

**Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Razi University**

**A Course Syllabus for Contemporary American/British Literature**

**Spring Semester, February-June 2019.**

**Class Time: ???**

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**Part 1: Course Overview**

In this course, we will be exploring modern and postmodern literature in the context of American/British history and culture. Issues such as identity, race, class, gender, history, art, poesy and narrative will be explored while perusing chosen masterpieces and watching excellent motion pictures. This course intends to provide a general overview of the development of American/British literature since the 1920s (roughly) introducing you to selected works representing major literary trends and philosophical movements in the English speaking world. Moreover, the connection between literary/philosophical concepts and the cultural contexts of the 20th and 21st centuries will be explored. It is imperative to note that our main focus will be on two major literary movements: modernism and postmodernism. By the end of the course, students will have acquired an understanding of the relationship between texts and context and what it means for 20th and 21st centuries literature be deemed modern, postmodern or of the realm of after theory.

**Part 2: Course Objectives/Outcomes**

* Analyzing literary works/adaptations and their context and with/through critical thinking/writings.
* Promoting students’ awareness of the texts and their context through class discussions and lectures.
* Increasing class’ understating of the less discussed issues and newly born trends and texts.
* Making connection between literary creation, aesthetics, and philosophy with cinema and media.
* Addressing the influence of English literature and culture on world’s literature and intellectual trends.

**Part 3: Required Texts**

Greenblatt, Stephen, and Meyer Howard. Abrams. *The Norton anthology of English literature*. Vol. 2. New York, Norton & Company, 2013.

Baym, Nina. *The Norton anthology of American literature*. New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2002.

\*Literary works’ PDFs will be sent to students.

**Part 4: Students’ Responsibilities**

* **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and to have completed the assigned reading before arriving in class. Two absences will be permitted. Each additional absence will result in a reduction of the final course grade. **And remember, take notes during the sessions.**
* **Participation:** Students are expected to take part in class discussions and raise questions, if they have any, regarding the subject matter and content of each session. Moreover, they will be asked to give their opinion on certain matters during the class time.
* **Forget about your mobiles/tablets/laptops. Bring printed copies or books.**

**Part 5: Classroom Rules and Standards of Online Behavior**

* All electronic gadgets must be off or set to silent mode. If you use them for reading PDFs and other class related files, make sure they will not distract you or others so as to prevent the class from digressions.
* Punctuality is a non-negotiable must.
* 3 sessions of absence mean reducing your chance of passing the course greatly not to mention increasing the possibility of being dropped out of the course. Don’t try it, ever!
* Class activities are expected of the students.
* Last but not least, respect the class. Do not leave the class in groups during the breaks. You absolutely must not extend breaks’ duration on your own authority. For each session, a 10 minute break is already scheduled.
* Should the students have any questions, concerns, or requests for meeting and materials, they will contact me **only and solely** via **my email address**. Other forms of communications are absolutely not recommended.

You all have my thanks and appreciation since you have always observed these rules and regulations. Bringing them here again is only a matter of formality and academic regulations.

**Part 6: Grading Policy and Final Exam Structure**

| **Points** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| 1.5+1 | Class participation and Attendance |
| 4.5 | Critical Response Essay and Presentations (some sort of take-home quiz)\* |
| 13 | Final exam\*\*. |
| 20 | Total points |

**\*This is optional. Obviously if you choose not to write essays or give presentations, you will be answering extra questions on the final exam.**

**\*\***the final exam will be an essay exam. On your exam, you will answer essay questions that are structured around the issues discussed in the class. You must respond to them properly and to the point in a reasonable length with maximum awareness of the texts themselves and critical subject matters that have been presented in the class. It goes needless to say that those who show genuine analytical insights in their answers will receive extra points. And there will be at least two bonus questions on your exam which are much more difficult than the regular questions and need a great deal of critical insight and mastery over the sources. Don’t forget: **everything I say will be on the exam!**

**Part 7: Schedule**

**Week 1:**

* British Empire, Censorship, and Class Structure.
* Text(s): ‘The Darkling Thrush’ Poem by Thomas Hardy, ‘The Gift Outright’ Poem by Robert Frost.

**Week 2:**

* The Great War and Its Aftermath, New World Powers, War Poetry, Birth of Fantasy.
* Motion Picture(s): *The Hobbit Trilogy* Directed by Peter Jackson.

**Week 3:**

* Between Two Wars, Fiction Writing, and Emergence of Radical Thoughts.
* Motion Picture(s): *Gone with the Wind* (1939) Directed by Victor Fleming.

**Week 4:**

* The Second World War, Holocaust, and the Rise of the New World.
* Text(s): The Shield of Achilles Poem by W. H. Auden.
* Motion Picture(s): *Schindler's List* Directed by Steven Spielberg.

**Week 5:**

* British Empire: Decline and Loss, Dawn of Postcolonialism.
* Text(s): *Slaughterhouse-Five* Novel by Kurt Vonnegut.

**Week 6:**

* Migrant Experience and Multiculturalism, Diaspora, and Feminism.
* Text(s): ‘Lady Lazarus’ Poem by Sylvia Plath.

**Week 7:**

* Northern Irish Question, Political Protest, and Popular Culture.
* Motion Picture(s): *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) Directed by Stanley Kubrick.

**Week 8:**

* Religion, Science, and Technological Innovations.
* Motion Picture(s): *Blade Runner* (1982) Directed by Ridley Scott, *Blade Runner 2049* (2017) Directed by Denis Villeneuve.

**Week 9:**

* 1970s-1990s: War and Terrorism.
* Motion Picture(s): *Platoon* (1986) Directed by Oliver Stone.

**Week 10:**

* Women Writers: Iris Murdoch, Alice Munro and Elizabeth Bishop.
* Text(s): ‘Walker Brothers Cowboy’ Short Story by Alice Munro.

**Week 11:**

* The New Century and History.
* Text(s): *Wolf Hall* Novel by Hilary Mantel.

**Week 12:**

* Race, Class and Postmodernism: New voices in 21st-century literature.
* Magic Realism. Video Games and New Media.

**Week 13:**

* Review.

**\*Content and form of this syllabus may change.**