

English 125: Introduction to Literature
Eastern Connecticut State University
Fall Semester, 2010
Section 03: MWF, 11-11:50am, Webb Hall 214
Section 06: MWF, 9-9:50am, Goddard Hall 202

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Office Hours: M 1-3pm; W 1-2pm;
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Introduction to Literature

This class is designed as an introduction to the major varieties of literature: poetry, drama, and fiction. We will read and discuss a variety of texts with an eye towards developing strategies for understanding, appreciating, interpreting, and discussing literature. One important aspect of the course will involve helping students to develop a conceptual vocabulary for thinking and talking about how literary works achieve their effects: in the case of fiction, for example, we will consider the relationships among plot, characterization, and narrative structure, while in our discussions of poems, we will have cause to consider questions of figurative language, poetic form, and poetic voice.

The readings for this class are organized around a common theme: our human quest for knowledge (about ourselves, about other people, about the world around us) and the often tremendous cost of that knowledge. Our readings will be varied: from an ancient Greek tragedy to an American film from the 1990s; from a play about a man who sells his soul to the devil for mystical knowledge to a poem about Adam and Eve's fall through the acquisition of knowledge of good and evil; from two poems meditating on how much one can change in a few short years to a novel exploring how one family's life has been shaped by hundreds of years of history. What all of these readings have in common is their recognition of a poignant dilemma: we are driven by a curiosity to know, but sometimes find that knowledge brings us little comfort.

The principal objectives of this class are:

- 1) To help students become more careful and sensitive readers of complex literary works—and thereby give them the tools to read literature not only with greater understanding, but also with more pleasure, both in college, and for a lifetime.
- 2) To help students develop strategies for discussing literary texts with precision.

Required Texts (books are available at the campus bookstore)

Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (Hackett)
John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (Norton)
John Sayles, dir., *Lone Star* (DVD)
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Norton)
Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* (Hackett)
Graham Swift, *Waterland* (Vintage)

Other readings will be posted on WebCT

COURSE POLICIES

Please Note: It is Eastern Connecticut State University's policy to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. You will also need to contact the Office of AccessAbility at (860) 465-5573. The Office of AccessAbility coordinates all arrangements with instructors, and I can't provide accommodations for you unless your need for them has been documented with that office.

About the class

The class will involve both lecture and discussion. In my lectures, I'll present background material on the readings; I'll attempt to clarify elements of the texts that, in my experience, many students find difficult or confusing; and I'll point out some things that I think are interesting about the texts we're reading. But much of the work of the class will take the form of discussions in which you explore your own understandings of the texts. Because this is a large class, we will often divide into smaller groups for discussion. It is *imperative* that you come to each class prepared to talk about the texts: you need not simply to have *done* the reading, but also to have *thought about* the reading. Make sure you allow yourself adequate time to read the texts carefully and to form some impressions of them.

Assignments

In addition to a cumulative final examination (Friday, December 17 from 9:00-11:00am for the 9:00 section; Wednesday, December 15 from 12:30-2:30pm for the 11:00 section), the scheduled assignments for the class include a group project, a one-hour midterm, and a series of quizzes (eleven quizzes will be offered; your grade will be based on the ten highest scores you earn).

Attendance and Participation

Participation in discussion is an integral part of this class. Since it's not possible to participate in a discussion at which you're not present, that means attendance is pretty important, too. Though I don't adhere to a strict formula regarding numbers of absences, I do take attendance. If you miss classes, you should expect the participation of your grade to suffer. Of course, that's also true if you are mentally absent from classes at which you are physically present.

Grading

Your final grade for the course will be *no lower than* the grade arrived at using this formula:

Quizzes:	20% (10 @ 2 points ea.)
Group project:	20%
Midterm test:	20%
Final examination:	25%
Participation:	15%

With the exception of quizzes, which are graded in terms of points earned, I use the grade point scale published on page 60 of the University's catalogue to calculate grades (i.e. A = 4.0; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3.0; B- = 2.7; C+ = 2.3; C = 2.0; C- = 1.7; D+ = 1.3; D = 1.0; F = 0).

