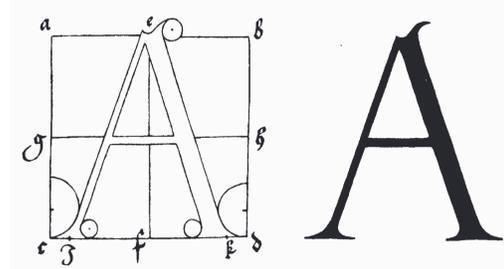


Comparative Literature 200 | Spring 2016
Introduction to Literature:
The Rise of Literature and the Maintenance of Oppression

"Soon Your Majesty will have placed her yoke upon many barbarians who speak outlandish tongues. By this, your victory, these people shall stand in a new need; the need for the laws the victor owes to the vanquished, and the need for the language we shall bring with us." My grammar shall serve to impart them the Castilian tongue, as we have used grammar to teach Latin to our young".



-- Elio Antonio de Nebrija to Queen Isabella of Spain in 1492

MTWTh: 09:10-11:10 (SMI 102)

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Office Hours: T 12-1pm | F 11am-12pm

Course Description

Typically, an English conversation about literature involves the canon of “great works” starting with *Beowulf*, moving through Shakespeare, Milton, Blake, Keats, Joyce and Eliot etc. Because of feminism, women are frequently woven throughout the list as well: Austen, Shelley, Brontë, and Wolfe etc. While their writing is, no doubt, brilliant, this course will explore more the politics behind writing itself. It will trace the rise of the concept of literature through its development with the Western Academy/University. It will then seek to answer and address how literature has been couched as superior to oral traditions; how literacy was used to legitimize colonization; how it created an elite class who, then, barred others from it; how women have fought for the right to write; and how people of color and queer communities have employed the spoken word as means of resistance.

This course will engage with various forms of literature ([slam] poetry, prose [novels, novellas, essays, short stories] and drama [theater]) from some of the first written texts up to the 21st century. It will also entertain various feminist, anti-colonial and queer of color theoretical concepts. Students will then develop their own creative and analytical skills by writing in various forms. Classes will be a mixture of small-group and large class discussions.

Course Objectives

1. Students will explore and discuss the historical development of the rubric “literature”.
2. Students will critically examine and reflect on the political uses of literature throughout time and various cultures.
3. Students will comparatively analyze various forms of literary production in thinking about their specific cultural, historical and linguistic differences.
4. Students will synthesize and further their analytical skills by producing a series of various written materials.

Expectations

The following are expectations that I not only hold for myself but also expect of my students. These are borrowed from Laverne Cox’s speech at the UW in May 2015:

1. Be impeccable with your word.
2. Don’t take anything personally.
3. Don’t make assumptions.
4. Always do your best.

Cultural Products

Literature

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 1987. Excerpts.
 Césaire, Aimé. *Une tempête*. 1969.
 de France, Marie. *Guigemar*. c.1200.
 de la Cruz, Sor Juana Inés. *Hombres necios que acusáis*.c. 1680.
 ----. *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz*. c. 1691.
 Douglas, Frederick. “Learning How to Read and Write”. 1845.
 Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. 1792. Excerpts.

NOTE: All the above material will be available on the *online workspace* in addition to some potentially optional readings/viewings.

Theory

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. 1986.
 Aristotle, *Poetics*.
 Eagleton, Terry. “The Rise of English.” 1994.
 Mignolo, Walter. *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*. 2003.
 Plato, “The Myth of Theuth, God of Writing”, *The Republic, Book X*.

NOTE: The majority of this material will be presented in class, with the exception of Plato. I have placed the citations here for your own use if you so choose to read the material.

Assessment

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Two Personal Journals | 10% |
| Reading Quizzes | 15% |
| Commentaries | 20% |
| Creative Writing Project | 25% |
| Participation | 30% |

Two Personal Journals. You will have to write two personal journals, one at the beginning of the class and one at the end. The first will detail your own relationship with literature up to now; the second will be a reflection on what you have learned in the course. Personal journals should be **500-750 words (about 1-2 pages)**.

Reading Quizzes. Throughout this quarter, I will have various reading quizzes for each of the literary pieces we engage with. If you read the piece as asked, you should more than fine.

Three Commentaries. Throughout this quarter, you will have to write three commentaries that address the political purposes of a singular literary piece of your choosing. Questions that you may entertain are: What techniques does the literary piece employ? What is the political importance of this piece? What political narratives does the piece seek to interrupt? Etc. Each commentary should be **750-1000 words (about 3-4 pages)**. The essays are to be submitted to the online workspace.

Creative Writing. By the end of the course, you will have had to do a creative project of your choosing. Taking note of the various styles of and techniques used in the writing we engage with, your creative piece should be very intentional. It could be a (slam) poem, song, play, speech, short story, memoir, essay, and/or movie/television script, as long as it has a literary component. The project is also to be submitted to the online workspace.

Participation. Participation in this course is crucial, especially given that it is only five weeks. This means not just showing up on time for class, but also actively participating in the discussions. The quality of students' work exponentially increases when they have engaged in discussions vs. just showing up and doing the "required work."

