



Course Objectives

1. To develop your understanding of literature
2. To develop your general critical and analytical reading abilities
3. To develop ways of enjoying and appreciating literature as a lifelong activity
4. To improve your general critical thinking and writing abilities
5. To improve your general oral communication skills through class discussions and presentations.

As part of the Liberal Studies curriculum, this course immerses you in the experience of literature. We will not simply appreciate the greatness of literary "masterpieces" like awestruck fans in front of a painting (or Graceland if you prefer). I will lead you to consider some fundamental questions, beginning simply--What is literature? What are its uses?--and delving more deeply over the course of the semester. Readings that vary across time, culture, and style will help us to consider how and why literature has been made and enjoyed by others and, ultimately, what it means to us today, both inside and outside the classroom.

Texts

The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces. Lawall, Sarah et al, eds. 7th ed. Vol. 2. New York: Norton, 1999.

Allende, Isabel. The House of the Spirits. Trans. Magda Bogin. New York: Bantam, 1993. Trans. of La casa de los espíritus. Madrid: Plaza y Janes, 1982.

Other Materials and Resources

Composition notebook; two 3-1/2" disks with case; one double-pocket folder for your portfolio of web-posts and glossary; 3x3" Post-Its. Regular computer access will be required, so that you can make use of the Class Web Page, library resources, and WebCT discussion list.

Expectations, Workload, and Help

I hope you will find this to be an enjoyable but challenging course. We will discuss all major readings during class, but I will expect that you have closely read and reflected upon them in advance. Your ability to participate in class discussion depends on this. As in all English courses, you must make the effort to draw your own inferences about the texts you read and be prepared to learn how to articulate and justify your interpretations. Make sure you schedule time for reflective reading; falling behind in the reading diminishes what you can gain from each class.

Requirements and Expectations

Participation - preparedness; engagement in class discussion; contribution to group activities, including informal presentations; marginal notation. Also includes announced or unannounced reading quizzes, marginal notation quizzes, as well as any miscellaneous assignments not included elsewhere.	25%
Informal Writing Commonplace Book and Journal - Includes quotations and responses to each reading assignment; additional journal entries may consist of in-class writing and other informal entries. This is designed to make you a more active reader, to prepare you for class discussion, and to lead you to take intellectual "ownership" of the reading. You must keep up with assignments; a journal faked in the final week will not be credited. (Collected at mid-point and semester close, but may be spot checked at any time during the semester.)	50% 20%
WebCT posts - Regular (at least weekly) assigned responses to current readings and to classmates' posts. A typical assignment would ask you to discuss an issue related to the reading and then respond to one classmate's posting. I will participate in the discussion instead of grading individual posts. Generally due prior to the in-class discussion of the relevant reading. Late posts will receive half-credit, except when caused by significant and insurmountable technical difficulties at IUP. (Printed and collected in portfolio at mid-point and semester's close.)	20%
Glossary - A typed glossary will be submitted at the end of the semester and graded in terms of comprehensiveness and quality. Use the back of your notebook to begin a glossary of terms. This list should include literary terms introduced in class, but also terminology (not just vocabulary) you pick up in reading. Definitions should be assembled from class notes and independent research.	10%
Drama Review - Rather than reading a play, you are asked to attend one on-campus theater production this semester; then write an evaluative review of the play and its staging (300-500 words). Consult with me with any questions regarding eligible events.	%10
Final Exam - An open-book exam through which you will demonstrate familiarity with readings, comfort with literary terms, awareness of "literary" issues, and an ability to reflect upon readings and to venture independent interpretations.	15%

Commonplace Book and Journal - Acquire a composition notebook to keep your journal. Open to the first two facing pages of the notebook, then title the left page: Commonplace Quotations, and the right page: Reflections. After you have read and made marginal notations, for each reading assignment, you will extract one or more meaningful quotations from the reading and write them on the left hand page or verso; on the page opposite you will comment upon it.

Attendance - Presence in class is assumed. Each student is allowed three absences, beyond which the student's final average will be reduced 5% points per absence. On announced peer-revision days, students must arrive with the requisite number of typed-copies of their own draft, or they will not be credited with attending. Students who anticipate missing more than five classes for health, family, or other personal reasons should consider taking the class at another time. Students attending IUP sponsored events (eg. athletes) should notify the professor in advance via email; a typed, 350-word discussion of any assigned reading will be expected within one week of such absences; any pre-scheduled assignments should be submitted in advance. Fairness requires that no exceptions be made.

Expectations, Workload, and Help

I hope you will find this to be an enjoyable course that challenges you to be reflective. We will discuss all major readings during class, but I will expect that you have closely read and reflected upon them in advance. Your ability to participate in class discussion depends on this. As in all English courses, you must make the effort to draw your own inferences about the texts you read and be prepared to learn how to articulate and justify your interpretations. Make sure you schedule time for reflective reading; falling behind in the reading diminishes what you can gain from each class. **However**, on the positive side, please note that most of the assignments above heavily reward effort! A student who conscientiously reads, enthusiastically participates, and thoughtfully posts can expect a respectable grade.

