

WORLD LITERATURE I TO THE 16th CENTURY

IDS 2303 001 SPRING 2008

MWF 12-12:50

DR. KIMBALL

TEL.: 5424

EMAIL: skimball@utsa.edu

Office: MB 2 210

Office hours: MWF 1-2 PM

Although literature is defined as anything written, this definition is both too broad and too narrow. Anyone can call up the department of Motor Vehicles and ask for “literature” regarding traffic violations. Surely we can distinguish between literature in the sense of any writing and literature in the sense of verbal art. But to say, that literature has to be written. Or printed is again too narrow, because some literature belongs to the oral tradition. Let us assume, that literature, as Robert Frost suggests, is a performance in words. Yes, it is, or ought to be entertaining, and, at least to a certain extent, allow us to escape from the mundane world of reality of our everyday life – to give us at least a momentary escape from our ennui. How else do we account for the fact that we cry, at least want to cry over the fate of an imaginary character, such as Romeo crying for his Juliet? But art as literature also offers truth. It is the truth patched together over the vast experience of life; one might dare to say, that literature is stolen from life, but rearranged in such a way, that the disruptions and distractions which plague us in real life are deleted so as to give us an undiluted picture.

We will read and discuss a variety of texts written over the last 2500 years or more, and from a variety of cultures, to teach us about ourselves as we have emerged from the past, as well as how we might evolve over the next 2500 years.

There will be three short essays, as well as a longer one on topics to be announced, to be written as take home assignments, in lieu of the proverbial midterm and final exam, because, to my thinking, literature can not be assessed through scantrons. These papers will be analytical, articulate, open ended, based on class discussions, making attendance and class discussions vital. I expect students to come to class prepared with that day’s reading assignment.

Make up work is up the discretion of the professor and needs to be discussed beforehand. Excessive absences may result in a drop of grade. Also, please, no cell phones going off!

The papers assigned are of a comparative nature; nevertheless there is the issue of plagiarism from ready made papers on literary topics, which can be purchased on the internet. Students, who violate University Rules on Scholastic Dishonesty are subject to

disciplinary penalties as outlined in the Regents' Rules and regulations , Part one, Ch. 4. sec 3, subsection 3.2.

Students with disabilities are to be registered with the Office of Disability.

Texts: *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces, Vol. I*

Calendar

Week I, Jan 14

Reading: *Gilgamesh*

Week II, Jan 21

Reading: *Gilgamesh*, cont'd

Week III, Jan 28

Reading: *The Old Testament, The Food, The Origin of Language, Job, The Song of Songs*

Week IV, Feb 4

The Odyssey

FIRST PAPER IS DUE

Week V, Feb 11

Reading: *Odyssey*, Cont'd

Week VI, Feb 18

Reading: *Odyssey*, con'd

Week VII, Feb 25

Reading: Ovid, *Metamorphosis, Apollo and Daphne, Europa and Jove, Ceres and Proserpina, Pygmalion*

SECOND PAPER IS DUE

Week VIII, Mar 3

Reading: *Beowulf*

Week IX, Mar 10

Reading: *Beowulf*, continued

MAR 17-22 SPRING BREAK

Week X, Mar 24

Readings: Boccaccio, *The Decameron*

Week XI, Mar 31, April 2 and 4
Reading: *The Thousand and One Nights*

Week XII, Apr 7
Reading: Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Week XIII, April 14
Hamlet, Continued

Week XIV, Apr 21
Film based on *Hamlet*

Week XV, Apr 28
Continued
Review for final paper

Week XVI, May 1 and 2 Student Days, classes do not meet

May 3-9 Finals Week
FINAL PAPER IS DUE