

World Literature II: Encountering Modernity

LLT 1223, CRN 3110

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Office Hours: S228, MW 12:30-1:30, and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is “modernity”? How does modernity continue to shape the world? How has art and literature responded to modernity? These are the central questions we will be exploring this semester. As you will see, modernity is a complex phenomenon that has unfolded over hundreds of years, a combination of technological, political, economic, social, and cultural forces. These forces combine to create modernity as an historical era and process that unites and disrupts, displaces and creates, dismantles old identities and forges new ones.

Because of this complexity, literature and the other arts are some of the most powerful resources we have for understanding the emergence of modernity, which is why they play a central role in this course. The works we will be examining not only *represent* these forces but actively *respond* to them. They are works that teach us how it feels to be modern. In this sense, the literature we will be exploring together are not simply documents from the past; they are resources for understanding the present, since we are all products of these modernizing forces.

Ultimately, this course will allow you to discover and reflect upon modernity as a global and personal phenomenon. To undertake this journey, be prepared to read (and reread) regularly, thoughtfully, and imaginatively, write clearly and with precision, and participate actively in class discussion.

Course Outcomes

By taking this course, students will...

Interpret literary texts and visual art through close reading.

Examine major historical processes and their relationships to each other.

Compare and contrast cultural and social contexts through literature and art from across the globe.

Investigate literary and cultural works with basic research.

REQUIRED STUDENT WORK

1. Close and attentive reading of the assigned texts; active, engaged, and daily contribution to the class discussion (further instructions below)
2. 3 essays on assigned texts/topics, due at various points throughout the semester
3. Weekly reading quizzes
4. Drafting exam questions

5. Midterm and final exams

GRADE CALCULATION

Participation/discussion questions: 20%

Papers: 45% (15% each)

Midterm and final exams: 20% (10% each)

Exam Questions: 5%

Reading quizzes: 10%

The following grading scale will be used for computation, **although attendance will directly influence your course grade—see attendance policy below:**

A, 100% - 95%,	B, 85% - 83%	C-, 72% - 70%
A-, 94% - 90%	B-, 82% - 80%	D+, 69% - 66%
B+, 89% - 86%	C+, 79% - 76%	D, 65% - 63%
	C 75% - 73%	D-, 62% - 60%

REQUIRED TEXTS

Available in the bookstore (you MUST purchase these editions)

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (Norton) ISBN: 978-0393970142

Norton Anthology of World Literature, 4th edition, vol E (Norton) ISBN: 9780393602852

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Oxford) ISBN: 9780199537150

Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Norton) ISBN: 978-0393352566

Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West* (Riverhead) ISBN: 978-0735212206

On Canvas

Various texts. **Print and bring hard copies on the day these texts are assigned.**

EXPECTATIONS, POLICIES, ADVICE

On Reading

Henry David Thoreau said that the best books require the best of us, and that “reading in the high sense” is “not that which lulls us as a luxury and suffers the nobler faculties to sleep [...], but what we have to stand on tip-toe to read and devote our most alert and wakeful hours to.” The more actively and intelligently you engage with these texts, the more you will get out of this course. Prepare to spend the bulk of your studying time for this class carefully reading (and rereading) the texts. We will spend some time discussing what this means but, at minimum, it requires you to read **with a pen in hand** (underlining, making comments in the margins, taking notes). As evidence of this engaged reading, each student will be required to **share one discussion question for each day of reading.**

ADDITIONALLY: you must bring all REQUIRED material to class in *HARD COPY*. Printer malfunctioning will not be an acceptable excuse for not having the hard copy in hand.

Participation/Attendance

Per LTU guidelines, I will be keeping attendance every day and students who miss more than **6** class sessions risk failing the course. At the same time, I believe that you are ultimately responsible for your own learning. Whether or not you attend class is entirely up to you; apart from the regulations imposed by the university, I will not reward you simply for being here or penalize you for not being here.

However, a seminar is not a lecture, but an exercise in shared learning. We teach one another in this course, and thus, if you **ARE** in class, I expect your fully engaged presence. As your instructor, I am responsible for guaranteeing the best classroom environment, which informs my participation guidelines. Additionally, if your classroom behaviors indicate that you are not here to learn, I will call you out as an **agent saboteur: that is, someone who has infiltrated our seminar for the purposes of disrupting its progress. Agent Saboteur behaviors include but are not limited to the following:**

- ...no hard copies of the assigned readings.
- ...use of cell phone, including texting or web browsing (if you need to take a call or text, simply step outside).
- ...use of laptop without prior permission.
- ...engaging in other behaviors (sleeping, etc.) that distract from or diminish the quality of our conversation.

Obviously, if you are not here, you will not be able to earn participation points. Your participation score will fall into one of four categories. Here are the characteristics of each category.

Excellent participation (A): Demonstrates leadership in our class discussion by initiating conversation on a daily basis. Listens to fellow classmates and responds to them directly. Attends each class prepared to offer relevant, insightful, and thoughtful comments and discussion questions. Demonstrates a thoughtful reading of the material, and is prepared to respond to questions about the text. Takes regular notes and actively annotates the readings.

Good participation (B) Speaks up in class on a daily basis. Demonstrates that he/she has read and engaged the material to some degree, but offers little insight or poor discussion questions. Contributes to small group discussion, but fails to show leadership. Takes minimal notes.

Passing participation (C): Speaks up in class occasionally, but does not make a significant contribution to the class discussion. Participates in small group discussions, but minimally. Does not demonstrate basic knowledge of the material. Takes few or no notes.

