

Natalie McKnight (This syllabus is also available on my Course Info site).

Hu. 101 Fall

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-2:00

Thursdays 10:00-11:00 and 1:00-2:00 (10-11 is our tutorial hour, which will
be held in room 307 unless otherwise announced)

Fridays 10:00-11:00 (And by appointment)

Humanities 101 Traditions in the Humanities: The Forms of Passion

--“The appreciation of beauty in art or nature is not only (for all its difficulties) the easiest available spiritual exercise; it is also a completely adequate entry into . . . the good life, since it is the checking of selfishness in the interest of seeing the real. . . . It is when form is used to isolate, to explore, to display something which is true that we are most highly moved and enlightened.” -Iris Murdoch, from *The Sovereignty of Good*

In *Erotic Faith*, Robert Polhemus points out, as does Murdoch in the quotation above, the similarities between the functions of religion and literature, and I’d like you to keep these in mind throughout our year together: both strive “to honor creation and the mystery of being; to make people feel the worth of their own souls; to reconcile them to their lives and offer an alternative to the pain of daily existence; to justify, rationalize, or sublimate power relations; to exalt by holding out the promise of salvation; to lift people out of themselves, free the spirit, and move them to ecstasy; to transmute and control aggression and violent drives” (4-5). Works of literature, and the arts in general, stem from and shape the deepest passions and concerns of human nature and structure civilization as we know it. In other words, the arts are not simply adornments, ways of passing time pleasantly, although they serve that purpose, too. Throughout this course you should be prepared to address both the grand motivations and passions that shape the arts we study, along with the specific details that make them memorable.

The following pages list the readings, papers, films, and exams for the semester. I will expect you to have completed the readings by the lecture of the week under which the readings are listed. I also expect you to be in class, on time, with your book, notebook, and as much of your mental energy and enthusiasm as you can muster. I will try to do the same.

There is much in literature, art, history, and film that I want to explore with you this semester, but **my chief goals** are these:

1. To help you to develop or increase your appreciation of literature, art, and film and their insights into human nature.

2. To enhance your abilities to think, read and write critically, skills you will need no matter what you study or do for a living.

3. To develop your understanding of how the arts reflect and affect the social/historical contexts from which they come and to strengthen your sense of history in general.

4. To enable you to perceive the shared aesthetic and cultural values in the art, literature, architecture and music of various time periods.

Advice:

1. **BE INTERESTED!** (interest--n. 1. a feeling of curiosity, fascination, or absorption. . . . 4. an excess or bonus beyond what is expected or due.) If you have interest, you will gain interest.

2. **THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS "READING"; THERE'S ONLY RE-READING.** The only way to move beyond superficial knowledge of a text is by rereading.

Enjoy!

Unit 1 The Ancient World: Ways of Knowing through the Arts

Week 1 9/5-9/8

Tues: Introduction to course and syllabus.

Fri: For today, read the sections of *Gilgamesh* in the *Norton Anthology of Western Literature, Vol. 1* (hereafter referred to as NA1)

Week 2 9/11-9/15

Mon: Read *Genesis* 1-3, 4, 6-9, and 17-22; also read *Psalms 23* and *Song of Songs* (all in NA1). Lecture on the Hebrew Bible and ways of knowing literature.

Tues: Discuss readings and **hand out first essay assignment**.
See Chaplin's *The Kid* on Tues or Wed at 3 in the JSA.

Fri: Discuss film and readings.

Week 3 9/18-9/22

Mon: Read *Oedipus* (NA1) for today.

Tues: Discuss play.

Fri: Read *Antigone* (NA1) for today, and be prepared to defend/prosecute.

Week 4 9/25-29

Mon: For today, read *Lysistrata* (NA1). Lecture on play and tragedy/comedy.

Tues: Discuss play (psychoanalytic and gender studies approaches); view slides of art/architecture. Go over grade criteria.

See *Sunrise* on Tues/Wed at 3 in JSA.

Optional **Tutorial Thursday on essay assignment!**

Fri: Discuss film and tragic/comic blend.

Week 5 10/2-10/6 **No office hours on Thursday and no class on Friday: I'll be away at a conference—use the extra time to get work done on your papers! I'll have extra office hours on Tuesday 10/3 to make up for the cancelled hours.**

Mon: For today, read *Luke 2* and *Matthew 5-7* and 26-28 from the *New Testament* (NA 1).

Tues: Discuss readings (using philosophical and formalist strategies).

Unit 2 The Middle Ages

Week 6 10/9-13 **Monday is a holiday—no classes; Tuesday follows a Monday schedule.**

Tues: For this week, read from the *Koran* “The Exordium,” “Women,” “Jonah” and “Joseph”; also read Hildegard of Bingen’s “A Hymn to St. Maximus and Dante’s “Love and Poetry and “Sonnet” (all in NA1). Lecture on transition from classical period to the Middle Ages, shown through art slides and music, and the common roots of Judaism, Islam and Christianity.
Essay #1 due!

