I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

World Literature I has at its core a selection of a corpus of masterpieces from Western Literature which emphasize the intellectual heritage that is the antecedent of twentieth century United States culture and Western Civilization. This core has been extended to include masterpieces and significant works of non-Western Literature (e.g., African, Chinese, Indian, and Japanese) and important female writers. It presents significant currents in world literature and emphasizes diversity and cultural and intellectual pluralism in imaginative literature. This multicultural global model is designed to create opportunities to develop the theme of the “reflective decision-maker” in education.

II. COURSE RATIONALE

The course continues to introduce students to and expects them to use the concepts, vocabulary and skills for reading, analyzing and interpreting literature. It stresses the importance for each student to understand and use the reader-response approach to literature. This approach involves processes such as comprehending at the literal level, analyzing and synthesizing, engaging the imagination, responding through journal writing, and reacting through various creative activities. This provides the foundation for the Humanities’ contribution to producing the sensitive educated individual who is expected to function in a global multicultural environment.

III. COURSE COMPETENCIES

A. General Competencies:

Students successfully completing this course should be able to:

- show an enhanced ability to meditate on and think reflectively and creatively about literature, and extrapolate from the imaginative to the real world.
- make effective decisions on any pertinent subject or issue arising out of these literary readings.
- read and understand criticism from a variety of sources and write an analysis and interpretation of a work focusing upon theme, character, plot, point of view, setting, symbolism and language.
- demonstrate the application of critical theories by analyzing a literary work from a historical, sociological, psychological, philosophical, biographical or psychoanalytical perspective.
identify through oral and written presentations the major themes in a literary work.

demonstrate the ability to associate masterpieces with their historical period, identify authors or major literary works, recognize authors’ point of view, tone and mood in literary works (by scoring 75% and above on standardized objective tests), and identify major and minor characters in a literary work.

identify the various genres and sub-genres of literature that include fiction, poetry, drama, epic, fable, myth, lyric, etc.

demonstrate research skills by writing a research paper evaluated at “C” or above.

identify well-known lines from major literary works by scoring at least 70% on an objective test.

demonstrate a response to certain assigned reading selections by keeping a literary journal in which they write for the purposes of identifying, predicting, evaluating, reacting, associating, analyzing, rereading, etc.

demonstrate writing as a process in which the steps of prewriting, writing, and revision are always involved. This means that all written work required in the course (research and other shorter papers) must show evidence of careful planning, inclusive of outline development, whether topic or sentence. Employing these steps in the writing process will give written assignments the necessary logic, order, and coherence to make them effective.

B. SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES:

Students successfully completing this course should be able to:

Egyptian Book of the Dead

understand the Book of the Dead as an example of sacred narrative; recognize that what is myth for readers today was religion for the ancient Egyptians.

detect parallels between events and characters in the Book of the Dead and passages in Genesis or other books of the Bible.

consult and comprehend traditional print and Internet sources that heighten our awareness of the unique culture of ancient Egypt.

recognize that the Book of the Dead makes extensive use of metaphor and other types of figurative language; students should be able to identify and interpret these figures of speech.

develop familiarity with the names and roles of the major figures of Egyptian mythology.

recognize and discuss the use of description and narration (two of the most basic kinds of writing) in the Book of the Dead.
The Book of Ruth

- understand the historical and geographical significance of the setting of the story of Ruth
- recognize the importance of family and family life in ancient Israel
- recognize the customs and traditions of the time
- identify Ruth as a heroine who occupies a unique position in biblical history
- draw a family tree to establish the lineage of Naomi and her husband Elimelech
- develop familiarity with the names and roles of the characters in the story.
- recognize and discuss the story of Ruth as one of the greatest love stories of all ages.
- analyze the unique relationship between Naomi and Ruth
- show how this story demonstrates the themes of loyalty, trust, faithfulness, perseverance, and struggle in the face of adversity
- recognize the story of Ruth as a powerful portrayal of the Divine Will (the Will of God) being worked out through the joys and tragedies of life.

