E 303 D ● Plan II World Literature

Instructor: Sherman, Alexander
Unique #: 35800
Semester: Spring 2026
Cross-lists:
Areas: 1
Restrictions:
Computer Instruction:

Description: Whatever world literature is, it has everything to do with the novel. But the novel is also the hardest genre to grasp: novels are true and false, prosaic and poetic, long and short. Building on the first semester's survey of genres, we will do a deeper dive on this important but difficult genre. Getting a better sense of what novels have been and what they might be can potentially help us get a better sense of world literature and, maybe, the world.

To do so, we will read some of the oldest novels, the "most typical" novel, and novels that inaugurated regional "booms." The course is roughly organized by the historical geography of the novel. All these texts simultaneously exemplify familiar subgenres and features of the novel in general, as it has become increasingly globalized, while continuing to offer their own unfamiliar, sometimes uncanny idiosyncrasies related to their specific circumstances. By reading these challenging and sprawling texts, students will not only have a better grasp of perhaps the most assigned and researched literary genre, but will become more persistent, focused readers. We will cap off the year with a long comparative essay, transitioning from analyzing texts to wider-reaching cultural arguments.

Texts:

- *Aethiopica [Αἰθιοπικά, Aithiopiká],* Heliodorus of Emesa (Koine Greek; ca. 220 or 370)
- *The Tale of Genji [源氏物語, Genji Monogatari],* Murasaki Shikibu (Early Middle Japanese; ca. 1021)
- *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, Laurence Sterne (English; 1759-67)
- *Untouchable*, Mulk Raj Anand (English; 1935)
- *One Hundred Years of Solitude* [*Cien años de soledad*], Gabriel García Márquez (Spanish; 1967)
- *Nervous Conditions,* Tsitsi Dangarembga (English; 1988)
- *Beloved*, Toni Morrison (English; 1989)

Requirements & Grading:

Plus/minus grades are used. Extra credit is available. For up to 3 points of extra credit towards your final grade, you can read *The Luminaries* and write a mini-essay about it. For up to 3 points of extra credit towards your final grade, you can read *The Sympathizer* by Viet Thanh Nguyen (who is visiting UT for an event this semester) and write a mini-essay about it. These are both due at the same time as the final paper. Presenting on some of the secondary readings will also add up to 1 point of extra credit, as detailed in the assignment guide.

Assignments	Points Possible	Percent of Total Grade
WRITING		75
• Five mini-essays on a novel • Interpreting a novel • Comparative essay on two or more novels		30 20 25
PRESENTATION		10
• Presentation on secondary reading		10
PARTICIPATION		15

Schedule:

Week	Date	Day	Class Topic	Reading Due	Assignments Due
1	1/13	T	Introduction	Syllabus, mini-essay assignment guide, and presentation assignment guide	N/A

Week	Date	Day	Class Topic	Reading Due	Assignments Due
1	1/15	Th	*Aethiopica* [Αἰθιοπικά, *Aithiopiká*], Heliodorus of Emesa (Koine Greek; ca. 220 or 370)	p. 353-424 (to end of Book Three)	Sign up for presentation
2	1/20	T		To end (p. 588)	
2	1/22	Th	Presentation on "The Chronotope"	Optional: Excerpt from "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," Mikhail Bakhtin (1937)	Mini-essay due Friday at 5 PM
3	1/27	T	Excerpt from *The Tale of Genji* [*源氏物語, Genji Monogatari*], Murasaki Shikibu (Early Middle Japanese; ca. 1021)	p. 1-131 (to end of "The Safflower")	
3	1/29	Th	Presentation on "Monogatari" and "History of the Novel, Theory of the Novel"	Optional: "Monogatari," Adriana Boscaro (2006); "History of the Novel, Theory of the Novel," Franco Moretti (2010)	
4	2/3	T		To end of excerpt (p. 277)	
4	2/5	Th	Presentation on "Fictionality"	Read assignment guide for essay 1 Optional: "The Rise of Fictionality," Catherine Gallagher (2006)	Mini-essay due Friday at 5 PM
5	2/10	T	Excerpt from *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, Laurence Sterne (English; 1759-67)	p. 1-137 (to end of volume II)	
5	2/12	Th	Presentation on *Theory of the Novel* and presentation on "Epic and Novel"	Optional: Excerpt from *The Theory of the Novel*, György Lukács (1916); "Epic and Novel," Bakhtin (1941)	
6	2/17	T		To end of posted excerpt (p. 304)	
6	2/19	Th	Presentation on *Theory of Prose*	Optional: Excerpt from *Theory of Prose*, Viktor Shklovsky (1925)	Mini-essay due Friday at 5 PM
7	2/24	T	*Untouchable*, Mulk Raj Anand (English; 1935)	To end	
7	2/26	Th			1) Mini-essay 4 due Friday at 5 PM 2) Essay 1 due Friday at 5 PM
8	3/3	T	*One Hundred Years of Solitude* [*Cien años de soledad*], Gabriel García Márquez (Spanish; 1967)	p. 1-140	
8	3/5	Th	Presentation on "Solitude," "The Marvelous Real," and *The Fantastic*	Optional: "The Solitude of Latin America," Gabriel García Marquéz (1982); "On the Marvelous Real in America," Alejo Carpentier (1949); excerpt from *The Fantastic*, Tzvetan Todorov (1970)	
9	3/10	T	Presentation on *The Historical Novel*	p. 141-313 Optional: Excerpt from *The Historical Novel*, Lukács (1937)	
9	3/12	Th	Class visit to Ransom Center and García Márquez archive		

Week	Date	Day	Class Topic	Reading Due	Assignments Due
SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS					
11	3/24	T		To end (p. 314-417)	
11	3/26	Th		Read assignment guide for final essay	Mini-essay 5 due Friday at 5 PM
12	3/31	T	*Nervous Conditions*, Tsitsi Dangarembga (English; 1988)	p. 11-178	
12	4/2	Th	Presentation on "The *Bildungsroman*"	Optional: "The *Bildungsroman* and its Significance in the History of Realism," Bakhtin (1936-8)	
13	4/7	T		To end (p. 179-298)	
13	4/9	Th	Presentation on *The Antinomies of Realism*	Optional: Excerpt from *The Antinomies of Realism*, Fredric Jameson (2013)	Mini-essay 6 due Friday at 5 PM
14	4/14	T	*Beloved*, Toni Morrison (English; 1989)	p. 3-173	
14	4/16	Th	Presentation on *Gothic Conventions* plus foreword to *Beloved*	Optional: Excerpt from *The Coherence of Gothic* Conventions, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1980); foreword to *Beloved* (2004)	
15	4/21	T		To end (p. 174-324)	
15	4/23	Th			Mini-essay 7 due Friday at 5 PM
Final paper due by end of final exam slot for course: 4/30/2025 at 10 AM. For confirmation, see https://onestop.utexas.edu/registration-and-degree-planning/final-exam-information.					

Learning Outcomes:

1. Read and understand novels from an array of periods, languages, and subgenres
2. Analyze novels at different scales, from the passage to the whole text
3. Make comparative arguments about the novel form and its significance, drawing on literary history and theory
4. Develop resilience, persistence, and understanding

Policies: *Documented Disability Statement*: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone), or visit http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd.

Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Academic Integrity: Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. For additional information on Academic Integrity, see http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint.php.

Religious Holy Days: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Web Site: Canvas.