

ENGL 2120
World Literature
MWF 8:00-8:50

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World Literature: Legal Fictions

This course is an introduction to some of the major foundational texts of the western tradition, not simply with an eye toward constructing a canon of great books but in order to begin to think critically about the ideas that we have inherited from the past, sometimes unconsciously. These are texts, in other words, that continue to influence our own contemporary moment. We will not only read older texts but also some more recent ones that directly (or indirectly) respond to them. As a CT2 course, the focus will not be on memorizing dates and character names but on thinking critically and writing persuasively about enduring questions that continue to shape our human communities. In particular this semester we will be concentrating on questions surrounding the law. What is the relationship between the law and the individual? What counts as a right? What ethical responsibility does the law have for protecting the rights of individuals versus protecting the rights of the state? Here, the object is to situate our contemporary concerns in relationship to foundational texts and legal cases.

Learning Outcomes:

In this course you will learn to read complex texts carefully, attending to the text's rhetoric, think critically about sometimes intractable human, cultural, social, and political challenges, and write persuasively about these same texts, enduring questions, and grand challenges.

Critical Thinking 2:

A recent study from the Student Science Research Council ("Improving Undergraduate Learning: Finding and Policy Recommendations from the SSRC-CLA Longitudinal Project") discovered that 36% of college students did not demonstrate any significant improvement in learning, as measured by CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment) performance, after four years of college. On average students are not being asked to read or write enough during the semester, and so students are not learning to think critically. In this CT2 course, you will be required to write, which is key, suggest the authors of the SSRC report, to improving CLA and critical thinking scores. With the help of this course, you will become a leader in critical thinking.

This CT2 course is designed to afford students the chance to:

- ◆ **explore** complex social issues from diverse perspectives
- ◆ **analyze** multi-dimensional challenges and problems

- ◆ **extrapolate** from one conceptual context to another
- ◆ **synthesize** in verbal and written form alternative solutions and points of view

With a small enrollment, this course is an introduction to college level thinking, discussion, and writing. There is no critical thinking without effective communication. This course depends on active participation and in-class discussion. The course will also feature a series of written assignments, designed to challenge you to respond to alternative perspectives and points of view and offer fuller exploration of complex texts and ideas as they relate to enduring human questions.

To measure your improvement in critical thinking, all CT2 courses feature pre- and post-class testing. We will take a standardized critical thinking test at the start of the semester and at its close.

The assignments you complete will also serve as artifacts to help showcase your improved critical thinking skills.

Texts:

Dante, *Inferno* (Random House, ISBN: 9780385496988)
 Homer, *The Odyssey* (HarperCollins, ISBN: 9780060931957)
 Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Harper, ISBN: 9780060935467)
Meaning of the Holy Quran (New Amana Publications, ISBN: 9780915957323)
 New Oxford Annotated Bible (Oxford, ISBN: 9780195284843)
 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (Norton, ISBN: 9780393326420)
 Sophocles, *Three Theban Plays* (Penguin, ISBN: 9780140444254)

Course Requirements:

Three Formal Essays (50%)
 Midterm Exam (10%)
 Final Exam (20%)
 Attendance, Participation, and Informal Writing (20%)

Course Policies:

1. Attendance: Your presence in class is imperative to your individual comprehension of the material as well as to the ongoing conversation created collectively in class. **If you miss more than two (2) classes during the semester, your attendance/participation grade will be lowered by 1/3 a step for each missed class.** For example, if you miss 3 classes, your attendance/participation grade would be lowered from a B+ to a B.
2. Preparation and Participation: You are expected to have read the assignment carefully by the day for which it is scheduled for discussion. **You must bring your copy of the text to class every day.** If you do not bring the text to class then

you are not prepared for class, even if you have read the assignment. Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class. **Your active participation is encouraged and will be factored into your final grade for the course.**

3. Papers: Topics for the formal papers will be distributed in class. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, and must observe spelling and grammar conventions. They must be submitted in hard copy, not by email. Writing assignments will be graded on the strength of the argument, the structure in which that argument is conveyed, the use of evidence to support the argument, and the clarity of the essay's style. The due dates are clearly marked on the reading schedule. Grades on late papers will be reduced by 1/3 a grade step per day late.
4. Students with Disabilities: Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see me during office hours as soon as possible. I also encourage you to contact Student Disability Services if you have not already done so. They are here to help.
5. Honor Code: Not only are you expected to avoid stealing others' ideas, but you are also expected to know how to cite your sources in your papers. Please see me if you have any questions about proper citation of sources. Clemson's official policy on plagiarism reads as follows: "As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a 'high seminary of learning.' Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form." Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and expulsion from Clemson University.

Reading Schedule:

Week 1	1/22	Introduction
	1/24	What is Critical Thinking?
	1/26	Homer, <i>The Odyssey</i>
Week 2	1/29	Homer, <i>The Odyssey</i>
	1/31	Homer, <i>The Odyssey</i>
	2/2	Homer, <i>The Odyssey</i>
Week 3	2/5	Homer, <i>The Odyssey</i>
	2/7	Homer, <i>The Odyssey</i>
	2/9	Atwood, <i>The Penelopiad</i> (BB) Draft of Two-Page Paper Due
Week 4	2/12	Discussion of Thesis Statements
	2/14	Walcott, <i>Omeros</i> (BB)
	2/16	Walcott, <i>Omeros</i> (BB) Final Two-Page Paper Due
Week 5	2/19	Genesis
	2/21	Genesis
	2/23	Genesis
Week 6	2/26	Exodus
	2/28	Exodus
	3/2	Midterm Exam
Week 7	3/5	Sophocles, <i>Antigone</i>
	3/7	Sophocles, <i>Antigone</i>
	3/9	Sophocles, <i>Antigone</i>
Spring Break		
Week 9	3/19	Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience" (BB)
	3/21	Dred Scott v. Sandford (US Supreme Court Decision) [BB]
	3/23	Schenck v. United States (US Supreme Court Decision) [BB]
Week 10	3/26	Draft Workshop for Four-Page Papers
	3/28	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i>
	3/30	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i>

Week 11	4/2	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> Final Four-Page Paper Due
	4/4	Gospel according to Luke
	4/6	Luke, continued
Week 12	4/9	<i>The Quran</i>
	4/11	Airport Commissioners v. Jews for Jesus (oral arguments)
	4/13	Airport Commissioners v. Jews for Jesus (decision)
Week 13	4/16	Dante, <i>The Inferno</i>
	4/18	Dante, <i>The Inferno</i>
	4/20	Dante, <i>The Inferno</i>
Week 14	4/23	Dante, <i>The Inferno</i>
	4/25	Dante, <i>The Inferno</i>
	4/27	Dante, <i>The Inferno</i> Final Six-Page Paper Due
Week 15	4/30	Lee, <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>
	5/2	Lee, <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>
	5/4	Lee, <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>
Monday	5/7	Final Exam