

Western University
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
Fall/Winter 2017-2018

WLC 1030

World Literatures and Cultures East to West and North to South



Instructor

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Arts & Humanities Building, 3G28E

Office Hours: TBA

Class Time and Location: Monday 2:30-3:30 & Wednesday 2:30-4:30; MC 17

Course Content and Aims

In this course you will learn what it means to go global and think big by taking an exciting journey of discovery across continents and civilizations, from Europe to Asia, from Africa to the Americas. Along the way you will explore a selection of writers and masterworks that have changed, challenged, and connected cultures from antiquity to the present. You will also engage with a variety of visual material (films, animations, videos) based on, or inspired by, a number of the masterworks under examination. The visual material will be used to fully appreciate how stories, plays, and poems enhance our lives to the point of illuminating our experience and understanding of love, justice, power, happiness, and other universal aspects of the human condition. To further enrich your journey, you will be introduced to the artistic legacy of some of the capitals of world culture. While getting acquainted with these Western and non-Western cities you will become familiar with the wonders that make each of them a unique place within contemporary globalization.

The masterworks from various epochs and cultures that you will study include *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Homer's *The Odyssey*, *The Arabian Nights*, Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, and many more.

Required Texts (available at the Western Bookstore)

Damrosch, David, *Gateways to World Literature* (volumes 1 & 2).

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you are expected to be able to:

- Identify cross-cultural patterns of similarity and difference as evidenced in the circulation of themes and the exchange of stories across time and space
- Recognize the roots of today's globalizing world in a number of literary works.
- Understand how literature, from around the world, has historically contributed to generate, disseminate, and transgress cultural assumptions and values.
- discuss the role that literature has played, and continue to play, in exploring how the meaning of universal human concerns – such as love, friendship, power, justice and happiness – evolves in time.
- show awareness of some of the basic questions regarding adaptation.
- appreciate the role of cultural networks that cities have played throughout history.
- demonstrate basic critical skills in discussing topics and in analyzing works



Course Requirements

1) Short Assignments (2 pages; 5% each)	25%
2) Writing Project (1000 words or 4 double-spaced pages)	15%
3) Midterm	15%
4) Participation	10%
5) Final Exam	35%

Short Written Assignments

You will write five short assignments in response to questions that will be posted on Owl. Based on assigned readings, the questions will address specific aspects of works and topics covered throughout the year. Each assignment is worth 5% of the total grade.

Writing Project

A list of topics will be uploaded on Owl at least one month before the due date for the submission of the project (in mid- March; check the lecture schedule that you will receive in September, when classes start). You will write on one of the topics of your choice from the list. The purpose of the writing project is for you to build

research skills while developing, in combination with the short assignments, proper familiarity with academic writing. You are expected to use at least two secondary sources. Keep in mind that secondary sources are important, as they are supposed to help you in constructing and supporting your argument

Midterm (1 hour)

It will consist of identification questions to be answered in short-paragraph form. The questions will address the reading material covered in class up to that point.

Participation

You are expected to maintain regular attendance and to complete all readings for each class. Participation is assessed on the basis of day-to-day preparation and contribution to class-activities and discussions. If you have a legitimate reason to be absent from class (sickness, family crisis, religious holiday), contact me or my Teaching Assistant beforehand, so that we can arrange how to make up any missed material.

Final Exam (3 hours)

The final exam will consist of questions to be answered in short paragraph and short essay form. It is cumulative, i.e., it covers the entire year. Please note that all final examinations are timetabled by the Office of the Registrar without any input from the Department. Since your exam may be scheduled for any date during the April examination period, and since students must write at a scheduled time, you should not make any plans which might run into conflict with the examination timetable.

N.B. Please use the MLA style for all written assignments (<https://style.mla.org/works-cited-a-quick-guide-video/>)

Prerequisite:

Antirequisite:

Other Academic Matters: [UWO Academic Calendar \(Academic Policies/Regulations\)](#).

The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures Policies (which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in the department's courses) are available [here](#). It is your responsibility to understand these policies, and thus ignorance thereof cannot be used as grounds for appeal.