Fri: Discuss readings and art.

Week 7 10/16-20

Mon: For today, read Marie de France’s “Lanval” and “Laüstic” and Chaucer’s “General Prologue” and “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale” (all in NA 1). Discuss courtly love traditions

Tues: Continue discussing readings. **See film, *Casablanca*, on Tues. or Wed.**

Tutorial review for midterm exam.

Fri: Discuss film. Review for midterm.

Week 8 10/23-27 **Midterm Exams** (schedule TBA; no classes held)

Unit 3 The Renaissance and Baroque Periods

Week 9 10/30-11/3

Mon: For today, read *Everyman* and Petrarch and Michelangelo sonnets (in NA 1) and in *Annotated Mona Lisa* (hereafter referred to as AML), the Renaissance section, p. 30-45. Discuss transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. View art slides.

Tues: Discuss readings and sonnet form; go over exam.

Fri: Continue discussing readings and assign second essay.

Week 10 11/6-11/10

Mon: For today read poems by Thomas Wyatt, Spenser, Sidney, Marlowe, Raleigh and Herrick, plus Shakespeare sonnets, all in NA1.

Tues: Discuss poems.

Fri: NO CLASS TODAY–HOLIDAY!

Week 11 11/13-17

Mon: For today, read *Hamlet* (in NA 1).

Tues: Discuss play and film versions. See *Sunset Boulevard* on Tues. or Wed.

Fri: Discuss film.

Week 12 11//20-11/21 **Thanksgiving break begins Wednesday.**

Mon: For today, read *The Tempest* (NOTE–THIS PLAY IS NOT IN YOUR ANTHOLOGY. NUMEROUS EDITIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE BOOKSTORE AND LIBRARY. SOME COPIES ARE ON RESERVE IN THE CGS STUDY CENTER AS WELL, OR YOU CAN BUY ONE NEW OR USED VIA AMAZON.COM).

Tues: Discuss play. HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!!

Week 13 11/27-12/1

Mon: For today, read Margaret de Navarre's *Heptameron*—the Prologue plus Story 3 and Story 10. Discuss Renaissance women authors and the rise of fiction.

Tues: Discuss paper due Friday; bring in thesis. **See *Rear Window* on Tues. or Wed.**

Fri: **Second paper due.** Discuss film.

Week 14 12/4-12/8

Mon: Read John Donne's poems p. 2049-50 and 2536-2543 and George Herbert's poems p. 2547-2550, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, sections of Bk. 1 and 2 (all in NA1). View Baroque art. Read Baroque Art section of AML, p. 46-63.

Tues: Discuss poetry and art.

Fri: Continue discussing poetry.

Week 15 12/10-12/11 No new readings for this week. Review for exam.

STUDY DAYS 12/13 AND 12/14. FINAL EXAM 12/15.

Required texts:

The Annotated Mona Lisa. WE WILL USE THIS ***BOTH SEMESTERS!!!***

The Norton Anthology of Western Literature, Vol. 1 (We'll use Vol. 2 in the second semester.

The Tempest, by William Shakespeare. Any edition will do. The Bookstore has some copies (in general literature, not in my textbook section). Copies are also available in the library or via Amazon.com; some copies are on reserve in the CGS/Katzenberg Study Center under my name.

Attendance and Participation

Having paid over \$40,000 to be here, I would imagine you would want to be here—in class, on time, prepared, eager to participate. That's the only way to enjoy and get the most out of this class. If you need more incentive than that, 20% of your final average will be a combined grade for attendance, participation, debates and quizzes (the attendance part of this grade will be figured as follows: 0-1 absences = A, 2-3 absences = B, 4-5 = C, 6-7 = D, 8 or more = F). Participating regularly and meaningfully to class discussions can boost your final grade, particularly if it's on the borderline. But ultimately I would hope that you want to do the work

and participate eagerly because you're enthusiastic about learning and greedy for knowledge. I'm not kidding.

Any student with 10 or more absences will automatically fail the course. That amount of absences means you really haven't taken the course and therefore do not deserve credit for it.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is stealing someone else's words or ideas and presenting them as your own, whether they are words of a fellow student or a published author. If you use more than 3 consecutive words from any source, you must quote them and show where they came from. In addition, you must cite the source of any summary or paraphrase of another person's ideas or words. Anyone caught plagiarizing will fail the assignment and will face academic probation. Since I never fail a paper, no matter how poor, unless it is late or plagiarized, it doesn't make sense to steal someone else's work. Your chances for a passing grade are much better if you just do the work yourself and turn it in on time.

Late policy: one grade off per day late unless I have a legitimate, written excuse (i.e. doctor's note).

Work hard and enjoy the course. I plan to!

