Course Description and Objectives:

The question of what constitutes “the modern” is as interesting as it is multifarious. Our definition of “modern” will evolve throughout the semester as we consider how this term manifests in literature representative of different Western cultures and time periods beginning with the eighteenth century. Each individual text we read considers what is “modern,” and yet studying these texts as a collective whole reveals the fascinating variances that occur when one studies the modern world from the perspectives afforded by differences in culture, gender, and time period. In addition, how we choose to define “the modern” affects us on an individual basis as our reactions to and critical analyses of these texts help us shape our own specific understandings of this concept.

This course also reinforces and extends the work you have done in the previous two core courses with academic writing. We will study sophisticated approaches to critical analysis as the course increasingly emphasizes more focused and self-directed work with research, subject matter, and literary analysis. Thus, this course provides a capstone to the English core by refining your academic writing while also allowing you to reflect upon the modern world as it is informed by foci you have considered in the previous two core courses, the literature we read in this course, and the individual perspectives and experiences each one of us brings to the class.

Required Texts:

- *The Miser and other Plays*, Moliere, isbn# 0140447288
- *The Rambler*, S. Johnson, isbn# 0-300-00016-2
- Selections of Romantic & Victorian poetry (distributed in class)
- *The Importance of Being Earnest* (any edition)
- *My Antonia*, Willa Cather, isbn # 039575514
- Selections of Modern and Postmodern poetry (distributed in class)
- “The Dead,” J. Joyce (online)
- *The Great Gatsby*, F.S. Fitzgerald isbn# 0684801523
- selected articles and supplementary readings as indicated on “Schedule of Readings” handout

Grading:

Your final grade will be determined according to the following scale:

- A = 94-100%
- B = 84-86%
- C = 74-76%
- D = 60-64%
- A- = 90-93%
- B- = 80-83%
- C- = 70-73%
- F = 59% and under
- B+ = 87-89%
- C+ = 77-79%
- D+ = 65-69%
Course Requirements:

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<td>Literary Analysis Paper #1</td>
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<td>Literary Analysis Paper #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus Question freewrites</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Class Participation &amp; Professionalism</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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Other Grading Issues:

♦ I will not correct mechanical errors you make in your papers.
   * Instead, I will place an “x” next to each place in the paper where you have made a mechanical error.
   * A paper with, on average, more than three mechanical errors per page will receive an X grade on the paper.
   * In this case, your paper’s earned letter grade will be covered with a penciled “X” until you correct each mechanical error I’ve indicated with an “x” and meet with me to discuss the ways in which you have corrected each error.
   * After our discussion, I will change your paper grade to whatever grade was previously covered by the “X.”
   * Failure to correct these grades or to meet with me to discuss these corrections will result in a final grade of an “F” for that specific paper.

♦ Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date. After that, they’re late.
   * You are allowed one (only) “computer excuse” (printing problems, computer lockup, disk problems, etc.) for final drafts, so long as I get the paper by the time I go home that day. It is your job, in this case, to ensure that you place the paper in my hands before I leave campus that day. I never take responsibility for papers that are not placed directly in my hands.
   * The final paper grade will be lowered a grade (e.g. from A- to B+) if you miss a peer review session OR if you do not have a draft for a peer review session.
   * Final paper grades are lowered a grade (e.g. from B to B-) for each class day that either a first or final draft is handed in late.
   * I do not accept any papers that are more than two weeks late.
   * It is important, if you expect your paper will be late due to a family emergency or illness, to discuss the matter with me before the paper is late. Otherwise, the paper is most likely subject to all late penalties.

Class Participation and Attendance Policy:

This course will be successful only if everyone participates enthusiastically and regularly. Being present in class is imperative because your comments in class are valuable and constructive; they are therefore necessary if this course is to reach its full potential. Please regularly participate and enjoy speaking in class and asking questions. The more you participate, the more we all will benefit from this course. *Students absent more than three times this semester may find their final course grade lowered one grade (e.g. from C to C-) for each additional absence.*
More Details on Course Requirements:

♦ **PEER REVIEW SESSIONS:** When the time comes, I will provide a handout detailing the requirements and guidelines for the specific format I have designed for our peer review sessions which I will also explain. Note importance of first draft due dates.

