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Department of English & Writing Studies

Understanding Literature Today **English 1020E (003)** Fall/Winter 2013-14

Instructor: Dr. Mark McDayter

Date/Time: Wednesday 7:00pm-9:00pm

Location: Talbot College 343

Prerequisites

Grade 12U English or permission of the Department. For part time students who have been admitted without the OSSD, this permission will be granted as a matter of course.

Antirequisite(s): English 1022E, 1035E.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

Where does "literature today" come from? What is "literature today" like? The literary texts that we read and enjoy in English were not born from a vacuum, but developed from a richly diverse and immensely complicated cultural tradition that spans hundreds of years and every continent on earth. This section of ENG1020E will explore the connections between literature and culture, with a particular focus upon both modern and early modern texts and ways of writing. In the course of these explorations, we will read poetry, fiction, criticism, plays, a graphic novel, and literature in digital formats, including blogs, social media, and video, while discussing these

Integrate outside research materials and references to the original text into an essay through use of quotations and paraphrases;
Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively;

Week 3 - September 24, 2014

Representing and Being the Other
Jonathan Swift, A Modest Proposal (Online)
Tutorial 3: Irony and Voice

Week 4 - October 1, 2014

Representing and Being the Other (cont'd)
Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart
Tutorial 4: Essay Writin

Week 12 - November 26, 2014

Some Poetic Preoccupations (cont'd)

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "The Lover: A Ballad" (Online)

Tutorial 12: "The Proper Subjects of Poetry"

Essay 2 DUE in Tutorial

Week 13 - December 3, 2014

Some Poetic Preoccupations (cont'd)

Eliza Haywood, Fantomina (TBA)

Tutorial 13: In-class Essay

Week 14 - January 7, 2015

Many Selves

Christina Rossetti, Goblin Market (Online)

Tutorial 14: Research Methodologies (1)

Week 15 - January 14, 2015

Many Selves (cont'd)

Marjane Satrapi, Persepolis

Tutorial 15: Research Methodologies (2)

Week 16 - January 21, 2015

Many Selves (cont'd)

Marjane Satrapi, Persepolis (cont'd)

Tutorial 16: The Library

Week 17 - January 28, 2015

Watching from the Stage: Parody and Metatheatre

Tom Stoppard, The Real Inspector Hound

Tutorial 17: Storyboarding

Week 18 - February 4, 2015

"Each in His Narrow Cell": Elegy and Allusion

Thomas Gray, Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard (Online)

Tutorial 18: Citation and Documentation

Week 19 - February 11, 2015

Elegy and Allusion (cont'd)

Tony Harrison, V

Tutorial 19: Reading Secondary Sources

February 18, 2015

Reading Week: No Classes

No Tutorial

Topics:

- While we never hear the actual voice of the woman who is the target of the dramatized seduction in Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress," we can construct, in some detail, both her responses and character from the speaker's own language and argument. What is she like, based on the evidence of the poem? How does her implied character and response impact upon our understanding of the poem?
- Although it seems, in parts, to be a celebration of female desire and liberation, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's "The Lover: A Ballad" begins with an attempted seduction, and concludes badly for women. Discuss the poem's depiction of female desire, with a particular emphasis upon the implications of the concluding stanza.
- Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina* is too brief to be considered a novel, and is most conventionally described as a "romance." It contains, nonetheless, many elements and features that look ahead to the novel form that was, by the 1740s, to become established as one of the most important literary genres. With particular reference to Samuel Johnson's *Rambler* 4, and to other descriptions of the novelistic form, discuss *Fantomina* in the context of "the novel." Explain why this is an important question.
- Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* identifies itself in many ways as a moral fable for children. Discuss this poem as a work of children's literature. In what ways does it particularly target younger readers, and how are its language, images, and themes particularly appropriate for children? How, in this sense, does it differ from "adult" poems?
- A graphic novel such as Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* depends, to a great extent, upon the interplay of meaning between image and text. Examine some of the ways in which particular images comment upon, or change the meaning of the accompanying text, or vice versa. For this essay, you will likely need to include scans of the images you discuss.
- Because Tom Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound* breaks through the "fourth wall" to some degree, it can be seen as a play about plays, and about the audience's relationship with the action and characters on stage. Discuss what this play has to say about that relationship.
- Thomas Grey's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" employs a theme, images, and language that are "melancholic" in nature, with a focus upon sobering and sad self-reflection. How does the poem evoke melancholy, and what is the point of this tone? Of what use is melancholy?
- Tony Harrison's *V* is, most literally, a monologue by the poet, but it also features an imagined argument between the speaker and a fictional hooligan. How this fictional interlocutor is created, what is his nature, and what is his function in the poem?
- Discuss the particular images, theme, and function of one titled passage or section of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, placing it within the context of the poem as a whole.
- Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* employs colour in its title, and throughout its narrative. Discuss the meanings and purpose of these colours, and how they relate to the novel's overall themes.
- To some degree, Ransom Riggs' *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* is a formulaic novel for teens, borrowing, in particular, a great deal from J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. How does it relate to that formula, how does it depart from it, and what is the point and function of those departures?
- Blogging is, really, a literary genre that has emerged only within our own lifetimes as one of the most popular and engaging forms of writing. Provide a detailed analysis of one blog post on Jezebel, paying particular attention to the features that make it "literary." Why are these literary devices used? How are they used in this particular post?

Attendance: