

**Guidelines for World Literature Teachers**  
**2009-10**  
**Auburn University**  
August 3, 2009

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The goals of the World Literature courses are:

- to provide a program of guided reading of works acclaimed in different times and cultures from antiquity to the present
- to provide a very broad framework of cultural history in which to read the works
- to explore methods and assumptions of literary and cultural analysis
- to help students develop the related skills of careful reading and effective writing

These general goals lead to the following specific student learning objectives:

- to develop the ability to read literary texts carefully and closely
- to develop understanding of the methods and assumptions of literary and cultural analysis
- to gain a good working knowledge and understanding of the texts read
- to gain a good understanding of the literary and cultural contexts of the texts read and be able to interpret them within these contexts
- to gain a general but clear sense of the literary and/or cultural history of the periods covered in the course and be able to situate the readings chronologically within that history
- to develop the ability to write well-supported and persuasive interpretations of literary texts

**READING**

The first and most important point is that both the readings and the handling of the readings should be clearly related to the goals and objectives of the World Literature courses.

Beyond that, the first course should include culturally diverse readings from the ancient period to c. 1600, and the second course culturally diverse readings from c. 1600 to the present. To

provide balance, the World Literature Committee requires that all syllabi include 1) works originally written in English; 2) works not originally written in English; 3) works by women; 4) works by indigenous writers or story-tellers from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the Americas, or Oceania; and for World Literature II, at least one work by a member of a minority group within Western culture. The committee also requires balance among the historical periods represented. For World Literature I, chronological balance involves representation from the ancient world (beginnings to c. 300 CE), the period from c. 300 to 1500 CE, and the period from c. 1500 to 1600 CE. For World Literature II, such balance involves each of the centuries from c. 1600 CE through the twentieth century and beyond.

The length of the reading assignments will vary with the type and relative difficulty of the texts; ideally instructors should try to balance a sense of responsibility for helping their students meet challenging course objectives with a realistic sense of what they can be expected to accomplish each day. A good working guideline is that the amount of reading for any particular class should not exceed what would take most students about two hours to read carefully (MWF classes, slightly more for TR classes). In general, it seems unreasonable to expect students to be prepared to discuss more than approximately 20-25 pp. of prose or drama taught from an anthology (somewhat more if using separately purchased texts) during a single fifty-minute class period, or 30-35 pp. for a twice-a-week format. If you are assigning lyric poetry (or other comparably dense varieties of writing), the amount you can expect students to prepare may be considerably less.

## **WRITING**

Again, the first and most important principle is that both the writing and the handling of writing should advance the goals and objectives of the World Literature courses. Because many students assume that World Literature is not a writing course, you should stress the importance of reciprocal skills of reading and writing in all core courses, and you should expect to devote a portion of class time to writing instruction.

In each course students must write two essays for a combined total of at least 2,400 words (a full revision may be substituted for the second essay). Students should be given a reasonably detailed written assignment for each of these essays. Both essays are to be graded and returned before the last class day. Many instructors assign short in-class and out-of-class assignments in addition to the two essay assignments.

Writing assignments in the World Literature sequence build on the kinds of skills students learn in English Composition—the basic mechanics of writing standard English; basic essay organization; thesis formulation; rhetorical analysis; writing for a particular audience; etc. Writing in World Literature should involve applying these skills to literary interpretation. Over the two courses, writing assignments should develop and refine students' abilities to engage in concrete textual analysis; articulate and advance well-supported theses based on arguable propositions; offer specific claims that avoid unsubstantiated and sweeping generalizations; move well beyond paraphrase and summary to engage and utilize the language of the text as a fundamental form of evidence for a thesis; understand that writing is a form of critical thinking; and attain a style and level of discourse commensurate with a third and fourth English course;

and appropriately incorporate and document sources.