Homer - The Iliad

- discuss in an essay the controlling theme and other major themes found in the Iliad;
- list at least five epic conventions found in the Iliad;
- illustrate in an exercise at least three examples of how the gods intervene in the affairs of the characters in the Iliad;
- summarize in a written exercise the plot of the Iliad;

Homer - The Odyssey

- list at least five epic conventions found in the Odyssey in a written exercise;
- narrate at least two of the adventures of Odysseus in an essay;
- analyze in an exercise the relationship between Odysseus and Penelope;
- retell in an essay the events surrounding the homecoming of Odysseus;

Sappho - Poems
- discuss the characteristics of lyric poetry as composed by Sappho;

- compare, in written form or orally, the status and depictions of women in Sappho and Homer;

**Euripides - Medea**

- analyze the formation of Medea’s plan for revenge;

- defend the statement in oral/written expression that Medea does (does not) fit the Aristotelian concept of the tragic heroine;

- analyze the use of the supernatural in the Medea

- describe the two stage devices, the ekkyklema and the deus ex machina, illustrating in detail the use of the latter in the Medea in written form;

- present and discuss in an essay the controlling theme and other major themes found in the Medea;

- analyze the character of Medea as an amalgam of the salient qualities of Achilles and Odysseus;

- define recognition or tragic flaw as an essential concept of tragedy in any essay examination;

**Aristophanes -- Lysistrata**

- understand the historical background of the Peloponnesian War from 431BC to 404BC between Athens and Sparta.

- understand Lysistrata as an anti-war satirical comedy.

- recognize how the fantastic plot, sexual ribaldry, improbable actions and extremely comic situations are the satirist’s way of raising very serious issues.

- see Lysistrata as one of a series of plays which confirm Aristophanes as a social critic of his times.

- understand and appreciate the satirical-comic effects achieved through language and other visual means.

- identify and explore the contrasts and conflicts between men and women in dramatic terms.

- discuss how Lysistrata maintains the unity of the women and overcomes obstacles to that unity.

**Plato - Dialogues**
- explain how Plato develops the dialogue into a literary form;
- restate major ideas Plato presents in one or more of his dialogues;
- discuss in a brief essay what is meant by Platonic dualism;

**Aeneid** - Book VI

- appreciate and understand the journey to the underworld as a major theme in western literature;
- compare and contrast Virgil’s treatment of this theme with another example such as Book II of the Odyssey or Dante’s Inferno;
- describe Aeneas as an epic hero who is subject to destiny and is devoted to carrying out an idealistic mission;
- perceive the religious dimensions of Aeneas’ quest and his trip to the underworld; understand that what is considered myth today was sacred for citizens of the Roman world;
- appreciate, identify, and comment on the outstanding literary attributes (e.g., figurative language, imagery, dramatic tension) of Book VI.

**Ramayana** (excerpts:)

- provide a sketch of a character, for instance Hanuman;
- identify the moral values of Indian epic;
- understand the Ramayana as a work of epic literature the role of the techniques of oral literature should be recognized;
- specify resemblances and differences between heroic ideals in the Ramayana and in other epic works, such as the Iliad of the Aeneid;
- comprehend the Ramayana in its broader cultural and historical context. Students should appreciate the heritage of the Ramayana story within and outside of present-day India;

**West African Myths and Fables**

- identify the features of oral presentation found in fables and myths;
- to show what do myths and fables teach them of African culture.

- summarize and/or paraphrase a fable or myth in standard English, dialect, or the Gullah language.
Chinese Lyric Poetry

- contrast the themes found in selected poems of Li Po and Tu Fu;
- identify the characteristic of Chinese lyric poems as expressed in works of Li Po and Tu Fu;
- identify in selected poems the “romantic spirit” of Li Po.

The Epic of Son – Jara

- outline the geographical and historical setting of the Son-Jara;
- give the epic characteristics found in the Son-Jara;
- discuss Son-Jara as an epic hero.
- outline the development of the storyline in the epic narrative.
- identify and comment on traditional and cultural traits that define the setting.
- recognize Son-Jara as a unique epic hero shaped by his culture and times.
- point out and understand the performance features used by this griot in his oral recitation.
- contract the heroic characteristics of Son-Jara with the actions of his opponents.
- show how magic and the supernatural element aid Son-Jara’s heroic conduct and defines setting.
- identify the historical and cultural themes explored in the epic.
- know the historical and geographical setting of the epic.
- recognize the role of Islam and traditional rituals in defining “religion” in this epic.