Failing participation (D/F): Attends class, but does not speak. Does not demonstrate that he/she has read the material. Does not contribute actively to small group activities, and sits passively during large group discussion.

I will be giving you feedback throughout the term so you know where you stand on your participation grade.

Discussion Questions

To further cultivate the spirit of the seminar, I expect each student to come to class having written **one discussion question based on that day's assigned reading**. Good discussion questions are designed to solicit exploration and reflection; in this sense, they are not simply factual or yes/no questions. They allow us to "seminar" in a purposeful, focused manner. Ideally, a question will include a specific reference to a passage or element from the text, but it can also be more general, perhaps relating our text to a contemporary example.

We will use these questions as a way to structure our discussion of the text that day. A typical class period will begin with 30-45 minutes of lecture/guided discussion, followed by 30-45 minutes of student-generated discussion of the text, although you can expect some variation.

I have linked to a document on Canvas that offers some tips for designing effective discussion questions; read this carefully during the first week of the term.

Quizzes

Brief quizzes will be given roughly once a week. These quizzes are simply intended to nudge you to complete the readings with care. If you have read attentively, you will have no problem with the quiz. If you have not read, you will. **No make-up quizzes allowed.**

Due Dates and Optional Revision

Late essays will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each 12-hour period. Thus, an "A" essay due at 11:59 pm turned in at 5 am the next day will score at B+; at 5 pm, it will score a B, etc. For essays 1 **OR 2 (but not both)**, you will have the option of turning in a revision, due 1 week after I return the essay with comments. **I will only accept a revision that includes a 1 paragraph statement explaining how it was revised. Additionally, I will grade the revision as rigorously as I grade the first draft—if you want to improve the grade, you must improve the paper substantially.**

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing—as long as you cite them. As a matter of policy, any plagiarized piece of writing will receive an F with no possibility of revision, **even if the plagiarism is unintentional**. Additionally, students who commit flagrant or

persistent plagiarism will be reported to the Academic Honor Board for review and risk failing the course. Note that plagiarism is an insult to me as your instructor and to your peers. There is no reason for you to stoop to this in this course. If at any point you have further questions about this, or aren't sure whether or not something is plagiarism, come and see me.

You will be required to type the undergraduate Honor Code Pledge on all papers and other work completed outside of class. Failure to do so will result in a lowered grade for that particular assignment. The Honor Code Pledge is as follows: "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in completing this work, nor have I presented someone else's work as my own."

Finally, the Department of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Communications requires students to submit all final copies of expository essays to VeriCite, an anti-plagiarism software. Instructions on submitting work to VeriCite will be provided at a later date.

Accommodations

Please let me know if you need accommodation of any sort. I will work with Disability Services to provide what you require. I am very willing to take suggestions specific to this class to meet your needs. This syllabus is available in large print, as are other class materials.

Important Dates

1/21: Last day to add/register on Banner Web

1/25 Last day to drop traditional semester courses with refund

Reading schedule (subject to revision)

Introductions

1/15 Kahn, "The Seminar" (Canvas, hereafter C)

1/17 Class syllabus, "ABC of Translating Poetry" (C); **Essay 1 assigned**

1/22 Reading Literature: Blake, "London," (C); Eagleton, "How to Read Literature," pg. 1-7, 25-35 (C)

I. "Where are we?": Journeys Free and Forced

1/24 Lipking, "The New World of Slavery—An Introduction," pgs. 75-89 in Behn, *Oroonoko*; **Language Groups established**

Over the weekend: read Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* in its entirety. Note: Fairly graphic violence.

1/29 Behn, *Oroonoko* **Draft exam questions assigned**

1/31 Behn, *Oroonoko*

2/5 Behn, *Oroonoko*; **Language Group research due on CLASS Google Doc by 11:59 pm**

2/7 Equiano, "Interesting Narrative" (Norton)

II. "What is our power?": Enlightenment and its Discontents

2/12 Dessalines, "Liberty or Death: Proclamation of the Inhabitants of Haiti" (Norton); "Revolution in France" music video (C)

2/14 Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" (C)

2/19 Shelley, *Frankenstein*; **Essay 2 assigned**

2/21 Shelley, *Frankenstein*

2/26 Shelley, *Frankenstein*

2/28 Shelley, *Frankenstein*

3/5 Midterm Exam: Bring Blue Book

3/7 Analyzing visual art; "Formal Guide to Art Analysis," "The Art of Slowing Down in the Museum" (C); **Essay 1 Due**

3/12: SPRING BREAK

3/14: SPRING BREAK

3/19 **NO CLASS: DIA VISIT on your own**

III. "How do we organize ourselves?": Urbanism, Industrialism, Realism

3/21 **No Class: Attend Kenneth Knoespel Humanity+Technology Lecture, 12:30-1:45, S100**

3/26 "The Meiji Restoration" (C)

3/28 Ichiyo, "Separate Ways" (Norton)

4/2 Tagore, "Punishment" (Norton) **Essay 2 Due; Essay 3 Assigned**

IV. "How are we connected?": Postcolonial Modernism

4/4 "Modernity and Modernism" (C)

4/9 Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*

4/11 Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*

4/16 Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*

4/18 Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*

V. "Who are we?": Crossing Borders and Identities

4/23 Hamid, *Exit West*

4/25 Hamid, *Exit West*

4/30 Hamid, *Exit West*

5/2 Hamid, *Exit West*

Essay 3 due during exam week; Final Exam: Thursday, May 9, 1:45-3:35