

Classical Literature

English 3315

Tuesday, 6-8:45
D106

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 1-4:30

Goals

Classical literature deals with raw emotion in ways that some modern literature does not. What more painful can there be than a father going into the camp of his son's killer to ask the man to stop dragging the body around the citadel every day and, instead, to give it up to be buried honorably? Or killing one's own brother? One reason for the rawness is that the classical writers could get to the core of an issue because they were writing about subjects no one had dealt with before; by contrast, modern writers, to have anything new to say, must pick around the edges of subjects. Another reason is the use of myth or archetypes to express ideas. When Odysseus sits on Calypso's isle looking over the horizon towards Ithaca with tears in his eyes, we see all men who love their wives.

Classical literature refers to Greek, and Roman literature because those cultures have affected western thinking the most.

In this course, we will study representative classical literature and ask several questions. What are the core issues that the literature treats? Are those issues still vital today? What techniques were effective? Specifically, of course, we will discuss ways to make classical literature relevant to modern readers, especially to high school students.

Course procedure and grading

You will be graded on your knowledge of the literature and on your understanding of the writers' insights, and your ability to develop and support your own. Specifically, you will take exams and quizzes, write response papers and a term paper, and participate in class discussion. You will accumulate points, up to a possible 1,000, and if you have 900, you will make an A and so on.

Quizzes. There will be quizzes over the readings, at the beginning of class and after the break. The quizzes will cover basic questions about the facts of the readings, such as why Achilles decides not to fight. If you read the literature carefully, you will do well. The purpose is to get you to read the literature and to be in class on time. I'll pass out the quizzes a minute or so before class starts, and you'll have ten minutes.

Exams. 250 points. A mid-term exam on March 22, worth 100 points, and a final exam on May 10, worth 150 points. You will need to identify ideas, literature, characters, etc. and write two essays on topics you select from a list. The object will be to show that you can analyze and synthesize evidence and produce a conclusion and a coherent argument to back it up.

Assignment sheets for the following are on Blackboard.

Weekly question. 40 points. The first two weeks, you will answer questions that I post on Blackboard. Grades will be based on whether you have a topic sentence, the context of your evidence, your evidence, and documentation.

Blackboard posts. 60 points. Later in the course, you will post questions on Blackboard and answer one of your peers' questions.

Response papers. 200 points. You will write two papers responding to questions that I give you or to questions that you ask. Basically, they will ask what a piece of literature indicates about human nature or about culture. You will submit a rough draft of each paper, and I'll tell you what you need to do to make an A.

A list of response questions is on Blackboard. You may respond to questions on any of the literature we have covered up to the time you write a paper. If you wish, you may write all the response papers about the same topic and then put them together with appropriate polishing for the term paper.

Term project. 150 points. You have a choice. You may select a topic regarding American literature, develop a position, and write a six- to eight-page paper to support that position. Or you may emulate a novel. I will look over your work at various points and advise you on how to make an A.

Author report. 60 points. You will research an author's life and literary interests and submit a report to me, which I'll look over, return to you for corrections, and post online.

Late papers

Late work will not be accepted without a documented reason for turning it in late. Also, if you miss more than four assignments, you will be dropped from the course.

Attendance

To participate in class, you have to be here and on time. **If you are absent nine hours without good documented reasons, you will be dropped with an F.**

Plagiarism

Plagiarized work will not be accepted. Plagiarism means turning in someone else's work for credit. We will discuss plagiarism as well as ways to avoid it by citing others' work correctly.

Students with disabilities

Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. Students who need accessibility services should contact Kathy Biddick at 830-279-3003. The address is 2623 Garner Field Road, Uvalde, Texas 78801.

Distance education

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

Schedule

January 19

Introduction to the course

Introduction to Greek culture, geography, and history

January 25

First weekly question. For instructions, see Blackboard.

January 26

The Iliad, through Book 12

<http://classics.mit.edu/Homer/iliad.html>

<http://www.online-literature.com/homer/iliad/>

February 1

Second weekly question

February 2

The Iliad, through Book 24

February 8

First draft of your first response paper. For instructions, see Blackboard.

February 9

The Odyssey through Book 12

<http://classics.mit.edu/Homer/odyssey.html>

<http://www.online-literature.com/homer/odyssey/>

February 15

Final draft of your first response paper.

February 16

The Odyssey through Book 24

February 22

Rough draft of your second response paper.

February 23

Hesiod and others

February 29

The final draft of your second response paper.

March 1

The Orestia by Aeschylus

Agamemnon, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aeschylus/agamemnon.html>

The Libation Bearers, <https://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/aeschylus/libationbearers.htm>

The Eumenedes, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aeschylus/eumenedes.html>

March 7

First online post. For instructions, see Blackboard.

March 8

Sophocles. The three Theban plays.

Oedipus, the King, <http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/oedipus.html>

Aristotle's comments on tragedy, <http://www2.cnr.edu/home/bmcmanus/poetics.html>

Oedipus at Colonus, <http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/colonus.html>

Antigone, <http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/antigone.html>

March 9

Response to the first online post.

March 15 and 17

Spring break

March 21

Mid-term examination online

March 28

Second online post

March 29

Medea, <http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/medea.html>

March 30

Response to the second online post

April 4

Topic for your term project. For instructions, see Blackboard.

April 5

Lysistrata, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/7700/7700-h/7700-h.htm>

April 11

Outline of your term project.

April 12

Plato

The Republic, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html>

April 18

First draft of your term project

April 19

Aristotle

Nicomachean Ethics, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>

April 25

Second draft of your term project

April 26

Horace, The Odes, Book I, <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/HoraceOdesBkI.htm>

Virgil, The Aeneid, Book IV, http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/VirgilAeneidIV.htm#anchor_Toc342032

May 2

Final draft of your term project

May 3

Ovid, The Metamorphoses, Book I, <http://classics.mit.edu/Ovid/metam.1.first.html>

Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, Book I, <http://classics.mit.edu/Antoninus/meditations.1.one.html>

May 10

Final Examination online