As a result of its assessment work, the World Literature Committee has determined that some paper assignments work better than others and offers the following suggestions:

1. Make assignments specific: provide students with options so they may produce a paper on a subject that interests them, but focus assignments on specific moments, episodes, or issues in the text or texts to be discussed. Consider how easily a student might plagiarize to meet your assignment. Broad, “Write-me-a-paper-on-heroism-in-the *Odyssey*” assignments can either overwhelm the struggling student or seem like an invitation to plagiarism to the dishonest. More focused assignments greatly reduce the chances of plagiarism, which is of considerable concern.
2. Creative assignments should have clear pedagogical goals and allow opportunities to demonstrate detailed knowledge of and imaginative engagement with the text(s).
3. Clarify your grading criteria without engaging in lengthy, legalistic memos.
4. Work on the skills needed for successful papers in class, provide writing instruction in class, and construct strategies for helping your students before papers are due.
5. Make sure students are aware of what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Remind students that in addition to working with you, tutoring on both their reading and their writing skills is available in the English Center (HC 3183).

## **EXAMINATIONS**

Your course must include carefully supervised mid-term and final examinations with substantial writing components. Because of the greater time allowed, the final exam must be worth more than the midterm exam. Take-home exams may not be substituted for timed, proctored examinations. Final exams should demonstrate knowledge of historical periods, cultural contexts, and formal features of the texts, as well as require interpretive analysis. The final exam must include one or two interpretive essays worth a total of 40-60% of the final exam grade (see section on Grading).

## **THE SYLLABUS**

On the first day of classes students should receive a syllabus that serves as the official contract for the course. The instructor’s requirements and expectations should be stated clearly and precisely in the syllabus and should not subsequently be modified except by consultation with the class. Instructors should keep in mind that the tone of the syllabus is important in establishing a productive relationship with the class. Minimally the following categories of information should be included:

1. a reminder of the course prerequisite

2. a statement of the course objectives
3. an explanation of the course design
4. a list of books or other materials students will be required to buy
5. a specific explanation of grading processes and criteria, indicating how the course grade will be determined, including the relative importance of assigned papers, quizzes, exams, class participation, and a statement of the policy on unannounced quizzes
6. statements of any policies the instructor may have on attendance and assigned work (such policies can be enforced only if stated in the syllabus)
7. an explanation of the University's policy on academic honesty, especially with regard to out-of-class writing
8. a statement of willingness to accommodate students with disabilities who must also consult with the Program for Students with Disabilities (HC 1244; 844-2096)
9. the instructor's office hours and contact information, including a statement of policy about when and how quickly you will respond to student email
10. a tentative schedule of assignments, including all readings, major writing assignments, and major exams; include a reminder that readings should be completed before the class discussion for which they are assigned; include a reminder that students may withdraw (with a W on their transcript) until midsemester

**Note: in accord with department policy, three copies of the course syllabus are to be given to Amy Hutchins in the main office during the first week of classes.**

### **1) Prerequisite**

The prerequisite for ENGL 2200 is completion of ENGL 1120 with a grade of C or better. The prerequisite for ENGL 2210 is completion of ENGL 2200 with a grade of D or better.

### **2) Course Objectives**

The syllabus should spell out the specific objectives for your course, all of which should be compatible with the course objectives of World Literature as described above. (Note: objectives in this context mean objectives for student learning: i.e., what students should know or be able to do by the end of the term). As stated above, you should stress the importance of developing the reciprocal skills of reading and writing in all core English courses.

### **3) Course Design**

You should explain the rationale for your course and begin to establish the connections between reading assignments, writing assignments, and the course objectives. A thematic focus is one good option, particularly along with a basic chronological organization, but what is really important is that you explain how the course coheres.

#### 4) Books

Be sure to provide clear information about which edition or translation of a text students should buy. (For details on book ordering and supplementary materials, see the Appendix.)

#### 5) Grading

The syllabus should indicate how the final grade will be determined. A recommended distribution is (note that for the exams the percentages must fall within the required range):

Writing	30-40%
Class work (discussion, quizzes)	10-20%
Mid-term examination	10-20% required MWF; 10-25% TR
Final examination	20-30% required

**The relative weight of the exams must be calibrated so that the final exam is assigned a greater percentage than the midterm exam.** In addition, the final exam is required to include one or two interpretive essays worth a total of 40-60% of the final exam grade. Note that every course must have a final examination at the time specified by the University. University policy does not allow scheduling final exams on the last day of the semester or on Study Days.

