

Literature (LIT)

210 Global Literatures I: Beginnings to 1500

3

This course focuses on a select cluster of texts – from Western and non-Western literary traditions – which are foundational to the world’s literary heritage. Works studied may include Hebrew Scripture, Greek epic and drama, Chinese poetry and philosophy, Indian prose epic and verse, Roman poetry and drama, Sufi poetry, Medieval European verse, and Japanese prose epic and poetry.

220 Global Literatures II: 1500-1800

3

Literature written in English flourishes in the early modern period, with innovations in English poetry, Elizabethan drama, and the early novel. This course, then, will examine important literary trends across the world through the lens of these formative developments in the Anglophone tradition. Works studied will include English drama (one Shakespeare play), English poetry, the early English novel, read alongside African epic, Chinese prose and verse romance, and other early modern European prose, verse, and drama.

230 Global Literatures III: 1800 to the Present

3

While foregrounding the literary developments of European Romanticism, Realism, Modernism and Post-Modernism (with a particular focus on the Anglophone tradition), this course also considers the emergence of a global literary marketplace in the twentieth century. Works studied may include European Romantic poetry, Victorian prose, European realism (including drama), modernist poetry and prose, and emerging post-colonial literature.

240 Introduction to Literary Theory

3

This course introduces students to important movements in contemporary literary theory, such as psychoanalytic, Marxist, feminist, poststructuralist, new historicist, race, and post-colonial theory. Students will read works by influential thinkers in these various movements, learn key concepts used in their writing, ask what notion of the good inspires their criticism, and attend to the different methods that they use in reading literature. Students should be prepared to read more theory than literature in this class, but anticipate their own engagement with literature changed as they learn to combine various elements of the theory that are studied.

310 Approach 1: Genres and Movements

3

These courses explore genre and its conventions and/or the characteristics of particular literary movements, as tools for reading and understanding texts.

Poetry and Hymnody

An exploration of the English hymn-writing movement that began in the early eighteenth-century and its relation to “secular” poetry of the same period. Readings will include translations of the psalms, hymns by Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, and poetry by John Donne, Anne Finch, Thomas Gray, James Thompson, Phyllis Wheatley, William Wordsworth and others. More time in class will be given to analyzing the formal elements of poems than describing their historical and biographical context. (Spring 2011)

315 Approach 2: Nations and Regions

3

These courses examine texts clustered around national(ist) or regional concerns/themes. They may be organized by geography and/or chronology.

Literature from Around the Atlantic

How does the Atlantic ocean figure in the imagination of writers from Europe, West Africa, the West Indies, and the Americas? What can depictions of the sea tell us about the way people thought of themselves as individuals, their social lives, their nationalities, and their historical moment? We will read work from regions all around the Atlantic and from the late eighteenth century to the present. (Spring 2011)

320 Approach 3: Culture, Identity and Ethnicity

3

These courses examine texts organized around particular cultural issues, identity (including religion, race, class and gender), and/or ethnicity.

Native American Literature

This course traces a selection of Native American voices from beginnings to the present, with particular emphasis on how they formulate identity in dialogue with and opposition to dominant Euro-American cultures. We will begin the course with Native American creation narratives and conclude with recent writers, including Sherman Alexie, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Louise Erdrich. (Fall 2010)

325 Approach 4: Authors

3

These courses provide a close-up look at one or several authors and their literary careers, emphasizing biography and historical / cultural context.

Defoe and Equiano

A comparison of the lives and writings of Daniel Defoe and Olaudah Equiano. Defoe (1659-1731) was an English political spy, failed poet, journalist, and fiction writer, best known for his novel Robinson Crusoe. Equiano (1745-1797) was an African slave who earned his own freedom as a merchant sailor and wrote a bestselling autobiography that helped end the slave-trade in Britain. (Fall 2010)

Shakespeare

This course will carefully consider the achievement of one of the most influential writers in the English literary tradition – William Shakespeare. The focus of the class, naturally, will be on Shakespeare's plays – we will look at salient examples of his comedies and tragedies, as well as one history and one romance. Although Shakespeare is best appreciated in performance, we will begin our examination of each play with a close reading of the text, paying attention to its language, characterization and important themes. This will be supplemented by screenings of performances. In our discussion we will also consider theoretical, critical and cultural issues relevant to each play. (Spring 2011)

330 Literature for Children

3

This course is an exploration of all types of literature for children. The characteristics and history of various types of literature are studied, along with strategies for involving children in every genre. Special attention is given to the study of multi-ethnic literature. Open to sophomores and above.

340 Adolescent/Young Adult Literature*3**

This course concentrates on literature written for and by adolescent/young adult readers. While relying on works typically classified as young adult literature, the course will also look at literary “classics” found within the curriculum for middle, junior, and senior high classrooms. Models of literary criticism employed within the study of these works will center on reader-response theory. Separate tracks are offered for those students who are English majors and for those who are majoring in English with a Teaching Endorsement. (Spring 2011)

480 Seminar in the Major: Broken Families in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Fiction**3**

“Take the orphans out of the novels of Dickens, the Bronte sisters, and George Eliot,” observes literary critic Roger Lundin, “and what do you have left?”. This writing-intensive course will consider Lundin’s question by examining influential fiction from the United Kingdom and the United States, including novels by Twain, Faulkner, Morrison, and Berry. We will read these texts in light of contemporary theories of attachment, the focus of an interdisciplinary conference at EMU the same semester. Each class member will write a presentation-length paper for delivery at the conference and complete a polished draft of a scholarly article. While this course serves as the capstone for English majors, able students from other disciplines are welcome to enroll after securing the instructor’s permission. (Spring 2011)

499 Independent Study**1-3**

Directed studies in authors, genres, literary movements, problems of criticism and special topics in literature. Open to juniors and seniors by permission of the department.