A note on academic integrity: In the world of the university, plagiarism is a very serious offense. If I discover that you have attempted to pass off someone else's work as your own, you will receive a grade of "F" for the course. In keeping with Eastern's academic misconduct policy, I will also refer cases of academic dishonesty to the university's judicial officer. You can find Eastern's academic misconduct policy at: <http://kb.easternct.edu/al/12/3/article.aspx?aid=1522&bt=4>

SCHEDULE

Week 1	Mon	8/30	Introductions
	Wed	9/1	Thomas Gray, "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College"
	Fri	9/3	Christopher Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i> , Act I <i>ADD/DROP DEADLINE</i>
Week 2	Mon	9/6	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY
	Wed	9/8	Christopher Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i> , Acts II-III
	Fri	9/10	Christopher Marlowe, Acts IV-V (Quiz)
Week 3	Mon	9/13	Christopher Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i> , conclusions
	Wed	9/15	John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Introductions
	Fri	9/17	John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Book 4, lines 1-392 (Quiz)
Week 4	Mon	9/20	John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Book 4, lines 393-775
	Wed	9/22	John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Book 7, lines 70-640 (Quiz)
	Fri	9/24	John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Book 8
Week 5	Mon	9/27	John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Book 9
	Wed	9/29	John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Book 10, lines 1-233, 647-1104
	Fri	10/1	John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Book 11, lines 1-125, 250-369 Book 12, lines 270-649 (Quiz)
Week 6	Mon	10/4	Hesiod, from <i>Works and Days</i> Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 5-34
	Wed	10/6	Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 34-58
	Fri	10/8	Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 59-101 (Quiz)
Week 7	Mon	10/11	Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. pp. 103-139
	Wed	10/13	Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , pp. 140-156
	Fri	10/15	Midterm Exam: Doctor Faustus, Paradise Lost, and Frankenstein
Week 8	Mon	10/18	Aristotle, from <i>Poetics</i> Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Tyrannus</i> , 1-19
	Wed	10/20	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Tyrannus</i> , 19-46
	Fri	10/22	NO CLASS: PROF. PAULEY ATTENDING A CONFERENCE

Week 9	Mon	10/25	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Tyrannus</i> , 46-63
	Wed	10/27	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Tyrannus</i> , conclusions (Quiz)
	Fri	10/29	Graham Swift, <i>Waterland</i> , chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-25)
Week 10	Mon	11/1	Graham Swift, <i>Waterland</i> , chapters 5-7 (pp. 26-59)
	Wed	11/3	Graham Swift, <i>Waterland</i> , chapters 8-9 (pp. 60-105)
	Fri	11/5	Graham Swift, <i>Waterland</i> , chapters 10-13 (pp. 106-134) (Quiz) <i>CREDIT/NO-CREDIT DEADLINE</i>
Week 11	Mon	11/8	Graham Swift, <i>Waterland</i> , chapters 14-21 (pp. 135-169)
	Wed	11/10	Graham Swift, <i>Waterland</i> , chapters 22-28 (pp. 169-208)
	Fri	11/12	Graham Swift, <i>Waterland</i> , chapters 29-31 (pp. 209-241) (Quiz)
Week 12	Mon	11/15	Graham Swift, <i>Waterland</i> , chapters 32-38 (pp. 242-290)
	Wed	11/17	Graham Swift, <i>Waterland</i> , chapters 39-47 (pp. 290-331)
	Fri	11/19	Graham Swift, <i>Waterland</i> , chapters 48-52 (pp. 332-358) (Quiz)
Week 13	Mon	11/22	Graham Swift, <i>Waterland</i> , conclusions (Group project due: <i>Waterland</i> timeline)
	Wed	11/24	John Sayles, <i>Lone Star</i> , preliminary discussion
	Fri	11/26	John Sayles, <i>Lone Star</i> (Quiz)
Week 14	Mon	11/29	John Sayles, <i>Lone Star</i>
	Wed	12/1	John Sayles, <i>Lone Star</i>
	Fri	12/3	John Sayles, <i>Lone Star</i> (Quiz)
Week 15	Mon	12/6	Thomas Gray, "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" (Revisited)
	Wed	12/8	Conclusions