

# SYLLABUS

## San José State University Department of English and Comparative Literature ENGL 125A: European Literature, Homer to Dante (40660), Fall 2009

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<b>Office Hours:</b>	T-Th: 1:30-3:00
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	T-Th: 10:30-11:45
<b>Classroom:</b>	BBC 123
<b>Class Web Page:</b>	<a href="http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/125a">www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/125a</a>

### Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, and so on, may be found on the class web page at [www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/125a](http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/125a). The same information is available on the course Blackboard page ([sjsu6.blackboard.com](http://sjsu6.blackboard.com)), which you will need to access in order to submit your essays online. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU for any messages that may be sent pertaining to this class.

### Course Description

This course surveys works written in languages other than English by European writers, from Homer to Dante. These works form part of the cultural foundation on which is based the literature of Europe, including Britain, as well as that of the United States and other societies. Not only is this literature extremely important in its own right, but for centuries authors from around the world have addressed their readers in the assumption of a shared familiarity with the great works of Greece, Rome, and medieval Europe.

### Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

First, to provide students the opportunity to improve their abilities in reading, discussing and writing about literature, and to increase their understanding of it, with a focus as much on form as on content. Second, to introduce students to examples of European literature written during the ancient, classical, and medieval periods. Third, to enhance students' understanding of the historical, demographic, geographic, and cultural background of Europe and its people. Last but not least, to read and appreciate some great works of literature.

## Required Text

Sarah Lawall et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of Western Literature*, Eighth Edition, Volume 1, 2006. ISBN: 9780393925722.

## Other Texts

In addition to the *Norton Anthology*, students should have access to a dictionary, thesaurus, and composition handbook (from English 1A or 100W, for example). That dictionary, incidentally, should not be reserved for essays alone. Students are expected to look up any unfamiliar words encountered in the texts that are not explained in the notes, and to be able to define them when called upon to do so in class. Obviously, this is particularly important in a class covering works originally written at quite a distance from us in time and space, since many of the places, concepts, items, and expressions may be unfamiliar.

## Library Liaison

Toby Matoush, toby.matoush@sjsu.edu, 808-2096

## Classroom Protocol

**Preparation and Participation:** Students should come to class having read the day's assignment and prepared to discuss it. Opportunities for such contributions may take the form of small-group or full-class discussions; in either situation, individual students may be called upon by the instructor to answer a question, interpret a passage, or express an opinion.

**Quizzes:** The best way to measure how carefully you are reading the texts, and how much of that reading you retain (at least for a day or so) is with short quizzes at the beginning of the class period. The quizzes will only cover significant information from that day's reading assignment, though that information may not be the sort readily accessible to you in plot summaries, outlines, or synopses, but only through personally experiencing the text for yourself. If you read well ahead of the assigned schedule, be sure to review your notes and come to class with a fresh and detailed impression of the works. A pattern of doing poorly on these quizzes should be taken as an indication that you are not doing the reading, or not reading attentively enough, or not reading with the care and analysis necessary to be successful as an English major and literary devotee.

**Written Work:** There will be two essays, both about 1500 words and counting 25% of the final mark each, and a final examination counting 25%. There will also be frequent quizzes, which will help determine the remaining 25%, along with participation in class discussions, the timely completion of readings and written work, and other short assignments. The second essay may require research beyond the class texts themselves. Grading will be on a 100-point scale for each assignment. For the final mark, 100-97 will be an A+, 96-94 an A, 93-90 an A-, 89-87 a B+, 86-84 a B, 83-80 a B-, 79-77 a C+, 76-74 a C, 73-70 a C-, and so on.

