

**World Literature
COLI 110-07
Meeting Times: T/Th 8:30-9:55 a.m.
Meeting Place: LN 1402
Fall 2009**

**Instructor: Beth Polzin
Office: LT 1408A
Office Hours: T 10-12, or by appointment
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“Why are we reading, if not in hope of beauty laid bare, life heightened and its deepest mystery probed? Can the writer isolate and vivify all in experience that deeply engages our intellects and our hearts? Can the writer renew our hope for literary forms? Why are we reading if not in hope that the writer will magnify and dramatize our days, will illuminate and inspire us with wisdom, courage, and the possibility of meaningfulness, and will press upon our minds the deepest mysteries, so we may feel again their majesty and power? What do we ever know that is higher than that power which, from time to time, seizes our lives, and reveals us startlingly to ourselves as creatures set down here bewildered” (73)?

Annie Dillard, from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

“What a heavy oar the pen is, and what a strong current ideas are to row in!”

Gustave Flaubert

World Literature Course Objectives

Our course offers you the opportunity to engage with texts written by writers who are native to other countries and continents, and whose writing occurs during other times than the present historical moment. We will engage during our class meetings on the text, on and for which we may assume each of you to have different understandings and considerations. Our goals during class discussion, therefore, will be to ask questions pertinent to a discussion of our views of the text and to the discovery of where our ideas are in common and where we differ. These interpretive discussions will lead us more deeply and actively into the texts, and provide an avenue to the larger writing assignments.

World Literature Learning Outcomes

Students will ... Articulate concepts and deeper meanings of the text;

Form and ask relevant questions that help to engage others;

Summarize text clearly and succinctly;

Paraphrase a character's or writer's words fully;

Compose original arguments and follow one purpose in an essay;

Rewrite assignments to strengthen the essay in terms of organization, development, and persuasiveness.

Required Texts

Death and the King's Horseman by Wole Soyinka, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Milan Kundera, *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel García Márquez, *The Immoralist* by André Gide, *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende, and *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe.

In addition to the required texts, you will want to have access to a good, hardcover dictionary, such as the *American Heritage* or *Merriam-Webster*. You will also want a style guide, which includes the latest requirements for MLA (Modern Language Associate) formatting of essays.

Required Work and Grading Percentages

(2) 3-5 page essay, 25% each

(1) 5-7 page essay, 30%

Attendance & Participation, 20%

Participation

A one-page writing assignment will be due each Tuesday. Some students will be asked to read their assignment during class. These assignments, like the essays, should be in MLA style, typed in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins on each side. These writing assignments, along with your oral participating in class (regular attendance), will lead to the grade for attendance and participation.

Attendance

Succeeding in class depends upon attending class; your goal, therefore, should be to attend every class. You are allowed one unexcused absence. Unexcused absences include events such as a stalled car, a sick roommate, a phone call, or a cold. Do not skip class on a whim. Instead, save your "free" absence for a time when you truly need to miss class.

Attendance is a required and graded part of the course, and goes beyond merely arriving and taking a seat. Our course is based on the discussions, which will require everyone to share ideas. Therefore, plan to read actively and take notes on what interests you, and on the questions or comments you would like to share, so that you will always be prepared to contribute to the day's discussion. You will earn attendance credit by actively participating in each day's discussion.

Finally, a note on H1N1, otherwise known as the Swine Flu. If you have a fever, body aches, cough, and/or sore throat, please do not come to class. BU is following the Centers for Disease Control guidelines by requesting that if you become ill, then engage in self-isolation by remaining in your room or at home, and by limiting your contact with others. Follow the instructions on the University's Health Services website. If such a crisis occurs for you or for me, we will use our Blackboard course shell as a medium for you to complete your assignments and meet the requirements of the course. If this situation occurs, I will assign more writing as part of assessing your progress with the texts.

Class Etiquette

Arrive prior to our actual start time, so that you will be ready to begin, and remain for the entire class period. Be sure to silence your phones and any other noise-making devices that you carry with you. Keep phones, computers, and other electronic or distracting materials inside your bag during our class. To meet our goal of having a focused discussion, plan to not check your phone or answer calls during class. Please speak to me before class if you have an urgent situation in which you may need to check your phone, excuse yourself, or leave early. Always show respect for the views of others, even if you disagree. Practice becoming a professional by contributing to a mature and dignified classroom experience.

Ethics

Be sure that you understand academic honesty so that you do not commit plagiarism or risk an accusation of cheating. Plagiarism is when you use someone else's ideas without giving them credit. Use MLA formatting to cite your sources, including quotation marks, complete paraphrase and summary, and use of in-text citations and Works Cited page. Refer to the Student Handbook and the Student Academic Honesty Code so that you are clear on what is expected of you in this and in all of your courses, and see the following website: <http://www2.binghamton.edu/soe/our-programs/acad-honesty.html>

Remember, plagiarism is easy to avoid if you get into the habit of citing your sources for direct quotations or anytime you use an author's ideas. In addition, make sure that all work you submit is your own original work completed for that class. Contact me if you have concerns.

Resources

The Writing Center, LN 2412, (607) 777-6725, M/W 10-8, T/Th 10-5, F 10-3. Trained graduate and upper-level undergraduate students will offer free, one-on-one consultation with you when you bring your essay to their office. Call ahead to make sure someone will be available.

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), 607-777-2686 (voice/TTY), email: bjfairba@binghamton.edu, located within the Division of Student Affairs. If you know or believe you have a disability, please contact this office for assistance. Please be sure to contact me if you need accommodation.

University Counseling Center, LN 1202, (607) 777-2772, M-F 9-5p.m. by appointment. If you are having trouble handling stress or just want to talk, this office is here to help you. Give them a call.

Tentative Calendar of Readings and Essay Due Dates

Rough drafts of essays will be due in class. Rough drafts will also be due in a *Turnit In* folder on Blackboard as a plagiarism and citation check.

Final drafts of essays will be due in class. Final drafts will also be due in a *Turnit In* folder on Blackboard. Attach your rough draft with my comments, and any other prewriting and early drafts you have completed to your final draft. Use a paperclip to attach everything.

For the structure of our course, expect to complete all readings for each week by Tuesday's class. The reading and the short writing assignment will be due on Tuesday, and we will continue discussions on Thursday. Expect for your essays, both rough and final drafts, to be due on Thursdays. Plan the time that you budget for our class around this schedule of assignments.

Week 1

9/1—9/3: Introduction to the Course, George Orwell

Week 2

9/8—9/10: André Gide

Week 3

9/15--17: Milan Kundera

Week 4

9/22--24: Milan Kundera

Week 5

9/29—10/1: Milan Kundera, **First Essay, Rough draft due.**

Week 6

10/6—10/8: Wole Soyinka

Week 7

10/13—10/15: García Márquez

Week 8

10/20—10/22: García Márquez

Week 9

10/27—10/29: García Márquez, **Second Essay, Rough Draft due**

Week 10

11/3—11/5: Chinua Achebe

Week 11

11/10—11/12: Chinua Achebe

Week 12

11/17—11/19: Chinua Achebe

Week 13

T 24: Isabel Allende

R 26: **Thanksgiving Break**

Week 14

12/1—12/3: Isabel Allende

Week 15

12/8—12/10: Isabel Allende, **Third Essay, Final Draft due**

Week 16

12/14—12/18: **Finals Week**