

English 125A: European Literature—Homer to Dante

Fall 2011

Section 01: MW 12:00-1:15, SH 240

Prof. B. Cox

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Course Description: This course offers an introduction to some of the major literary works of the first 2,000 years of Western Culture—works of great genius and superb craft. They are as much a part of our heritage as that which we receive from our parents. Our goal this semester is to take possession of that heritage—like heirs who have come of age—by understanding how these works are connected to each other and to us via a series of parallel and contrasting patterns of thoughts and feelings that form a path of human continuity across time and place. Students will engage and explore the texts from a variety of contexts and viewpoints: textual, literary, social, and cultural; become familiar with a range of critical approaches to the texts; and demonstrate a working knowledge of the texts' influences within the Western literary tradition.

Department of English and Comparative Literature Student Learning Objectives (SLOs): Students will demonstrate the ability to

1. read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric;
2. show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature;
3. write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject;
4. develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively;
5. articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

Course Requirements: Daily reading responses (150 words minimum), a midterm exam, a critical paper (5-7 pages), and a final exam.

Required Texts:

The Norton Anthology of World Literature, Vols. A, B, & C, 2nd edition
Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, online <http://classics.mit.edu/Ovid/metam>.
Ovid, *Heroides*, online
<http://www.poetrytranslation.com/PTTBRLatin/Heroides/home.htm>

Class Policies:

Reading: Assignments (including all introductory information) are to be read before the class session for which they are assigned. Close, careful reading takes time; plan accordingly. Be prepared to discuss the readings in class.

Writing: All written work is due at the beginning of class. Reader responses (150 words minimum) need not be typed, but they must be legible (if I can't read it, you didn't write it), and they must demonstrate a critical engagement with the language and/or content of the assigned texts—**no summaries** (you may want to make and keep a copy of your reader responses, to refer to during class discussions). No late work will be accepted unless you (1) make arrangements with me in advance, or (2) provide written verification that circumstances completely beyond your control prevented your getting the work in on time. All written work is to follow MLA formatting and documentation guidelines. Pages should be stapled in the upper-left corner (no paper clips, please!). Always title your work. Always keep a copy of everything you turn in, as well as your notes, drafts, and research materials.

Attendance and Participation: On-time class attendance and active participation in class discussion are extremely important. If you miss class, you will always miss something important. The degree to which you do or do not come to class on time and prepared to contribute to the classroom exchange of ideas and information will be a 20% factor in determining your final grade in this course. **Please Note:** (1) You cannot contribute if you are not here; (2) your presence, in and of itself, does not constitute participation.

Grading: Your written work (including reader responses) will be evaluated according to the following criteria.

Qualities of "A" Writing

Content: completes with all parts of the assignment; displays original, provocative thought in one or more of the following ways:

finds a general significance in the specific instance; identifies and resolves a contradiction; improves or qualifies a common misconception; achieves a fresh insight into a frequently discussed topic; places the known in a novel context; supports an arguable assertion; develops its thought by explanation, example, or analysis, as appropriate; displays flawless logic; has the voice of a real person speaking to a real audience; is interesting and detailed.

Organization:

has a recognizable thesis, stated or implied, that conforms to our definition of a thesis; has an effective and appropriate overall pattern of organization; has unified, coherent paragraphs organized around recognizable topic sentences that are verbally or logically related to the thesis; has effective and appropriate transitions between paragraphs; has an effective introduction and conclusion.

Style:

frequently chooses grammatical options that mirror the content portrayed; shows a variety of sentence lengths and openers; frequently and appropriately uses emphatic sentence patterns such as long cumulative and periodic sentences, various strong parallel structures, and compound sentences using semicolons and conjunctive adverbs to control rhythm, pace, and emphasis.

Mechanics:

has NO diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors; demonstrates a sophisticated knowledge of English grammar, syntax, punctuation, and usage.

Qualities of "B" Writing

Content:

complies with all parts of the assignment;

displays original, provocative thought in one or more of the ways listed above;

attempts to develop its thoughts in the ways listed above;

contains no overt logical fallacies;

has the voice of a real person;

is detailed.

Organization:

has a recognizable thesis, stated or implied, that conforms to our definition of a thesis;

has an overall pattern of organization;

has unified, coherent paragraphs organized around recognizable topic sentences related to the thesis;

has appropriate transitions between paragraphs;

has an introduction and conclusion.

Style:

shows a variety of sentence lengths and openers;

frequently and appropriately uses emphatic sentence patterns such as long cumulative and periodic sentences, various strong parallel structures, and compound sentences using semicolons and conjunctive

adverbs.

Mechanics:

has no more than ONE diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling error; the error does not prevent

comprehension; does not repeat an error marked on a previous paper;

demonstrates a sound knowledge of English grammar, syntax, punctuation, and usage.

Qualities of "C" Writing

Content:

complies with the main parts of the assignment;

finds significance beyond the subjective response;

goes beyond mere description of the topic and response (analysis, generalization, etc.);

is detailed.

Organization:

has a recognizable thesis, stated or implied, that conforms to our definition of a thesis;

has coherent paragraphs organized around topic sentences, most of which relate to the thesis;

has a recognizable beginning, middle, and end.

Style:

shows a variety of sentence lengths and openers;

occasionally uses emphatic sentence patterns such as cumulative and periodic sentences, parallel structures, and compound sentences using semicolons and conjunctive adverbs.

Mechanics:

has no more than TWO diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors; errors do not prevent

comprehension; does not repeat an error marked on a previous paper;

demonstrates the ability to write correct simple, compound, and complex sentences.