♦ **INVENTION WORK & FIRST DRAFTS:** Upon handing in each final draft, you will also need to submit all preliminary work, including notes, prewriting, rough drafts, presentation questions, and peer response documents. Writing is a process, and I like to see the steps you took while engaging in this process. I therefore will not grade collections that do not include the preceding documents. These final drafts are considered late until your compilation is complete.

♦ **FOCUS QUESTION FREEWrites:** At the end of each class day, I will give you a question aimed at helping you focus your reading as you prepare for our following class. For each day’s reading assignment, after you finish your reading but before you come to class, you are to freewrite your answer to this question. Each freewrite should be roughly two-thirds to one page long. A strong entry will make reference to textual evidence, much as would a formal paper that does literary analysis. I will collect your Focus Question freewrites each class day before class starts. I do not accept FQFs after class has started. Late penalties are the same for FQFs as they are for papers. No credit will be given for FQFs handed in more than two weeks late, except in the instance of those done for extra credit.

♦ **FINAL & MIDTERM EXAMS:** In due time, I will provide a handout entitled “Information Regarding Midterm Exam.” Towards the end of the semester I will provide a handout entitled “Information Regarding Final Exam.” Be certain to read all course handouts carefully and to thoroughly contemplate their recommendations. If you still have questions or if something needs clarifying, please feel free to ask.

**Important Due Dates:**

- *Wednesday 23 & 30 September: First/Final draft of Formal Literary Analysis Paper #1*
- *Monday 2 November: Take-home Midterm Exam*
- *Monday 30 November/7 December: First/Final draft of Formal Literary Analysis Paper #2*
- *FINAL EXAM: Wednesday 9 December, 1:45-4:15 pm*

**Academic Dishonesty:**

I expect to find no instances of plagiarism throughout the semester; plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. I abide by the statement about dishonesty as illustrated on pp 77-9 of the 2014-2016 edition of the Undergraduate Catalog.
There are many things you can do to help yourself succeed in this course:

♦ Reading at the college level is much different than reading simply for pleasure. It is, in my opinion, so much more fun to read literature and academic scholarship in the manner that this course will emphasize. I encourage you to read actively. That is, don’t simply absorb what the text says. Engage in a constant discussion with the text, always questioning as you read while also focusing on evidence, synthesizing, constructing arguments, taking notes, and being aware of your rational and emotional responses to a text.

♦ I want you to get the most out of this course that you possibly can. It is amazing how necessary it is in life to possess strong reading, writing, listening, and analytic skills. In addition, being able to express ourselves in writing allows us to transcend time, to record certain strong emotions in an expressive way, and to construct and write impressive arguments and intelligent research papers. Perhaps most importantly, the type of reading, writing, and thinking we will do in this course teaches us about organization and our own thought processes. I, in order to ensure that you are benefiting from the course, will periodically hold conferences where we can discuss assigned papers and the process of reading, writing, interpreting, analyzing, and constructing arguments. If you would like to meet in addition to these designated conferences, I emphatically invite you to make an appointment with me or to stop by during office hours.
Composition & Literature III: The Modern World
Schedule of Readings

*PLEASE BRING YOUR TEXT TO CLASS EACH DAY*


Wednesday 26 August:  
Have read for class: Act I-III of Molière’s *Don Juan*

Focus question: ______________________________________________________________

Monday 31 August:  
Have read for class: Act IV through the end of *Don Juan*

Focus question: ______________________________________________________________

Wednesday 2 September:  
Have read for class: From Johnson’s *The Rambler*, Essays 2, 8, 41, 49, 134

Focus question: ______________________________________________________________

Monday 7 September:  Labor Day holiday – classes cancelled (Happy autumn!)

