

English 421 20th Century British Literature

Fall '02 Days  
Term

On-Campus

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

Prof. J. James

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.

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.

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)

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.