Boccaccio – The Decameron

- explain how the Plague is used as a framework and structural device.
- understand the themes and issues raised in each story.
- discuss issues of morality and/or sexual conduct raised in some stories.
- differentiate between the portrayal of the individual story tellers.
- relate the events in the story of Griselda to marital relationship and conduct in modern society.
- explain how the 7 young women and 3 men came to be together and tell the stories each tells.
show how Boccaccio develops the social class and narrative point of view of the story tellers.

draw parallels and make comparisons between Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and Boccaccio’s *Decameron*.

**Chaucer - *Canterbury Tales*: “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”**

- write/talk about the characters and personality-types described in the “Prologue.”
- discuss and evaluate Chaucer’s methods of presenting his portraits of the pilgrims.
- show an understanding of the range of tones, attitudes, and meanings expressed in Chaucer’s language in the “Prologue.”
- discern and interpret the impression of Medieval England conveyed in the “Prologue.”
- recognize the social, professional, vocational, and occupational classes/groups represented in the “Prologue.”
- understand the arguments, themes, and attitudes presented by the Wife of Bath based on her candid self-revelation in the “Prologue.”
- discern, interpret, and discuss the issues of female sexuality and women’s rights raised by the Wife of Bath.
- discuss questions of marital harmony and conflict explored in the “Prologue” and “Tale.”
- examine Chaucer’s use of irony and satire in presenting the Wife of Bath.
- relate the “Prologue” and “Tale” to modern society in terms of feminist issues.

**Machiavelli - *The Prince***

- identify through oral and written presentations the major themes in *The Prince*;
- state and discuss Machiavelli’s political beliefs in an essay;
- take specific passages from *The Prince* and identify the characteristics that make Machiavelli’s style effective;

**Montaigne - *Essays***

- discuss Montaigne’s awareness of non-European cultures;
- recognize the importance Montaigne attaches to the idea of nature;
- enumerate the distinct characteristics of the essay as developed by Montaigne;
Wu Ch’ eng-en - Journey to the West

- summarize the action in the episode selected by Wu Ch’ eng-en’s Monkey (The Journey to the West);
- compare the role of the monkey in this Chinese work with the role of the spider in African folklore;
- discuss fantasy as opposed to realism in this episode.
- apply the Aristotelian view of the tragic character in order to determine if specific characters are truly tragic or not;

Medieval China: Voices of Women

- identify women’s concerns as presented in these poems and how they might differ—and/or resemble the concerns of men;
- identify similarities and differences with Tang Dynasty poems written by Wang Wei, Li Bo, or other well recognized male writers of the era;
- discuss the erotic dimension of individual poems and how sexuality can be both expressed and suppressed;
- recognize the cultural values and the characteristics of everyday life that are revealed in the poems and present a picture of life that is distinctly Chinese.

Shakespeare - Hamlet

- trace the aspect of mystery that Shakespeare has built into Hamlet;
- trace one of these themes: (a) guilt, (b) death, (c) evil, (d) sexual corruption, (e) royalty—through the dramatic structure of Hamlet;
- demonstrate whether Hamlet does (does not) observe the Aristotelian unities;
- discuss the function of the play within the play;

Milton - Paradise Lost

- list at least three reasons why John Milton had the expertise to write a Christian epic;
- identify the biblical background (chapter and verse) of Paradise Lost;
- explain light and darkness, life and death according to both Paradise Lost and the Bible;
- list at least three “balances” in Paradise Lost;
- list at least three ways Satan tempted Eve in Paradise Lost;
- discuss why Adam and Eve were not permitted to remain in Paradise after "their fall" according to the Biblical explanation of "Heaven," "mortality," and "Immortality;"

- discuss the paradox of Satan’s entering Paradise near the Tree of Life;

- contrast the birth of “Sin” in "Paradise Lost" with God the son in the Holy Trinity;

- explain why the tone of *Paradise Lost* changes in Book IX;

- discuss the advantage of “the fall of man” from the point of view of God’s Son conquering death in both *Paradise Lost* and the Bible;

- identify Adam’s greatest weakness;

**Camoes - The Lusiads**

- identify epic conventions that are made use of in *The Lusiads* and recognize similarities with classical epics such as Homer’s *Odyssey*;

- discuss the depiction of non-Western cultures (e.g., African) in this epic;

- paraphrase stanzas from the *The Lusiads* and recognize their basic meaning;

- discuss the heroic dimension of the individuals depicted in *The Lusiads* as they encounter immense difficulties, at times overcoming and at others succumbing to them.

