Course Description

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Together with “The World, the Text, and the Critic II,” this course helps students to acquire a basic map of the history of texts from the beginnings of writing up to our own time. This course covers the first half, from Antiquity to the beginning of the 18th century. Through guided reading you will acquire essential facts about writers, works, and periods that will help you place your individual readings into a wider context and to find your way through the rich and diverse material you will encounter when studying literature.

Parallel to this systematic instruction, each of the three professors who teach this course will present to you an historical moment which has witnessed either the birth or a significant transformation of a literary genre. This will show you how we approach our material as students of texts, and will help you gain a deeper sense of how writing changes in time and is engaged urgently in relations with readers and with the world in which it emerges.

Detailed day-to-day schedules and learning goals for each module will be provided on Blackboard.

THE GENERIC MOMENTS

ANTIQUITY:

MEDIEVAL ANTIQUITY, RENAISSANCE ANTIQUITY

The Antiquity portion of the course will explore four major texts of the Ancient World in four consecutive weeks: Homer’s *Iliad (circa 800 B.C.E.),* Thucydides’ *Peloponnesian War (circa*
430-420 B.C.E.), Virgil’s *Aenied* (29-19 B.C.E.) and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (8 C.E.). We shall at once study these texts within their ancient contexts (religious, heroic, poetic, historical and mythological, in the Greek and Roman worlds), as well as within their medieval and renaissance contexts (from ancient epic to medieval romance, and from the text as an autopsy, or as a canonical source for Renaissance writers in Italy, France, England and beyond).

**THE MIDDLE AGES:**

**HEROES, LOVERS, TRICKSTERS, STORYTELLERS**

This portion of the course will explore Antiquity’s contributions to the emergence of European vernacular literatures and their genres and the social and cultural transformations of this “middle” period which spanned over a thousand years. From the exploits of the heroic figures and the quest for self depicted in romance, from the plight of courtly lovers to the ruses of fabliaux tricksters and their unwitting dupes, medieval literature often explores the possibilities for individual action and identity in a society where roles and responsibilities were rigidly codified. Early medieval aspirations for a divinely ordered feudal society composed of *bellatores*, *oratores*, and *laboratores* gave way to a diversification of social possibilities by the end of the Middle Ages. Social roles and ideals were so well-defined as to quickly become the subject of comedy in texts like the fabliaux and Chaucer’s estates’ satire. In response, medieval texts went beyond celebrations of the exceptional individual and heroic acts to also include more realistic representations of everyday existence. Older stories were adapted to newer times by storytellers who made authoritative narratives their own. We will discover medieval literature’s unique modes of authorship and cultural transmission.

**EARLY MODERN UP TO 1700**

**RENAISSANCE & BAROQUE: LIFE IS A DREAM**

The Renaissance/Baroque section of this course examines the literary self-consciousness of the western mind during a time of widespread diseases generically known as *plague*, of political upheaval, of religious Reformation (or early Protestantism), of New World discoveries, and of an accelerated repartition of knowledge thanks to new technical advances. Literary texts studied covering these historical movements include Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (the novella) Rabelais’s *Pantagruel* (the early novel), Montaigne’s *Essais* (the first of the genre), Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (tragedy) and Corneille’s *Illusion comique* (tragicomedy). Taking into account coinciding pictorial motifs, we shall explore the movement from the stability of the western world during the Renaissance period to its instability (or ecstasy) during that of the Baroque: the actors of plays and plays within plays, “the world as a stage”, “life as a dream”, the trompe-l’œil, the still-life (or *nature morte*), the marvels of the world and of human existence, the possibilities of the self and of self-consciousness.
Course Learning Outcomes

Introduction to the study of the disciplines of Comparative Literature and Literary Studies
Acquire a map of the history of literary and related works from the beginnings to the present
Learn essential facts about authors and works of these time periods.
Become acquainted with elementary terminology, questions, practices and methods of the study of literature
Develop a sense of what it may mean when someone uses the term “genre.”

General Education

The general education program at AUP consists of four requirements: Speaking the World, Modeling the World, Mapping the World, and Comparing Worlds Past and Present.

