

World Literature II
Spring 2014
TR 12:15-1:30
EDGE@State Classroom

Dr. Bane

Office: State Hall 1
Email: cbane@uca.edu

Hours: Daily 9:00-12:00
Phone: 852-0717

I have often said, and oftener think, that this world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel — a solution of why Democritus laughed and Heraclitus wept.

— Horace Walpole,
Letter to Sir Horace Mann, 1769

Welcome to the single most exciting class you'll be taking this semester: ENGL 2306: World Literature II. I know it will be difficult, but please try to control your emotions. Not everyone gets a chance to take a class this exciting, this enthralling, this enlightening. In World Lit II we spell "fun" with a capital F-U. Now just because it will be fun doesn't mean that it will be easy. There will be a lot of hard work, but the work will be rewarding. I promise.

Now, I know you're curious as to just how a literature class can be everything I'm promising. For the answer, we must look to one of the great writers and critics of our language, Oscar Wilde. → I know the hat makes him look a little like an Indiana Jones wannabe, but trust me, the man's a genius who had a lot to say about literature. In *The Critic as Artist* (1888), Mr. Wilde tells us that

It is the function of Literature to create, from the rough material of actual existence, a new world that will be more marvelous, more enduring, and more true than the world that common eyes look upon, and through which common natures seek to realise their perfection.



Literature creates new worlds, and not simply new worlds, but worlds that are more marvelous, enduring, and true than the "real" world. How can the world of literature be more true than the real world? I'm sure that this is just one of many questions you have. This syllabus is my attempt to answer at least some of those questions, so let's get started.

Course Description or "What is World Literature?"

The readings in this course consider the values, ideas, and beliefs that have helped make the modern world and include works written since the year 1650 (based on the arbitrary Georgian calendar widely used in the Western — i.e. Christian — world, 2271 based on the solar Persian calendar, 1059 based on the lunar Islamic calendar, 5411 based on the luni-solar Jewish calendar, or the year of the Tiger if you're Japanese or Chinese). Since this course is an introduction, it will take the form of many literature courses by conducting close analyses of the literature, focusing on themes, forms, style, language, and structure.

Because of its scope, World Lit II satisfies the Diversity in World Cultures requirement in the general education CORE. According to the UCA Bulletin, the purpose of World Lit II is to "introduce the student to a variety of literary texts which have greatly influenced culture around the world from the seventeenth through the twentieth century." In short, it is the study of texts that *matter*. Not matter in the sense that they mean something to English professors, but matter because they have greatly influenced the myriad cultures of the world. On a basic level, this course will help you sharpen your critical and analytical thinking skills. If we're lucky, you'll come to a greater understanding of our human complexities, even if we don't always have the answers to the questions we ask about ourselves and the world.

Course Objectives or "What will I learn?"

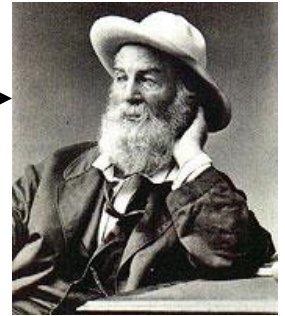
The primary objective of this course is to engage students with important literary texts. We will emphasize recurring themes, the socio-political contexts in which the texts were written, and literary innovation and experimentation. We will explore questions of identity formation and/or disintegration and how they are rooted in issues of gender, social status, ethnicity, community, geography, and generational conflict. The course will also consider texts both as part of an endeavor by writers to create not only individualistic works but also to maintain a sense of identity within a group with shared cultural interests.

Questions to Consider or “What should I be thinking about from day one?”

- How are race, nation(s), and identities formed?
- What tensions and connections exist between race and nationality?
- What tensions and connections exist between different cultures, races, nationalities?
- Are there themes that cut across the literatures of several cultures?

Warning!

Literature is about language. Sometimes language, even poetic language, can be brutal. This does not mean that the language in question is obscene or pornographic, simply brutal. For instance, when everyone’s favorite dirty uncle, Walt Whitman writes of his “limitless jets” of hot, quivering love jelly, he isn’t talking about the kind you slap on a PB&J.



The reason I’m bringing this up is not to shock you. It’s simply to let you know what you might expect in this class. You should also know that language isn’t the only thing that may be “uncomfortable” for some of you. We may also touch on certain topics that may raise eyebrows: abortion, infidelity, racism, etc. Again, this is not to shock you; it’s simply to keep you informed. Through literature, we see both the differences and similarities between us and people of other ethnicities, time periods, genders, religions, and values. **If you know that you will have issues reading, hearing, and discussing certain words and topics, you need to drop the course now.**

Course Texts or “What do I have to buy?”

This is a college class, so you have to buy something.

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*

Voltaire, *Candide*

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Machado de Assis, *Epitaph of a Small Winner: A Novel*

Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John: A Novel*

Leila Abouzeid, *Year of the Elephant: Revised Edition*

Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*

I recognize that books are expensive. Knowledge is free, but wisdom comes with a price. In this course, wisdom has a suggested retail value of \$87.90. The texts are available in the UCA bookstore, local textbook supply stores, all major bookshops (i.e. Barnes and Noble), and online (amazon.com, studentmarket.com, etc.). Shop smart...shop S-Mart. Though not required, I also recommend that you get yourself a good dictionary.

