

PHILOSOPHY & LITERATURE

MWF 2:00-2:50, Eng/Phil 163

Instructor

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Course Description

What kinds of things are literary works? How do they differ from other kinds of texts? Are fiction and truth mutually exclusive? Is it irrational to have strong emotional responses to fictional works? How do we—or how *should* we—interpret literary works? These questions and others will form the structure of this course, and will be investigated through the works of contemporary and historical philosophers, as well as through a selection of literary and critical works.

Core Texts

- Eileen John and Dominic McIver Lopes (eds.), *Philosophy of Literature: Contemporary and Classic Readings, An Anthology* (2004: Blackwell; ISBN: 978-1-4051-1208-6)
- Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths* (2007: New Directions; ISBN: 978-0-8112-1699-9)
- William Shakespeare, *King Lear* (2000: Pelican Shakespeare; ISBN: 978-0-1407-1490-6)

(Additional readings will be available in PDF format on my website, www.tytoken.com. These are indicated under the course schedule below as “[WEB]”.)

Course Requirements

Your final grade will depend on the percentage you earn of the total points possible in the class: A+: 97-100; A: 94-96; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63.

Papers

You will have to write three 7-to-10-page papers during the course of this term, each on one of the major topics of the course (“What Is Literature?”; “Ontology of Literature”; “Truth & Fiction”; “Emotion & Fiction”; “Tragedy”). No more than one paper may be written any major topic, and you cannot turn in a paper on “Literary Interpretation”. You may write a paper responding to some particular philosophical reading, comparing two or more views, or on some other relevant topic. Papers are due within two weeks of the major topic being covered in class:

- “What Is Literature?”: Papers due on or before Mon, Sept. 28.
- “Ontology of Literature”: Papers due on or before Wed, Oct. 14.
- “Truth & Fiction”: Papers due on or before Mon, Nov. 2.

- “Emotion & Fiction”: Papers due on or before Mon, Nov. 23.
- “Tragedy”: Papers due on or before Mon, Dec. 7.

I *strongly* recommend that you not put off writing your papers until the last three topics. Each paper is worth 15% of your final grade. Assignments submitted late without explicit extensions or authorized excuses will receive a penalty of one letter grade (10%) per class since the due date. (If the paper is submitted late but before the following class, it will be considered one class late.)

Papers will not be accepted via e-mail or fax.

Exams

There will be two exams for this class, with the midterm held on Friday, October 23, and the final held during the December 11-16 exam period (specific time TBD). The midterm exam is worth 20% of your final grade; the final exam is worth 25%.

Participation

The final 10% of your grade is your participation grade. Participation includes doing the assigned readings *before* the class in which the reading shall be discussed, taking active part in class discussion, and putting serious effort into your papers.

Participation also includes attendance. Not including the midterm exam, we meet 40 times this term, but for every class you miss without authorized excuse, your participation grade will be deducted 1 point (that is, 1% of your final grade, up to the 10% encompassed by the participation grade). See also “Classroom Courtesy” below.

Special Accommodations

- Students with disabilities that require special class or exam accommodations must present a form from AccessTECH Disability Support Program specifying the details during the first week of classes. Their offices are located in 335 West Hall. See www.accessstech.dsa.ttu.edu.
- You will not be penalized for any absences due to religious observances. However, it is your responsibility to inform me in advance of any intended absences for religious observance *as soon as possible* so that we can make other arrangements. As well, it remains your responsibility to have read the material assigned for that day and to obtain any notes from one of your classmates for classes missed.

Classroom Courtesy

Please be courteous to your fellow students and avoid unnecessary disruptions. Arrive on time, leave on time, and *turn off your cell phone during class*. Note that if your cell phone rings during class, *I will answer it*. Laptops are permitted in class, but please do not abuse this privilege. Text-messaging is *not* permitted during my class. If I see you text-messaging during class-time, your participation grade will be deducted 1 point. This is your only warning.