Cheating, Plagiarism, and Collusion

Scholastic Dishonesty is a serious matter. I am savvy and vigilant in detecting students who use unattributed web sources, "collaborate" with fellows students, or utilize other "clever" methods to enhance their grades. Take the grade you honestly earn on an assignment. Should a classmate attempt to use your work, refuse; I make no distinction between cheaters and those who aid them. A plagiarized assignment will earn you a zero for the assignment and referral to administrators for disciplinary action.

Make-up Work, Computer Breakdown, and Other Exigencies

Successful mastery of course material requires students to complete assignments in a timely fashion. Make-up work does not serve the learning process and so will not generally be permitted. Writing assignments should be handed in at the beginning of class on the day due; the grade of a major assignment will be reduced by a 1/2-letter-grade for each day or portion of a day it is late; after one week, a grade of F will pertain, though the student should still submit a paper in order to avoid getting a zero. Should

you unavoidably miss a class, be sure to convey any assignment to me: leave it in my English-office mailbox; use a classmate as courier or email it (sherwood@iup.edu).

Computers have not saved us from Murphy's Law: anything that can go wrong will. Make paper and back-up copies of work done on computers on at least two different disks (learn how to do this today if you're not computer literate). Keep written notes, but also print and save intermediate drafts. If you begin work in advance of deadlines, you will have more time to troubleshoot disk errors, virus alerts, and printer problems. I know intimately how unreliable technology can be, but you are responsible for submitting work despite the gremlins.

Cell Phones

Please silence cell phones and beepers during class time.

FAQ (Other Frequently Asked Questions)

What counts as good participation?

Comments sharing insights, posing questions, and responding to classmates. Your readiness to participate in class (attentive listening, informed and thoughtful contribution to class and group discussions, raising of questions) is assumed. Informed and attentive participation is the key. Verbal contributions to class may be combined with electronic contributions to the web discussion.

What is marginal notation?

If you have written nothing in the margins of a text, I will assume you have not read it. Almost all good readers literally interact with the texts they read by making notes in the margin. Students sometimes tell me that they prefer not to write in their books because they want to resell them. My first response is, don't! Hold onto them and you may decide to read them again some day. If you can't resist getting \$10 for a \$50 text, then read with an erasable pencil (hi-lighting is useless anyway) or keep post-it notes handy and write on them. Yes, I'm serious about this!

How do I access the class discussion list?

Our class has an online discussion area accessible on an IUP web server. If you have not previously used WebCT in a class, you will find it easiest to access the discussion area from my web page (www.chss.iup.edu/sherwood), which will also feature links to relevant resources. Consider the discussion list an electronic twin to our classroom discussion, with the advantage that you can work out your thoughts before "sending". Address the texts themselves, points raised in class discussion/lecture, or the ongoing web conversation. You may make an argumentative claim or raise a thoughtful question. Work with your classmates, reading their posts and responding, and you may gain further: picking up ideas for your paper or clarifying your knowledge of a text. I will browse your postings and occasionally participate in the discussion, but I will not grade each individual post; instead I will review the full slate of your postings when you submit copies with your portfolio. Participate as assigned; you should not expect to make up for missed postings in the final week of class.

What does he expect us to do when we read these assignments by ourselves?

First, make marginal notation as you read, recording whatever observations you can on your own. It matters little whether your response is clever or confused; the first step to understanding is having a response. Second, do your best to make some sense of them; reading a text is less about getting the right answer than it is about one's experience of the text; if you wait for the professor to teach it before reading, you miss that experience.

What can I expect on a test in a literature class?

Generally tests balance paragraph and essay-length questions. They assess your reading comprehension, assimilation of significant concepts presented in the reading and during classes, and your ability to analyze and interpret texts.

What if I cannot develop my own interpretation of a literary work?

Overstressing originality can make the process of developing your own reading seem quite daunting. Please consult the Barnet Guide to Writing About Literature for tips on developing ideas. Be sure you are reading actively, with a pencil in hand. While reading and during class, be ready to jot down ideas worth further exploration.

What if my interpretation of a work is wrong?

I like to compare good interpretations to the arguments of good lawyers. Obviously, in an ideal courtroom, both prosecuting and defense attorneys make strong, informed and persuasive claims. They work with the evidence at hand to persuade a judge or jurors. Obviously, only one can have the "right" on his or her side, but both can make competent cases. The analogy is key too, because a good literary interpretation is not just an expression of a reader's feelings or intuitive response to a work; it must be expressed in a way designed to persuade others. Thus ultimately for most literature courses, exactly what your opinion is matters much less than how you arrived at it and how effectively you can communicate your reasoning.