You are required to purchase (or check out from a library) the texts for this course. This is a literature course, which means that the focus is on reading and textual analysis, not regurgitating lecture notes. **Students who routinely fail to bring the appropriate text to class will be counted absent.** See the attendance policy below for the consequences.

Course Requirements or “What do I have to do?”

Reading critically is hard work, and you are not going to become an expert in one semester. However, if you commit yourself to the process this semester with the goal of actually learning something, you will have a good start at becoming a serious and critical reader of poetry and will develop the ability to express your views on paper. **What we read we shall read with passion, intensity, and critical awareness, all in keeping with the expectations of a college level course.** I’m not here to baby-sit, I’m here to teach. You’re not here to kill time, you’re here to learn. Both take hard work. Specific assignments and guidelines are outlined below.

Short papers: One of the primary objectives of the English Department at UCA is to foster critical writing skills in its students. As such, you will write three short, 2-page papers in this course. The purpose of these papers is to help you develop critical writing skills. Each paper will have a different focus and relate to each work covered. Although I will accept a late paper, it will drop one letter grade for every **weekday** it is late. For example, a paper due on Tuesday turned in on Thursday cannot make higher than a “C.” By the following Tuesday, it will be an “F.” Detailed assignment sheets will be given out for each essay, but note that **all essays must follow standard MLA format:** double spaced, 1” margins all around, and typed in either Times New Roman 12 pt or Arial 10 pt. **Essays that deviate from these guidelines cannot earn higher than a 70% or a “C” for a grade. (5% each; 40% total)**

Exams: There will be three exams. They will be objective in nature, testing your knowledge of the material and asking you to make connections between the texts. I will discuss these in more detail closer to test dates. **(15% each; 45% total)**

Intellectual Curiosity: Simply put, this means being an active college student. This course is taking place in EDGE Residential College. Throughout the course of the semester, EDGE will offer numerous educational and cultural opportunities to its students (guest speakers, International Dinner and a Movie nights, Language Corner, etc.). Over the course of the semester, you must attend **three** of these events and write a short, one-page review of it. Take an active role in your education, not a passive one. **(5% each; 15% total)**

Preparation and Participation: This means being present and actively engaged in the course. Although not graded, these facets of your performance will be used to determine whether borderline grades go up or down.

If at any point during the semester, it becomes apparent that students are not reading, I will begin giving reading quizzes.

Dire warnings and other non-negotiables, or “How do I stay on your good side?”

1. **You are in college. Act like it.** Be considerate of your classmates and the instructor.
2. **Come to class.** According to the *UCA Handbook*, “students are expected to attend **all** class meetings,” therefore regular attendance is essential. “Attendance” in this class is defined as being present, engaged, and alert the **entire class period** unless previous arrangements have been made.
3. **If you must be absent**, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from a classmate. Missing **four** classes will result in having your final grade lowered by one letter grade. Missing **five** classes will result in a drop for non-attendance or a failing grade.
4. **READ!** The single most effective strategy to success in a college course is to read the assigned material. The *Student Handbook* “suggests a **minimum** of two hours preparation on the part of the student” for each **credit hour** taken. This means a class worth **three** hours of credit requires **six** hours of preparation per week. In general, you should read the entire work before class discussion and re-read passages as necessary.
5. **Turn off cell phones before** entering the classroom. “Off” means off, not on vibrate. Your phones must be switched off and out of site in your book bag, purse, etc. This is your only warning or strike one. The first time you are caught texting, placing a call, or receiving a call or text—even if you simply forgot to turn off your phone—will be strike two. You will be asked to leave the class and will be counted absent for the day. The second time any of the previous offenses occur will be strike three. You will be dropped from the course with a WF. I’m serious.
6. **No laptops, e-readers** (e.g. Kindle, iPad), **or other electronic devices** will be allowed unless internet capabilities have been disabled. This is your only warning or strike one. The first time you are caught surfing the net, Facebooking, etc. will be strike two. You will be asked to leave the class and will be counted absent for the day. The second time any of these offenses occur will be strike three. You will be dropped from the course with a WF. Again, I’m serious.
7. **Grades are earned not given.** You are responsible for your grade, not me. This means you must work to earn the grade you want, not attempt to negotiate it after the fact. Additionally, **do not ask for extra credit**. The assignments outlined above are adequate to assess your performance in the class.
8. **Keep up with your grade.** Though my office will be open to discuss grade issues, it is your responsibility to keep up with your current grade in the course based on graded assignments. Don’t constantly ask me to figure it for you.
9. **Use of open-access Internet resources** (e.g. SparkNotes, Wikipedia) **is forbidden** and may result in failure. When conducting work for this course, do not consult resources other than the assigned texts.
10. **You will be treated as students not customers.** Simply because you paid tuition does not mean you dictate the terms of service.