Qualities of "D" Writing

Content:

complies with the main parts of the assignment;

makes a definite statement about the topic;

attempts to support that statement.

Organization:

has a recognizable thesis;

attempts to support that thesis;

has paragraphs organized around topic sentences; has enough coherence to be recognized as a unit.

Style:

varies sentence types frequently enough to avoid monotony; attempts the occasional stylistic emphasis of an important point.

Mechanics:

has no more than THREE diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors; errors do not prevent comprehension; does not repeat errors marked on a previous paper; demonstrates a basic understanding of the conventions of written English.

Note: Any assigned writing that earns less than a "D" in any of the four grading categories will be considered unacceptable and will receive a failing grade.

Your class participation will be assessed as follows:

- A = Regular, helpful questions and comments; fully engaged
- B = Occasional, pertinent questions and responses; good listening
- C = Infrequent, tangential questions or comments; attentiveness questionable
- D = Rare interaction; disengaged from discussion; not prepared for class
- F = Regularly absent, physically or mentally

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Reader Responses	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Critical Paper	20%
Classwork/Participation	20%
Final Exam	20%

There is no such thing as "extra credit."

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure. Courses graded according to the A,B,C,NoCredit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC, for NoCredit, shall replace D or F. In A,B,C,NoCredit courses NC shall also substitute for W (for Withdrawal) because neither NC nor W affects students' grade point averages. In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

SJSU Academic Integrity Policy: Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty are required to report all infractions to the office of Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity can be found at <http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.htm>. The SJSU rules against plagiarism are set forth in the SJSU Catalog, which defines plagiarism as the act of representing the work of another as one's own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism at SJSU includes, but is not limited to: (1) the act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work. It is the role and obligation of each student to know the rules that preserve academic integrity and abide by them at all times. This includes learning and following the particular rules associated with specific classes, exams, and/or course assignments. Ignorance of these rules is not a defense to the charge of violating the Academic Integrity Policy. All violations of the university's Academic Integrity Policy will be reported to the Dean of Student Services.

Campus Policy on Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with DRC to establish a record of their disability. The DRC website is <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu>

English 125A Schedule

Fall 2011

Week 1	W	8/24	Course Introduction and Overview; Introduction to Homer
Week 2	M	8/29	<i>Iliad</i> , Books 1, 6, 8, 9, Reader Response #1 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
	W	8/31	<i>Iliad</i> , Books 16, 18, 22, 24, Reader Response #2 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
Week 3	M	9/5	Labor Day—No class
	W	9/7	<i>Odyssey</i> , books 1-8, Reader Response #3 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
Week 4	M	9/12	<i>Odyssey</i> , Books 9-16, Reader Response #4 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
	W	9/14	<i>Odyssey</i> , Books 17-24, Reader Response #5 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
Week 5	M	9/19	Introduction to Greek Drama; Aristotle, from <i>Poetics</i> [SLO #2, 5]
	W	9/21	<i>Agamemnon</i> , Reader Response #6 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
Week 6	M	9/26	<i>Libation Bearers</i> (summary), <i>Eumenides</i> , Reader Response #7 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
	W	9/28	<i>Oedipus Tyrannos [Rex]</i> , Reader Response #8 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
Week 7	M	10/3	<i>Antigone</i> , Reader Response #9 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
	W	10/5	<i>Medea</i> , Reader Response #10 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
Week 8	M	10/10	<i>Lysistrata</i> , Reader Response #11 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
	W	10/12	Midterm Exam—bring large exam book (green or blue) [SLO #1-3, 5]
Week 9	M	10/17	Introduction to Virgil [SLO #2, 5]
	W	10/19	<i>Aeneid</i> , Books 1, 2, 4; Reader Response #12 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
Week 10	M	10/24	<i>Aeneid</i> , Books 6, 7, 8; Reader Response #13 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
	W	10/26	Ovid, from <i>Metamorphoses</i> , Book I, (online): "The Creation," "The Four Ages," "The Story of Lycia," "The Flood," "Deucalion & Pyrrha"; Reader Response #13 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
Week 11	M	10/31	Ovid, from <i>Metamorphoses</i> (Norton Text); from <i>Heroides</i> (online): "Penelope to Odysseus," "Medea to Jason," "Dido to Aeneas"; Reader Response #14 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
	W	11/2	From Roman Empire to Christian Europe—or from Polytheism to Monotheism [SLO #1-3, 5]
Week 12	M	11/7	From <i>Old Testament</i> ; from <i>New Testament</i> ; Augustine, from <i>Confessions</i> ; Reader Response #15 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
	W	11/9	<i>The Song of Roland</i> , Reader Response #16 due [SLO #1-3, 5]
Week 13	M	11/14	<i>Thorstein the Staff-Struck</i> , Reader Response #17 due [SLO #1-3, 5]

W 11/16 Marie de France, *Lanval*, Reader Response #18 due [SLO #1-3, 5]

Week 14

M 11/21 Introduction to Dante [SLO #2, 5]

W 11/23 Dante, *Inferno*, Cantos I-XVII, Reader Response #19 due [SLO #1-3, 5]

Week 15

M 11/28 Dante, *Inferno*, Cantos XVIII-XXXIV, Reader Response #20 due [SLO #1-3, 5]

W 11/30 Dante, from *Purgatorio*, Reader Response #21 due [SLO #1-3,5]

Week 16

M 12/5 Dante, from *Paradisio*, Reader Response #22 due [SLO #1-3, 5]

W 12/7 **Due: Critical Papers** [SLO #4]

Last Things; Review for Final

Course Evaluations

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 14, 0945-1200 (bring large exam books, blue or green)