**Submission of written work:** The two essays must be double-spaced (and without a cover page), follow standard MLA format, and be submitted online only, through the course Blackboard page (at [sjsu6.blackboard.com](http://sjsu6.blackboard.com)), by the beginning of class on the days they are due. Additionally, a copy of each essay must also be submitted to Turnitin.com, so please create a (free) account there, and link to this class by putting in the course number and password: 2787910, Homer. Late work can only be submitted to either site by prior arrangement. Do not email or leave at my office any work for this class, unless I specifically ask you to do so. Corrected papers will be returned online in pdf format. Please keep a copy of all work submitted on disk, and retain all graded work returned until the end of the semester; English majors should save the graded copies of their essays in all department classes, since these will be required

for the portfolio in their senior seminar. Students should anticipate a significant delay in the return of late work. Please note that many people find it harder to proofread work on a computer screen than in printed form, so you may want to print out your final draft and make corrections to that, before submitting the finished file online. Also note that the file name for any work you are submitting should begin with your last name, first name, course number, and assignment name: for example, “Smith John 125A Essay1.doc.” Finally, remember that I will also be keeping a copy of your marked work during the semester so that, when you submit your second essay, I will begin by reviewing the technical mistakes you made in the first one, and looking to see if you have made any progress in those areas on the second. You, too, should take the time to review those errors, and improve your writing—you know I will be checking.

**Classroom conduct:** Please do not read non-course related materials during class, and refrain from conversations or inappropriate comments while the instructor or classmates are speaking. Turn off cell phones, music, pagers, and other likely distractions while in class. Laptops may be used only for note-taking in class; otherwise they must be turned off.

### **Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about adding and dropping classes, including deadlines and penalties. Deadlines for adding and dropping are listed on the course calendar, below. Other information about academic policies is available at [info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-18.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-18.html). Information about late drop is available at [www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/). Exceptions to these policies must be granted by administrators, not instructors. **This semester, the last day to drop courses without an entry on your permanent record is September 3<sup>rd</sup>. The last day to add courses or register late is September 11<sup>th</sup>.**

### **Assignments and Grading Policy**

1. Class participation, quizzes, other short assignments, and timely completion of work: 25%
2. First essay (1500 words): 25%
3. Second essay (1500 words): 25%
4. Final exam: 25%

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment:

The “**A**” essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The “**B**” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the “**A**” essay. The chief difference is that the “**B**” essay will show some descriptably slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The “**C**” essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “**B**” essay.

The “**D**” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The “**F**” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A= excellent; B= above average; C= average; D= below average; F= failure. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC shall replace D or F. In such cases, NC shall also substitute for W (or Withdrawal) because neither grade (NC or W) affects students’ GPA.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic integrity**

Students should know that the University’s Academic Integrity Policy is available at [http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial\\_affairs/Academic\\_Integrity\\_Policy\\_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf). Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at [http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of all instructors involved.

To discourage plagiarism and contribute to the student’s awareness of this issue, both essays for this class will be submitted online to Turnitin.com (in addition to the copy submitted online to the instructor). More information about this will be contained in the essay assignments.

### **Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

### **Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

### **Learning Assistance Resource Center**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. The LARC website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/>.

## SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges.

Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/>.

## Course Schedule

*This schedule is subject to modification. If you miss class, please check for changes to the greensheet on the class web page at [www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/125a](http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/125a)*

### Major Assignments:

**Essay #1** (on *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*): essay due Oct. 8th.

**Essay #2** (on Greek and Roman plays): essay due Nov. 10th.

**Final Exam** (two essays: one comprehensive, one on Roman and medieval works). Question possibilities will be distributed on the last day of class, Dec. 8th.