As a control on work done outside of class, you may specify that the final grade will not be higher than the average of supervised, in-class writing and examinations. If you adopt this policy, it must be stated on the syllabus.

The method of determining the final course grade should not be subsequently changed without consulting the class.

#### 6) Policies on Class Attendance and Assigned Work

Your syllabus should state your policy on class attendance, which must be in accord with University policy set out in the Tiger Cub Student Handbook ([www.auburn.edu/tigercub](http://www.auburn.edu/tigercub)). A typical policy in the department is to allow a maximum of three unexcused absences for a class that meets three times a week, with assignment of a grade of "FA" for unexcused absence(s) beyond three. But if you intend to penalize students for unexcused absences by lowering their course grade, you will need to specify on the syllabus exactly what the penalty will be.

The University policy on class attendance includes policies on late or missed work and missed examinations. If, as most instructors do, you intend to penalize students for turning work in late, you must specify on the syllabus what the penalty will be (e.g., 5 or 10 points per day).

## 7) Plagiarism

The World Literature Committee strongly recommends that you use one of the following statements in your syllabus:

### (Short form)

Cheating and plagiarism are serious violations of the Student Academic Honesty Code (Title XII) and will be treated according to the procedures outlined in the Tiger Cub. You are responsible for asking your instructor any questions you may have about honest use of sources or proper documentation.

### (Long form)

Cheating and plagiarism are serious violations of the Student Academic Honesty Code (Title XII) and will be treated according to the procedures outlined in the Tiger Cub. Of particular importance for English students is the following section of the code, which prohibits:

*The submission of themes, essays, term papers, tests, design projects, similar requirements or parts thereof that are not the work of the student submitting them. When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when the ideas of another are incorporated into a paper, they must be appropriately acknowledged. Almost every student has heard the term "plagiarism." Nevertheless, there is a danger of failing to recognize either its full meaning or its seriousness. In starkest terms, plagiarism is stealing--using the words or ideas of another as if they were one's own. If, for example, another person's complete sentence, syntax, key words, or the specific or unique ideas and information are used, one must give that person credit through proper documentation or recognition, as through the use of footnotes.*

It is also a violation of academic honesty to have others (roommates, family members, paid consultants) materially assist you in the actual writing of essays. It is acceptable practice to have a peer review your work and make suggestions for improvement; in such cases, you should always include a footnote or endnote acknowledging those contributions. However, if someone else composes or rewrites part of your essay and you do not formally indicate that this has occurred, it is cheating and a violation of academic honesty. It is also cheating yourself of the opportunity to learn by doing.

You are responsible for asking your instructor any questions you may have about honest use of sources or proper documentation.

In any case, you should either briefly explain plagiarism or direct students to read the "Student Academic Honesty Code" in The Tiger Cub with particular attention to plagiarism. You should also indicate, on the syllabus and/or orally in class, that you take plagiarism seriously and will report instances of plagiarism to the Academic Honesty Committee.

The department strongly urges instructors to report every case of plagiarism for which there is evidence to the Academic Honesty Committee. Instructors have neither the burden nor the prerogative of determining the guilt or punishment of plagiarists, no matter how conclusive the evidence. For example, if you assign a zero to an assignment you believe was plagiarized, you would be in violation of university policy and a potential target of a grievance hearing. If you discover a case of suspected plagiarism, a template for the letter is available from the Coordinator.

Most online sources of copied material can be found easily using standard web search engines. The College of Liberal Arts also subscribes to a detection service for more recondite sources, [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). Information on this service can be obtained from Dr. Wiebke Kuhn, [kuhnwi1@auburn.edu](mailto:kuhnwi1@auburn.edu) or 844-2056. And see “Easy Guide to Reporting Honesty Cases by Faculty Members” in [The Tiger Cub](#).