Writing Centers

Students visiting the **Odegaard Writing and Research Center (OWRC)** can expect to conference with a writing assistant (one-on-one) for up to an hour at a time for *free*. All you have to do is make an appointment, which you can do online at the website below: <http://www.depts.washington.edu/owrc>

The **Center for Learning and Undergraduate Enrichment (CLUE)** is a walk-in late night writing resource (also *free*) at which graduate students provide advice on writing: <http://depts.washington.edu/clue/>

Both writing centers set no limit to the number of visits that a student can make each quarter. Think of writing centers as therapy for your writing.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own, and this is a serious offence. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing, as long as you cite them. As a matter of policy, any student found plagiarizing any piece of writing in this class will be reported to the Vice Provost for Academic Misconduct for review. For more information, refer to UW's Student Conduct Code at: www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html.

Accommodation

Please let me know if you need accommodation of *any* sort. I am very willing to work in conjunction with you directly or the UW Disabled Student Services (DSS) to provide what you require. All that I ask is that you quickly communicate it with me. The DSS can be contacted at dso@u.washington.edu, and Phone (206) 543-6450/V, (206) 543-6452/TTY.

Technology

E-mail. Though I am happy to communicate with you by e-mail, please understand that I may not be able to reply immediately. As a general rule, I will not respond to e-mails between 6 PM and 8 AM or on Sundays.

Organizations

COUNSELING CENTER

UW Counseling Center workshops include a wide range of issues including study skills, thinking about coming out, international students and culture shock, and much more. Check out available resources and workshops at: <http://depts.washington.edu/counsels/>

Q CENTER

The University of Washington Q Center builds and facilitates queer (gay, lesbian, bisexual, two-spirit, trans, intersex, questioning, same-gender-loving, allies) academic and social community through education, advocacy, and support services to achieve a socially-just campus in which all people are valued. For more information, visit <http://depts.washington.edu/qcenter/>

FIUTS

Foundation for International Understanding through Students: FIUTS is an example of a campus organization that can bring together your social and academic learning. "FIUTS is an independent non-profit organization which provides cross-cultural leadership and social programming for UW's international and globally minded domestic students. FIUTS is local connections and global community!" FIUTS also offers a free international lunch on the last Wednesday of every month. Consult FIUTS' web site for a detailed calendar of events and links to many resources <http://www.fiuts.washington.edu>.

COURSE CALENDAR

Each week will be divided up among the following: Period, Perspective, Product, and Practice. On days labeled “period”, we will discuss a specific socio-historical context. On days labeled “perspective” we will engage with a piece of literary criticism or theory from that specific era. On days labeled “product,” we will read a literary text produced in the same era. And lastly, on days labeled “practice” we will have you write, analyzing a product itself. While Assignments appear to be due on Fridays, they are actually due the corresponding Sunday at 11:59pm.

| | Cultural Products | Assignments |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Week 1: Ancient & Medieval | | |
| Period | Read: Plato, “The Myth of Theuth, God of Writing”, <i>The Republic, Book X</i> . Presentation: The Ancient and Medieval Worlds: The Rise of the University Discussion: What is literature? Why do we study it? What is the University? | |
| Perspective | Presentation: Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i> . Discussion: A scientific approach to literature | |
| Product | Read: de France, Marie. <i>Guigemar</i> . c.1200 Discussion: The Lai | |
| Practice | Discussion: What is Close Reading? | |
| Week 2: Renaissance | | |
| Period | Presentation: The Renaissance and the University Discussion: Language, Power and Colonization | |
| Perspective | Presentation: Mignolo, Walter. <i>The Darker Side of the Renaissance</i> . | |
| Product | Read: de la Cruz, Sor Juana Inés. <i>Hombres necios que acusáis</i> .c. 1680. ----. <i>Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz</i> . c. 1691. | |

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|--|---|-----------------------|
| | Discussion: Poetry | |
| Practice | Write: First draft of commentary | Commentary I |
| Week 3: 18th and 19th Centuries | | |
| Period | Presentation: The Enlightenment, the Modern University, and the Conflict of the Faculties Discussion: The State and the University | |
| Perspective | Presentation: Anderson, Benedict. <i>Imagined Communities</i> . Discussion: The Rise of Nationalism | |
| Product | Read: Wollstonecraft, Mary. <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Women</i> . 1792. Excerpts. Douglas, Frederick. "Learning How to Read and Write". 1845. Discussion: The Essay and Slave Narrative | |
| Practice | Write: First draft of commentary; Get feedback on creative project | Commentary II |
| Week 4: the 20th Century | | |
| Period | Presentation: After the Wars Discussion: Racial Liberalism and Liberal Multiculturalism | |
| Perspective | Presentation: Eagleton, Terry. "The Rise of English." Discussion: Literature as Ideology | |
| Product | Read: Césaire, Aimé. <i>La tempête</i> . 1969. Discussion: Drama | |
| Practice | Write: First draft of commentary; Get feedback on creative project | Commentary III |
| Week 5: The 21st Century | | |
| Period/Perspective | Presentation: The University Today Discussion: Phallogocentrism and Neoliberal Multiculturalism | |

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| Product | <p>Read. Anzaldúa, Gloria. <i>Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza</i>. 1987. Excerpts.</p> <p>Discussion: Mixing Genres</p> | |
| Practice | <p>Presentations</p> | <p>Personal Journal II: <i>What does literature now mean to you after having taken this class?</i></p> |

*The **Creative Writing Project** is due July 20, the last day of class. Please have it submitted to the Canvas website before class begins.