Academic Integrity and Irresponsibility

I take incidents of academic misconduct *very seriously*. These include but are not restricted to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and fabrication. Penalties are dependent on the nature of the misconduct, and may involve disciplinary proceedings with the Student Judicial Programs. Knowing what constitutes academic misconduct is *your responsibility*. If you have a concern about what constitutes academic dishonesty *prior to turning in an assignment*, please see me, and I will be happy to help you. For more information, see <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentjudicialprograms/academicinteg.php>.

Course Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READING(S)
Fri, Aug. 28	Introduction	<i>No readings</i>
Mon, Aug. 31	What is Literature?	Umberto Eco, "On Some Functions of Literature" [WEB]
Wed, Sept. 2		E.D. Hirsch, Jr., "What Isn't Literature?"
Fri, Sept. 4		Monroe Beardsley, "The Concept of Literature"

Mon, Sept. 7 No Class

Wed, Sept. 9	What is Literature?	Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, "Literary Practice"
Fri, Sept. 11		Robert Stecker, "What is Literature?"
Mon, Sept. 14		Daniel Dennett, "Where Am I?" [WEB]; Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths"
Wed, Sept. 16	Ontology of Literature	Richard Wollheim, "Literary Works as Types"
Fri, Sept. 18		J.O. Urmson, "Literature"
Mon, Sept. 21		Jorge Luis Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" and "The Library of Babel"
Wed, Sept. 23		Nelson Goodman and Catherine Elgin, "Interpretation and Identity: Can the Work Survive the World?"
Fri, Sept. 25		Gregory Currie, "Work and Text"
Mon, Sept. 28		Truth & Fiction
Wed, Sept. 30	John Searle, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse"	
Fri, Oct. 2	David Lewis, "Truth in Fiction"	
Mon, Oct. 5	Tim O'Brien, "How to Tell a True War Story" [WEB]	
Wed, Oct. 7	Gregory Currie, "What is Fiction?"	
Fri, Oct. 9	Kendall Walton, "Fiction and Nonfiction"	

Mon, Oct. 12 No Class

Wed, Oct. 14	Truth & Fiction	Peter Van Inwagen, "Creatures of Fiction" [WEB]
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Fri, Oct. 16		Amie Thomasson, "Fictional Characters as Abstract Artifacts"	
Mon, Oct. 19		Jorge Luis Borges, "The Circular Ruins" and "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbit Tertius"	
Wed, Oct. 21	Exam Review	<i>No readings</i>	
Fri, Oct. 23	Midterm Exam	<i>No readings</i>	
Mon, Oct. 26	Emotion & Fiction	Plato, <i>Ion</i> [WEB]	
Wed, Oct. 28		Colin Radford, "How Can We Be Moved by the Fate of Anna Karenina?"	
Fri, Oct. 30		Eva Schaper, "Fiction and the Suspension of Disbelief" [WEB]	
Mon, Nov. 2		Alice Elliott Dark, "In the Gloaming" [WEB]	
Wed, Nov. 4		Kendall Walton, "Fearing Fictionally"	
Fri, Nov. 6		David Novitz, "Fiction, Imagination and Emotion" [WEB]	
Mon, Nov. 9		H.P. Lovecraft, "The Music of Erich Zann" [WEB]	
Wed, Nov. 11		Tragedy	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i> (selections)
Fri, Nov. 13			David Hume, "Of Tragedy"
Mon, Nov. 16	William Shakespeare, <i>King Lear</i>		
Wed, Nov. 18	Susan Feagin, "The Pleasures of Tragedy"		
Fri, Nov. 20	Flint Schier, "Tragedy and the Community of Sentiment"		
Mon, Nov. 23	George Orwell, "Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool" [WEB]		
Wed, Nov. 25	<i>No Class</i>		
Fri, Nov. 27	<i>No Class</i>		
Mon, Nov. 30	Literary Interpretation	Robert Stecker, "Art Interpretation"	
Wed, Dec. 2		Noël Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation"	
Fri, Dec. 4		Jerrold Levinson, "Intention and Interpretation"	
Mon, Dec. 7		<i>No readings</i>	
Wed, Dec. 9	Exam Review	<i>No readings</i>	