The most recent advisory by the Instructional Media Group (11/26-07) on compliance with FERPA when using Turnitin.com states:

Faculty may require students to submit a paper for review ONLY before the paper is submitted to the instructor. Once the paper has been submitted to the instructor, it becomes a part of the official student record and students may NOT be required to submit it. At this point, only the instructor may submit it, stripped of student identification, for review. Contact IMG if you have questions: 844-5181.

### **8) Students with Disabilities.**

Your syllabus should include a statement of the policy on students with disabilities. Here is the sample statement recommended by the AU Program for Students with Disabilities:

Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. Bring a copy of your Accommodation Memo and an Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If you do not have an Accommodation Memo but need accommodations, make an appointment with The Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

If you have questions about disabilities services or accommodations for a particular student, you may find it helpful to talk to Dr. Sarah Colby Weaver, Director, Program for Students with Disabilities., 844-2096.

### **9) Office Hours and Contact Information**

You should have at least three hours a week of office hours and should provide students sufficient contact information for posing questions and making appointments at other times. Your syllabus should also indicate how long students can expect to wait for a reply to e-mail.

## 10) Schedule of Assignments

You should give a schedule of daily assignments, including all readings, all major writing assignments, and all examinations, including the final examination.

In developing the schedule, be sure to take into account the following from the department policy on withdrawal:

The withdrawal policy now in effect makes it very important that students be given some sense of how they are doing in the course before the mid-semester deadline for withdrawal. The most obvious way to do so is to make sure that you assign and return some graded work to students far enough before mid-semester so that they will have a basis for deciding whether or not to withdraw and a chance to follow through on their decision.

It is recommended that both the midterm exam and the first essay are graded and returned on or before mid-semester. And also keep in mind what is said above under “Writing”: “In each course students must write two essays for a combined total of at least 2,400 words. . . . Both essays are to be graded and returned before the last class day.”

### Program Assessment

To assess how well the program is meeting its goals, instructors are asked each semester to copy the final exam and final paper of a particular randomly selected student, and to submit this material together with a copy of the related exam questions and essay assignment to the program coordinator, with the names of both instructor and student deleted. This process has no direct bearing on either the instructor or the student.

The current criteria for assessment of student outcomes in World Literature Courses (revised Spring 2008) are based on the following programmatic goals, which are directly tied to the University’s core curriculum goals:

- Students completing the World Literature sequence will demonstrate the ability to read literary texts critically and analytically.
- Students completing the World Literature sequence will demonstrate the ability to communicate their literary interpretations and analyses in writing at a level commensurate with a sophomore-level course.
- Students completing the World Literature sequence will demonstrate knowledge of literary and cultural contexts of the works studied.

The World Literature Committee plans to revisit assessment procedures during the current academic year.

### Questions/Problems/Concerns/Suggestions

Instructors are encouraged to discuss questions, problems, concerns, and/or suggestions with the

Coordinator of World Literature, James Goldstein, and/or the Interim Department Head, James Ryan, at any time.

## Appendix: Additional Information

### **Book Ordering and Supplementary Readings**

GTAs and instructors teaching the course for the first time are expected to use an anthology for the course, unless an exception is requested in advance and approved by the Coordinator of World Literature. Indeed, while about one-fourth of World Literature instructors order separate texts for their courses, most use one of the following anthologies offered by major academic publishers (listed alphabetically): The Bedford Anthology of World Literature or The Bedford Anthology of World Literature, Compact Edition; The Longman Anthology of World Literature or The Longman Anthology of World Literature, Compact Edition; The Norton Anthology of World Literature, or The Norton Anthology of World Literature, Shorter Second Edition. Instructor manuals are available for most anthologies. The publishers generally provide the department with desk copies, which are available in 9030 Haley Center. Please see Amy Hutchins if you need a desk copy.

Books for all English Department courses are ordered electronically by individual instructors; the orders are filled by the three major textbook suppliers on and off campus. In the second half of each semester instructors are asked to complete the electronic book ordering form for the following semester. For further information about placing book orders, see Amy Hutchins in 9030 Haley Center.

Instructors may establish a supplementary collection of readings for their classes at the Draughon

Library either in print RESERVES or in E-RESERVES. For additional information on either types or reserves, go to the University homepage, click on “Libraries” and then, under “Find,” click on “Reserve Items.” For questions about e-reserves, please contact the library staff .

