenty-first century literature and art, I hope that this course will provide you with a framework that will enable you to interpret the innovative developments of the future that reference many of the movements of the past from new standpoints. Naturally, it is hoped that this course will be the first of many to come in Comparative Literature and the Arts and in the diversity of world literatures that comprise our global heritage.

BOTTOM LINES: ADVICE AND WARNINGS:

Please keep a copy of each of your papers, exams and presentations—just in case. Keep a complete record of all your work and grades. Please realize that any unethical behavior with respect to your work (cheating, plagiarism, purchasing of papers etc) is subject to **FAILURE OF THE COURSE**. Be advised that both faculty and T.A.’s are experienced in locating the sources of your plagiarism from the Internet. You must cite all your sources of research. Note that there will be **NO GRADE NEGOTIATIONS**. If you have any problem complying with the deadlines we establish for exams or papers, you must present a medical or other acceptable excuse in written form. No adjustments will be made for personal agendas, travel plans etc. If you have any special needs in terms of time or pace of your work, please submit a physician’s explanation at the beginning of the semester. All students whose level of English is lower than that of college level English are well advised to take full advantage of **THE WRITING CENTER** and the tutors they provide. I can attest to the fact that students who have attended sessions at **THE WRITING CENTER** on a regular basis have often raised their grades by two or three letters. Be advised too, that note will be taken of your attendance and your participation in the class and the discussion sections. Attendance is required in your sections and in the lectures, and your grade will be adversely affected by your absence. In sum, all aspects of your presence and work will be taken into account. There is a component of your grade that is based upon your profile over the semester (work, participation, behavior, attendance, attitude, ethics etc.). Grades are not strictly mathematical or objective assessments. The subjective component made by the T.A. and the Professor’s reflection on your overall attitude are equally important and will affect

your grade. You cannot negotiate your grade by playing your T.A. against your Professor. All decisions made by the T.A. are final. We may consult, but the T.A. decides upon the grades.

TEXTBOOK: LITERATURE OF THE WESTERN WORLD: VOL II: NEO-CLASSICISM THROUGH THE MODERN PERIOD. Editors: Brian Wilkie and James Hurt.

Other handouts will be provided as the need occurs

PAPERS AND EXAMS: There will be a MIDTERM, a FINAL, and a PAPER in this course. Each will count for approximately one third of your grade, but the overall grade will be affected by the other aspects of your presence in the course as I have already explained. Deadlines for work to be handed in must be strictly observed. All irregularities will affect your grade in some way.

Each of these assignments, the exams and the research paper will be discussed thoroughly in class and in your sections.

APPROXIMATE CALENDAR. This syllabus is an outline of the way in which your reading assignments will flow over the course of the semester. Please read every Introduction to each section and to the authors from Neo-Classicism through The Modern Period. You are encouraged to supplement your background familiarity with this material by library and internet research. I will enrich the material of the course with videos and films when available.

Week 1:	Tues. Aug. 28 Thurs. Aug. 30	Introduction to the Course. Neo-Classicism. Film on Versailles
Week 2:	Tues. Sept. 4 Thurs. Sept. 6	TARTUFFE by Moliere Film of TARTUFFE Try to see or rent the recent film MOLIERE.
Week 3:	Tues. Sept. 11 Thurs. Sept.13	Descartes and Locke Salons, Les Precieuses, LA Carte de Tendre
Week 4:	Tues. Sept. 18 Thurs. Sept. 20	THE ENLIGHTENMENT CANDIDE by Voltaire
Week 5:	Tues. Sept. 25 Thurs. Sept. 27	CANDIDE continued Opera CANDIDE by Leonard Bernstein
Week 6:	Tues. Oct. 2 Thurs. Oct. 4	Introduction to ROMANTICISM FRANKENSTEIN by Mary Shelley
Week 7:	Tues. Oct. 9	Film on FRANKENSTEIN

	Thurs. Oct. 11	PREFACE TO CROMWELL by V. Hugo
Week 8:	Tues. Oct. 16 Thurs. Oct. 18	Film on Romantic Poets MIDTERM EXAM
Week 9:	Tues. Oct. 23 Thurs. Oct. 25	Introduction to REALISM NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND by Dostoevsky
Week 10:	Tues. Oct 30 Thurs. Nov. 1	Film on Dostoevsky A DOLL'S HOUSE by Henrik Ibsen
Week 11:	Tues. Nov. 6 Thurs. Nov. 8	Film of A DOLL'S HOUSE THE EXPERIMENTAL NOVEL by E. Zola
Week 12:	Tues. Nov. 13 Thurs. Nov. 15	Introduction to MODERNISM METAMORPHOSIS by Franz Kafka
Week 13:	Tues. Nov. 20 Thurs. Nov. 22	A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN by Virginia Woolf HAPPY THANKSGIVING
Week 14:	Tues. Nov. 27 Thurs. Nov. 29	THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS by Sigmund Freud DADA AND SURREALISM
Week 15:	Tues. Dec. 4 Thurs. Dec. 6	FILM OF RHINOCEROS by Ionesco THEATRE OF THE ABSURD and wrap up of course.