Natalie McKnight
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Office Hours: Monday 1-2
Tuesday 12-1
Thursday 10-11 (tutorial in 307)
1-2
Friday 10-11

See syllabus and other materials on CourseInfo site!

Humanities 102: Breaks with Tradition

--“Good literature continually read for pleasure must, let us hope, do some good to the reader: must quicken his perception though dull, and sharpen his discrimination though blunt, and mellow the rawness of his personal opinions.”—A. E. Housman, *The Name and Nature of Poetry*

--“Art attempts to find in the universe, in matter as well as in the facts of life, what is fundamental, enduring, essential.”—Saul Bellow, Nobel Prize speech.

The main goals of this course are 1) to further your understanding and appreciation of literature, art, music and film and how they contribute to a culture’s ethos; 2) to enhance your abilities to think, read, and write critically; and 3) to strengthen your sense of history and wed it to the concretes of art. The effects of good literature that Housman mentions in the quotation above should also be considered goals of the course. The course begins with the Enlightenment and finishes with art, poetry and film from the last 10 years. The past three centuries have witnessed more radical changes in all the arts than occurred in the past three millennia. Tracing the causes and effects of these radical revolutions, revolutions we continue to experience today, will be the main focus of our course.

Week of:

- 1/16** Tuesday: Introduction to course, syllabus, and Enlightenment.
Friday: For today, read Pope’s *Essay on Man*, p 368+ in *Norton Anthology of Western Literature II* (hereafter referred to as NAW).
- 1/22** Monday: For today read poems by Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge in NAW.
View slides of Romantic art and listen to a Beethoven sonata.
Tuesday: Continue discussing poems. **See film, *The Bicycle Thief*, at 3 in JSA.**
Friday: Discuss film. **First essay assigned.**
- 1/29** Monday: For today read poems by Byron, Shelley, and Keats in NAW.
Tuesday: Continue discussing poetry.
Friday: Discuss American Romanticism in art.
- 2/05** *Monday: For today read Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* (separate book).
Tuesday: Discuss Dickens. **See film, *The Manchurian Candidate*, at 3 in JSA.**

- Friday: Discuss film.
- 2/12** Monday: For today read poems by Tennyson, Browning, Whitman, Dickinson and Baudelaire in NAW.
 Tuesday: Discuss poems and late 19th century art (Impressionism). Bring in thesis statements.
 Friday: Continue discussing poems.
- 2/19** **Monday is a holiday—no classes. Tuesday follows a Monday schedule.**
 Tuesday: **First essay due!** Read for today Chekhov's "Lady with the Dog."
 Discuss realism in literature and art.
 Friday: For today read Tolstoy's "The Death of Ivan Ilyich."
- 2/26** Monday: Read James Joyce's "The Dead" in NAW. Discuss modernism in literature and art (Post-Impressionism and Cubism).
 Tuesday: For today, read T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and "The Wasteland" in NAW. **See film, *My Life as a Dog*, today at 3 in JSA.**
 Friday: Discuss film. Exam review.
- 3/5** **Midterm exams.**
- 3/12** **Spring break! Have fun, be safe! Be smart--Get started on *Beloved*!**
- 3/19** Monday: For today, read World War I poems (specific poems to be announced).
 Tuesday: Discuss poems and war-related expressionist art. **See film, *The Piano*, today at 3 in JSA.**
 Friday: Discuss film. **Second essay assigned.**
- 3/26** Monday: **Stick Cubism in here!!!!**For today read Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter* and *The Caretaker*.
 Discuss Theater of the Absurd.
 Tuesday: Continue discussing plays.
 Friday: For today read Beckett's *Endgame* in NAW.
- 4/2** Monday: For today read poems by Elizabeth Bishop, May Swenson, Richard Wilbur, and Carolyn Kizer in *Vintage Book of Contemporary American Poetry* (hereafter referred to as "Vintage").
 Tuesday: continue discussing poetry. **See film, *In the Mood for Love*.**
- 4/9** Monday: Read poems in Vintage by Donald Justice, W.D. Snodgrass, Alan Ginsberg, and John Ashberry. Discuss poetry and contemporary trends in art.
 Tuesday: Continue discussing poetry.
 Friday: Bring in your own example of a contemporary work of literature, art, music or film that you think deserves to be considered serious art. Discuss criteria for judging art.
- 4/16** **Monday is a holiday—no classes. Wednesday follows a Monday schedule.**

Tuesday: For today read in Vintage poems by Phillip Levine, Sylvia Plath, Robert Pinsky, Sharon Olds, and Louise Glück.

Wednesday: Bring in working thesis statements.

Friday: **Second essay due!**

4/23 Monday: For today, have 1st half of *Beloved* read.

Tuesday: Discuss novel. Quiz? **See film, *The Color of Paradise*.**

Friday: Discuss film.

4/30 Monday: For today, finish *Beloved*.

Tuesday: Review for final exam.

5/7 Final Exam!

Required Texts:

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