Another means of providing readings is a print or digital COURSE PACKET, which students can buy together with their books. This involves delivering, well before the packet is to be made available, a copy of the materials together with precise source information to the bookstore, which produces and sells the packets after securing permissions from the publishers. For information check the AU Bookstore or call Kim Hawkins at 844-2351. Reading materials can also be transmitted in Blackboard.

Finally, you may create your own pdf files of short texts using the department scanners in the workroom and upload them to the class Blackboard. For questions about copyright and fair use, contact Dr. Wiebke Kuhn (kuhnw1@auburn.edu or 844-2056).

### **Enrichment Resources**

#### Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Arts

Auburn’s exciting new museum has a strong collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European and American paintings and plans to host one or more traveling exhibits each year. The museum staff is eager to assist instructors who wish to incorporate visual artworks into their World Literature courses and students who may wish to develop interdisciplinary writing projects for their World Literature classes. For information on coordinating museum holdings with course activities, contact Scott Bishop Waggoner, Educational Curator for Auburn University, at bishogs@auburn.edu or 844-7014. For general information visit the museum homepage.

### **Professional Development**

#### Faculty Seminars

In addition to the World Literature Lectures, the program organizes several brief, informal seminars each semester on teaching in areas that may be relatively unfamiliar to many of us, such as ancient Greek or Roman literature, European medieval literature, or ancient and modern Arabic literature, or to address common pedagogical concerns. The Coordinator welcomes suggestions for other topics.

#### Conference Participation

The department encourages instructors to participate in scholarly discourse on World Literature, or on the teaching of World Literature, in professional journals and conferences, and supports travel to conferences for the presentation of papers to the extent permitted by the department’s travel budget in accord with the travel policy announced each year by the Department Head. The Coordinator publicizes deadlines for conferences related to World Literature and welcomes information on other conferences the faculty may be aware of.

## **Support Services**

### The English Center

World Literature instructors are of course the primary resource for students in their classes who need individual help with reading or writing assignments. However, there is an additional resource for students who are not fully confident of their basic reading and/or writing skills: the department's English Center, which provides individual tutoring in reading and writing for students enrolled in Auburn University's Composition and World Literature courses. Instructors are encouraged to refer students needing such help with basic reading and/or writing skills to the English Center. For further information visit the English Center website.

### Blackboard

Blackboard is the new on-line course management system used by Auburn University. The Instructional Multimedia Group regularly schedules seminars instructing faculty how to use the system. If you have questions, please feel free to call IMG (844-5181) or send an e-mail to Dr. Kathy McClelland (mccleka@auburn.edu).

### Ralph Brown Draughon Library

With a collection of more than 2,700,000 volumes (the state's largest according to the Association of Research Libraries, 2003), extensive electronic access possibilities, a staff well-regarded for helpfulness, and comfortable modern building, Auburn's Draughon Library supports World Literature courses in many ways. These include reserve and e-reserve collections for particular classes, electronic access to a wide array of library materials, individual bibliographic assistance, and comfortable work sites. For information see the library's homepage.

## **The Future of the Sophomore Core Literature Requirement**

In Spring 2009, the Task Force on General Education made a number of recommendations that would significantly alter our role in the core curriculum. During the 2009-10 academic year, the Core Oversight Committee, which will be reconstituted as the General Education Oversight Committee, will consider the recommendations of the General Education Task Force. That Task Force was charged to examine how the current general education requirements can become more inclusive or flexible within the requirements as overseen by the State Articulation and General Studies Committee. Assuming the recommendations are implemented, AU students would be able to choose between either a history or a literature sequence (the state only requires one sequence); students would continue to be required to take one core course in the other area. If additional changes being discussed are implemented, students would be able to fulfill their sophomore literature requirement by selecting from a menu of three sophomore literature sequences: World Literature I-II; British Literature I-II; American Literature I-II. If all these changes are implemented, it is expected that more students will opt to take a history sequence than those who choose a literature sequence, though some majors including our own may decide to continue requiring the completion of a literature sequence.