University Policies or The Fine Print

The university’s two academic bulletins – the University of Central Arkansas *Undergraduate Bulletin* and *Graduate Bulletin* – are the official publications for all academic programs and policies. Students are urged to study these bulletins. In addition, students should familiarize themselves with the various policies in the *Student Handbook*, some of which are outlined below. The *Handbook* may be accessed online at <http://uca.edu/student/files/2011/06/Student-Handbook-2013-2014.pdf>.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism. (*Student Handbook* 37-42) “The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university’s Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the *Student Handbook*. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student’s acceptance of this university policy.” For this course, the first offense will result in an F on the assignment. The second offense will result in an automatic F in the course.

Sexual Harassment. (*Student Handbook* 115) Sexual harassment by any faculty member, staff member, or student is a violation of both law and university policy and will not be tolerated at the University of Central Arkansas. Sexual harassment of employees is prohibited under Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and sexual harassment of students may constitute discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

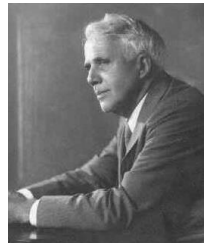
Americans with Disabilities Act. The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3613.

Emergency Procedures. An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

Course Evaluations. Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the thirteenth week of instruction, November 25, through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

Final Thoughts or There are other courses I could take, so why should I take World Literature?

In "The Figure a Poem Makes," (1939) everyone's favorite grandfather, Robert Frost, writes that literature begins in delight and ends in wisdom. The figure is the same as for love... It begins in delight, it inclines to the impulse, it assumes direction with the first line laid down, it runs a course of lucky events, and ends in a clarification of life—not necessarily a great clarification...but in a momentary stay against confusion.



Literature makes a person more whole. If you can find delight in literature, you will find delight in love and in life, and ultimately achieve wisdom and somehow "stay the confusion." If at term's end you do not feel this delight, it will be because you have perversely resisted enlightenment and blockaded yourself in a pinched and shrunken soul. If you let it, literature can redeem you for the human community. Let it.

Semester Breakdown

The following is a tentative schedule. We will adjust as necessary to cover as much of the material as possible. To help you pace yourself, the number of pages per reading assignment is in parentheses. For example, if you read 22 pages of Voltaire tonight and 22 pages tomorrow, you'll be reading for Thursday's discussion.

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| 1/14 – Intro to course, policies, syllabus; Whitman (Handout) | 3/4 – Kincaid, <i>Annie John</i> , Ch. One – Three (50 pages) |
| 1/16 – Voltaire, <i>Candide</i> , Ch. 1-18 (44 pages) | 3/6 – Kincaid, <i>Annie John</i> , Ch. Four – Six (53 pages) |
| 1/21 – Voltaire, <i>Candide</i> , Ch. 19-30 (41 pages) | 3/11 – Kincaid, <i>Annie John</i> , Ch. Seven – Eight (40 pages) |
| 1/23 – Behn, <i>Oroonoko</i> , pgs. 9-46 "...obedience." (37 pages) | 3/13 – Exam 2 |
| 1/28 – Behn, <i>Oroonoko</i> , pgs. 46-77 (31 pages) | 3/18 – Abouzeid, <i>Elephant</i> , Ch. One – Three (47 pages) |
| 1/30 – Exam 1 | 3/20 – Abouzeid, <i>Elephant</i> , Ch. Four – Five (33 pages) |
| 2/4 – Wilde, <i>Dorian Gray</i> , Preface – Ch. IV (55 pages) | 3/25 – 3/27 – Spring Break |
| 2/6 – Wilde, <i>Dorian Gray</i> , Ch. V-IX (55 pages) | 4/1 – Lahiri, <i>The Namesake</i> , Ch. 1-3 (72 pages) |
| 2/11 – Wilde, <i>Dorian Gray</i> , Ch. X-XIV (53 pages) | 4/3 – Lahiri, <i>The Namesake</i> , Ch. 4-6 (86 pages) |
| 2/13 – Wilde, <i>Dorian Gray</i> , Ch. XV-XX (48 pages) | 4/8 – Lahiri, <i>The Namesake</i> , Ch. 7-9 (86 pages) |
| 2/18 – de Assis, <i>Small Winner</i> , To the Reader – 21 (50 pages) | 4/10 – Lahiri, <i>The Namesake</i> , Ch. 10-12 (45 pages) |
| 2/20 – de Assis, <i>Small Winner</i> , 22-63 (54 pages) | 4/15 – Lahiri, <i>The Namesake</i> (In class movie) |
| 2/25 – de Assis, <i>Small Winner</i> , 64-103 (50 pages) | 4/17 – Lahiri, <i>The Namesake</i> (In class movie) |
| 2/27 – de Assis, <i>Small Winner</i> , 104-160 (51 pages) | 4/22 – <i>Kinyarwanda</i> (In class movie) |
| | 4/24 – <i>Kinyarwanda</i> (In class movie) |

4/29 – Final Exam (11:00-1:00)