This course can be used to fulfill the -C (Comparing Worlds Past and Present) and the -M (Mapping the World) requirement and as such has the following learning objectives:

- Acquisition of an historical perspective by following the development of literature over a period of more than 3000 years.
- Cross-cultural comparison of literary practices (Indian – Greek – Roman – Spanish – English etc.).
- Observing how literature and its genres are embedded in a social, intellectual, economic and political context.
- Understanding how subjects construct their specific perspectives on the world through various forms of social experience in human history, and how such constructions change with spatial and temporal parameters.

Course Outline

September

Week I – 10th -14th
Monday 10th - Course introduction (Elizabeth and Brenton)

Thursday 13th - Homer, *The Iliad*, Book I (Brenton)

September 16th – last day to drop/add courses online

Week II - 17th - 21th

Monday 17th - Homer, *The Iliad*, Books 22 and 23 (Elizabeth)

Thursday 20th - Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (Brenton)

Week III - 24th – 28nd

Monday 24th - Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (Elizabeth)

Thursday 27th - Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 6 (Brenton)

*October*

Week IV – 1st - 5th

Monday 1st - Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 4 (Elizabeth)

Thursday 4th - Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, Book 12 and Book 14 (Brenton)
Week V – 8nd - 12th

**Monday 8th** - Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, Book 10 and Book 13 (Elizabeth), *Antiquity paper due*

Thursday 11th - No class, Visit to the Louvre TBA

Week VI - 15th - 19th: Elizabeth

**Monday 15th** - *Le Roman de Troie* (excerpts)

**Thursday 18th** - *Le Roman d’Enéas* (excerpts)

Week VII – 22nd – 26th: Elizabeth

**Monday 22nd** - Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Conte du Graal*, *Comparative Antiquity/Medieval paper due*

**Thursday 25th** - Medieval lyrics (selections)

October 26th, Mid-semester grades due

Week VIII – 29th – Nov.2nd: Elizabeth

**Monday 29th** - Marie de France, *Laïs*
October 31ST - November 2nd, (included) Fall break, No classes

November

Week IX – 5th – 9th: Elizabeth

Monday 5th - The Fabliaux

Thursday 8th - Boccaccio, excerpts from The Decameron

Week X - 12th -16th: Elizabeth/Brenton

Monday 12th - Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales, “The General Prologue” and “The Miller’s Tale”

Thursday 15th - Boccaccio, introduction to the First Day of The Decameron, Medieval paper due

Week XI -19th – 23rd: Brenton: Due date for Renaissance paper TBA

Monday 19th - Shakespeare, Hamlet, I / Rabelais, Pantagruel, I-II

Thursday 21nd - Shakespeare, Hamlet, II / Rabelais, Pantagruel, XXII

Week XII -26th - 30th: Brenton
**Monday 26th** - Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III-IV / Montaigne, “Of the Lame or Cripple”


*December*

**Week XIII – 3rd – 7th: Brenton**


**Week XIV - 10th - 14th: Brenton**


*December 12th, Last day of classes, December 13th -16th, Reading days*

**Final exam: Thurs. Dec. 20th 8:30-11:00**

**Textbooks**

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Cid, the Cinna, the Theatrical Illusion</td>
<td>Pierre Corneille</td>
<td>Penguin Classics</td>
<td>9780140443127</td>
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Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students’ participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an “F” for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

GRADING

20 % Preparation, participation, attendance: You will have periodic, unannounced reading quizzes in class, they may not be made up. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Failure of four or more quizzes will result in failure of the class.

60 % Written Coursework during the semester.
20 % Antiquity (Professor Hobart/Kinne) – for due dates and descriptions of the assignments see the detailed schedule on Blackboard

20 % Middle Ages (Professor Kinne): two short papers

- 1st paper (three typewritten pages): Comparative paper on Classical and Medieval Lyric
- 2nd paper (three typewritten pages): Comparative paper on two Medieval works

20 % Renaissance (Professor Hobart): for due dates and descriptions of the assignments see the detailed schedule to be published on Blackboard

20 % Final examination (comprising both knowledge questions and essay questions)

Further instructions, grading criteria, and due dates will be indicated in the individual schedules for each module.

Other