**African Oral Poetry (all)**

- understand African Oral Poetry as a distinct subtype of African oral literature within the oral tradition;

- identify some of the distinguishing features of oral poetry that place it in a performance setting;

- show some knowledge of the region and culture-specific features of these poems, which contribute to meaning and reveal society/setting;

- discuss the usual linguistic resources of poetry observable in these poems while also recognizing how these are rooted in the African setting;

- discuss what has been learned about African culture, society, aesthetics, and creativity from reading these poems;

- paraphrase and/or summarize the content of each poem and recognize the unique aspects of each subtype, e.g., the praise poem, the ritual-based poem;

- recognize what oral poems share with and what differentiates them from written poems in the Western tradition.
2. **V.  OUTLINE OF COURSE CONTENT**

All students will be taught and tested on a group of core selections. All Professors will teach all texts marked by the asterisk. Individual Professors may teach additional selections and/or extend the scope of the core selections.

**Unit I: Masterpieces of the Ancient World**
- *The Book of Ruth*
- *Awakening Osiris* - Egyptian Book of the Dead
- Homer, *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*
- Homeric Hymn to Demeter and/or Sappho
- Euripides - *Medea*
- Aristotle, *On the Art of Poetry*
- **Aristophanes - Lysistrata**
- Virgil, *The Aeneid* Bk VI
- Confucius, *The Analects*
- The Book of Songs (Chinese)
- *Bhagavad Gita*
- *The Ramayana*
- West African Myth and/or African Fables

**Unit II: Masterpieces of the Middle Ages**
- Chaucer – “Miller’s Prologue and Tale”
- *The Epic of Son-Jara*
- Dante - *Inferno*
- Chinese Lyric Poetry
- Japanese Poetry – *The Man’yoshu*
- **The Voices of Women (selections)**

**Unit III: Masterpieces of the Renaissance**
- **Boccaccio - The Decameron** (selections)
- Machiavelli - *The Prince* or Montaigne - *Essays*
- Shakespeare, *Hamlet* or Milton, *Paradise Lost*
- Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
- Oral Poetry from Africa
- Wu Ch’engen *Monkey* (The Journey to the West)
- Maria de Zayas, *The Enchantment of Love* or Mirabai, *Devotional Poems*
- **de Camoes - The Lusiads**

3. **VI. LIBRARY ASSIGNMENTS/SPECIAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Periodic Examinations.

A Research Paper or several short papers.
4. VII. METHOD OF EVALUATION

Periodic Examinations/Tests 20%
Research or other papers/Essays 25%
Periodic Quizzes 10%
Mid Term Examination 15%
Final Examination 25%
Class Participation 5%

100%

5. VIII GRADING SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 - 100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 89</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 79</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 69</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 59</td>
<td>F</td>
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CULTURAL ENRICHMENT COMPONENT

World Literature 250, a part of the general education requirement, is one of the components in the humanities. The interrelationships of art (performing and visual), drama, history, and music are obvious. Life itself is interdisciplinary. Therefore, the cultural enrichment of the world literature experience in the humanities will undergrid the focus in these disciplines.

World Literature 250 requires attendance at cultural enrichment activities. These activities help to enrich the undergraduate educational experience by broadening your exposure to the wide range of intellectual opportunities on this campus.

_____% of your final grade in this course will come from your attendance at select cultural activities. Assignments will be integrated into the course in the form of short papers (2-3 pages), essays, classroom discussions, test questions, or special projects.

During the fall semester you will attend five activities.

REQUIRED ATTENDANCE

Information will be provided at a later date.


Traversi, Derek A. The Canterbury Tales: A Reading Delaware: The University Press, 1983.