Wednesday 9 September:  
Have read for class:  
- Van Tassel, Mary. “Johnson’s Elephant: The Reader of *The Rambler*”  

Focus question: ______________________________________________________________

Monday 14 September:  
Have read for class:  
- Selections of Romantic poetry (distributed in class)

Focus question: ______________________________________________________________

Wednesday 16 September:  
Have read for class:  
- Further selections of Romantic poetry (distributed in class)

Focus question: ______________________________________________________________
Monday 21 September:
Have read for class:
  ● Selections of Victorian poetry (distributed in class)

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Wednesday 23 September:  First draft Due of Literary Analysis Paper #1 – Peer Review

Monday 28 September:  * Bring a copy of your draft (whatever stage you’re at) to class today.
  ● Identify one grammatical weakness you have and read the corresponding pages of your favorite handbook that describe how to fix this weakness
  ● Skim the MLA tab or otherwise super-familiarize yourself with MLA citation

Have read for class:

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Wednesday 30 September: FINAL draft Due of Literary Analysis Paper #1

Have read for class:
  ● “The Importance of Being Earnest” first 1/2

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Monday 5 October:

Have read for class:
  ● “The Importance of Being Earnest” through to the conclusion

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Wednesday 7 October:

No new reading – continuing discussion of “The Importance of Being Earnest”

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Monday 12 October – class cancelled

Best wishes for a beautiful mid-semester break.

Wednesday 14 October:

Have read for class:
  ● Selections of poetry by the modern poets (distributed in class)

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________
Monday 19 October:
Have read for class:
  • Further selections of modern poetry (distributed in class)

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Wednesday 21 October:
Have read for class:
  • Selections of postmodern poetry (distributed in class)

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Monday 26 October:
Have read for class:
  • First half of “The Dead” by James Joyce

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Wednesday 28 October:
Have read for class:
  • Through the conclusion of “The Dead”

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Monday 2 November: Take-Home Midterm Exam Due at the Beginning of Class
Have read for class:
  • My Antonia, first ¼

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Wednesday 4 November:
Have read for class:
  • My Antonia, first ½

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Monday 9 November:
Have read for class:
  • My Antonia, first ¾

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Wednesday 11 November:
Have read for class:
  • My Antonia, through to the end
Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Monday 16 November:
Have read for class:
  • *The Great Gatsby*, first 1/3

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Wednesday 18 November:
Have read for class:
  • *The Great Gatsby*, first 2/3

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Monday 23 November:
Have read for class:
  • *The Great Gatsby*, through to the conclusion

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Wednesday 25 November: class cancelled
*Best wishes for a peaceful and reflective Thanksgiving holiday*

Monday 30 November: First Draft of Literary Analysis Paper #2 Due – Peer Review

Wednesday 2 December: *Bring a copy of your draft (whatever stage you’re at) to class today.*
  • Identify one grammatical weakness you have and read the corresponding pages of your favorite handbook that describe how to fix this weakness
  • Skim the MLA tab or otherwise super-familiarize yourself with MLA citation

Have read for class:
  • From *LBCH*, pp. 40-45, “Paragraphs,” & pp. 48-53, “Developing Paragraphs” (distributed in class)

Focus question: ________________________________________________________________

Monday 7 December: Final Draft of Literary Analysis Paper #2 Due

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday 9 December 1:45-4:15 pm
An interpretive question has three qualities:

♦ It is problematic, that is, there exists more than one legitimate answer to the question. “Do Johnson’s writings on melancholy apply to our world today?” is not an interpretive question because only one answer is correct -- yes, people today worry about melancholy all the time, and no further analysis is needed in order to answer this question. “Does Johnson’s discussion of melancholy differ in his various essays?” is an interpretive question because one reader might argue that Johnson’s views on melancholy remain the same throughout his essays while another person may legitimately argue that his views on melancholy seem to shift dramatically throughout his essays; still another reader might argue that his treatment of melancholy shifts only slightly as his essays develop.

♦ It is significant, that is, answering this question contributes to readers’ understanding of the text you choose.

♦ It can be answered by textual evidence. “Does Samuel Johnson live according to what he writes?” is not an interpretive question because we as readers can only speculate about the answer to this question, and our speculations are only a matter of opinion – not something that can be proven in the Rambler essays, per se; in other words, no textual evidence in the primary text can be cited to answer this question. “Is Johnson consistent throughout his Rambler essays on the issue of time management and procrastination?” is an interpretive question because we as readers can find evidence in the Rambler essays, per se, that supports one’s answer to this question.