Aug	25	T	Introduction
	27	Th	<i>Iliad</i> , pp. 100-122
Sept	1	T	<i>Iliad</i> , pp. 122-141 (l. 441), 156 (l. 822)-173
	3	Th	<i>Iliad</i> , pp. 173-186
	8	T	<i>Odyssey</i> , pp. 206-239
	10	Th	<i>Odyssey</i> , pp. 246 (l. 343)-254 (l. 687), 260-271
	15	T	<i>Odyssey</i> , pp. 301-334 (l. 267), 338 (l. 437)-344
	17	Th	<i>Odyssey</i> , pp. 403-417
	22	T	<b>No Class (Furlough)</b>
	24	Th	<i>Odyssey</i> , pp. 428-483
	29	T	Sappho, pp. 496-501; <i>Agamemnon</i> , pp. 502-550
Oct	1	Th	<i>The Eumenides</i> , pp. 579-606
	6	T	<i>Oedipus</i> , pp. 607-652
	8	Th	<i>Antigone</i> , pp. 653-663 (l. 416); first essay due.
	13	T	<i>Antigone</i> , pp. 663-687
	15	Th	Medea, pp. 688-719
	20	T	<i>Lysistrata</i> , pp. 720-755
	22	Th	<b>No Class</b>
	27	T	<i>Pseudolus</i> , pp. 863-89
	29	Th	<i>Pseudolus</i> , pp. 889-920
Nov	3	T	<b>No Class (Furlough)</b>
	5	Th	<i>Aeneid</i> , pp. 926-952
	10	T	<i>Aeneid</i> , pp. 974-995; second essay due.
	12	Th	Ovid, pp. 1023-39, 1059-1064
	17	T	Marie de France, pp. 1316-25; <i>Thorstein</i> , pp. 1374-79; Medieval Lyrics, pp. 1391-3, 1402-3, 1405-6, 1414.
	19	Th	<i>Divine Comedy</i> , pp. 1456-1471
	24	T	<i>Divine Comedy</i> , pp.1471-1506
	26	Th	<b>Thanksgiving</b>
Dec	1	T	<i>Divine Comedy</i> , pp. 1506-1535, 1546-1549, 1562-1566,
	3	Th	<i>Divine Comedy</i> , pp 1573-1597
	8	T	Review
	14	M	9:45-12:00: Final Exam (please bring an 8-1/2" x 11" exam booklet)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STUDENT LEARNING GOALS: DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH &amp; COMPARATIVE LITERATURE</b></p>
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*I. SKILLS*

- Ability to read texts closely and to articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature and rhetoric.
- Ability to explicate texts written in a wide variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes.
- Ability to recognize and appreciate the importance of major literary genres, subgenres, and periods.
- Ability to respond imaginatively to the content and style of texts.
- Ability to write clearly, effectively, and imaginatively, and to adjust writing style appropriately to the content and nature of the subject.
- Ability to develop and carry out research projects and to articulate them within appropriate conceptual and methodological frameworks, including the ability to recognize when information is needed, and to locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
- Ability to analyze texts other than literary or rhetorical: for example, political, journalistic, commercial, technical, etc.
- Ability to read and speak a language other than English.

*II. KNOWLEDGE*

- Understanding of the historical development of the English language and of literature written in English from Old English to the present.
- Understanding of the relations between culture, history, and texts, including ideological and political aspects of the representation, economic processes of textual production, dissemination and reception, and cross-fertilization of textual representations by those of other arts: architecture, sculpture, music, film, painting, dance, and theatre.
- Understanding of the twofold nature of textual analysis: 1) objective study from varied analytical perspectives; 2) subjective experience of the aesthetic reality of the text.
- Familiarity with a wide range of British and American literary works, as well as with selected authors and works of other literatures, including folk and popular forms.
- Familiarity with a wide range of literary terms and categories relating to literary history, theory, and criticism, including figurative language and prosody.
- Familiarity with the nature of the canon and of canon-formation, including issues of culture, history, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.
- Familiarity with basic practices of literary research and documentation, including electronic forms of information retrieval and communication.

*III. EXPERIENCES*

- Face-to-face exchange of ideas with faculty and fellow students in a classroom, in office visits, and in shared activities on and off campus.
- Cooperative projects with other students in discussion groups, writing activities, and study sessions.
- Cultural resources of the University: interest groups, public lectures, readings by creative writers, theatrical productions, music and dance performances.
- Involvement in the life of the University, connection with its physical environs, participation in a dynamic, rich, diverse intellectual community.
- Achievement of independently-conceived research projects, including the stating of a problem or issue and all steps involved in organizing, synthesizing, summarizing, and analyzing information in order to communicate conclusions.

*IV. UNDERSTANDINGS, INTERESTS, AND VALUES*

- An enduring interest in language and literature.
- A sense of the presence of the literary and rhetorical past.
- Greater awareness of the depth and complexity of human existence, perceived across the boundaries of time, place, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation
- Long-term interest and involvement in aesthetic, cultural, and intellectual matters as well as in social and political issues.
- Understanding of the ability of great literature and of concentrated language study to awaken and challenge readers and auditors to struggle with the profound questions of human identity and values.
- A personal critical perspective, and sense of intellectual independence and momentum.