

English 421 20th Century British Literature

Prof. J. James F11'00
Fall 2000 Term PH

Texts: Kermode & Hollander, Modern British Literature
John Synge, Playboy of the Western World

Bibliography: See Modern British Literature pages 695-705.

I. Goals: This course is an introduction to major 20th century British writers. Taught chronologically, it emphasizes: (a) the writer & his world; (b) developments in thought & culture; and (c) the various types of literature written: drama, short stories or novellas, & poetry. In general, English 421 will be taught as a discussion course, supplemented with mini-lectures, handouts of various sorts & some readings and/or dramatizations.

II. General Objectives of Literature: Literature holds many values for the student. Concerned with such realities as life, death, love, the problem of good & evil, literature enriches & clarifies life by contributing to an understanding of man's relationship to society, to his physical environment, to his inner self & to God.

Other studies seek similar ends but in other ways. Perhaps the area peculiar to literature is most accurately conveyed by the concept of the "concrete universal". Philosophy & science abstract truth from experience literature seizes truth in experience.

A good reader is one who both selects judiciously & reads discriminately. Most students are certain to invest substantial portions of their lives in reading literature as well as in attention to the related arts of the theater, film, & others. This means that one of the most important acquirements possible for a college student is a growing habit of active personal judgment in the selection & appraisal of what he reads & views. He can best initiate himself into a habit of valid & effective judgment by systematic, extensive practice in the critical reading of works of various kinds. The course in literature will provide this practice designed to help the student become a judicious reader of literary form.

How This Course Is Related to General Objectives of University:

- To develop in the student approaches to the creative & analytical understanding & appreciation of literature, specifically through the study of representative 20th century British writers.
- To open to the student the wealth of man's cultural heritage both artistic & intellectual.
- To encourage a search for truth through literature & to assist the student in forming a value system or a philosophy of life.

III. Tentative Schedule:

Week 1-2 Synge
Week 3-4 Shaw
Week 5-6 Conrad or Lawrence
Week 7 Joyce

Week 8 Simon Gray
Week 9-15 Selected poems of
Hardy, Housman, Auden,
Dylan Thomas, Larkin,
Owen or Rosenberg,
early Yeats or Eliot.

See page 3
for more
specific
Course
Goals/Objectives

IV. Major Assignments: Classes will consist normally of a threefold combination: (1) presentation of key points in literary works & indepth supplements by the instructor; (2) class discussions of these points & the assigned portions of literary works; (3) student presentations on special topics or themes approved by the instructor both to encourage student research & to afford an opportunity to the student for effective oral communication. Student involvement will be emphasized in all aspects of the learning experience.

You can expect: --Three exams (Roughly at the end of weeks 5, 10, & 15).
 --One research report/class presentation on an individual author or approved topic. ** See page 4.

V. Grading:

20% - Test #1

20% - Test #2

20% - Test #3

20% - Research Report or Special Project

20% - Attendance & participation/Inclass responses & journal entries.

**Parts of tests #2 & #3 may involve short take-home essays and/or some journal entries.

**Class attendance will be taken. Inbetween two grades, good attendance will raise the final grade.

See official CU attendance policy sheet to be given out the first week.

**Punctuality, please!

VI. Selected works by the following authors to be covered:

Drama: John Synge, Bernard Shaw, Simon Gray.

Short Fiction: James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster.

Poetry: Hardy, Housman, Lawrence, Auden, Wilfred Owen, Dylan Thomas, Philip Larkin, T.S. Eliot. Early Yeats & & Rosenberg if time allows.

Research Report Assignment: Starting in about ten weeks, each student will be called upon to present a 30-40 minute report on a 20th century British author or poet (or on some specific topic approved by the instructor).

The research report should include the following:

1. A review of the biographical details that may be helpful in understanding the writer's works.
2. A brief commentary on the writer's artistic & philosophical views which are reflected in his works.
3. Explication of the poet's more important works or analysis of a specific play, novella, or short story if you choose to work on a dramatist or fiction writer.
4. The student's appreciation & evaluation of the writer & his works.

** Each report should be limited to 30-40 minutes. The student should limit his material beforehand so that he can adequately cover it in the time allotted.

** The student should type up & xerox an outline of his report for the other members of the class.

** The student who is giving the presentation should be able to answer any questions raised by the other members of the class.

** Design a poster for your presentation. Or you may want to try your hand at a power point presentation or video-tape some of your presentation. More details will be given on this in class later on.

** It would be nice if a few students could display their posters in Sullivan Library or on the lanai boards outside the Ching Center.

*** A more thorough & detailed explanation of the above will be given out early in the term so you can start preparing for your reports fairly soon.

VII. Specific Course Objectives.

By the end of the semester, students are expected to:

- Have essential knowledge of literary genres covered in the class
- Have a firm grasp of the historical, social, and cultural background/context of modern British literature
- Critically read, annotate, and personally respond to specific modern British texts designated for this course (demonstrated by journal entries and inclass oral and written responses)
- Have confidence in doing careful analytical essays on selected modern British texts (essays are to reflect adequate organization and development; proper editing for sentence conciseness, clarity, and correct emphasis; correct use of grammar, punctuation, and diction or word choice; and correct use of MLA documentation if appropriate)
- Complete an extensive research project/presentation analyzing one modern British author (the appropriate use of research methods and exposure to a wide range of literary criticisms expected for this assignment)