

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

Bernard Shaw's Mrs. Warren's Profession

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. Major Assignments: Classes will consist normally of a threefold combination: (1) presentation of key points in literary works & in-depth 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.

#### IV. Schedule:

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Weeks 1-3   | Introduction to modern English literature, the Irish context/problems. John Synge's <u>Playboy of the Western World</u> . |
| Weeks 4-5   | Bernard Shaw's <u>Mrs. Warren's Profession</u><br>Bernard Shaw's <u>St. Joan</u>  |
| Week 6      | James Joyce's <u>The Dubliners</u> : "The Dead"   |
| Week 7      | D.H. Lawrence's "Horsedealer's Daughter"<br>Ken Russell's BBC film: <u>Lady Chatterley</u>                                |
| Week 8      | Simon Gray's <u>Plaintiffs and Defendants</u>   |
| Week 9      | Joseph Conrad's <u>Heart of Darkness</u>  |
| Week 10     | Poetry of Hardy & Housman   |
| Weeks 11-12 | World War I poetry: Owen & Thomas<br><u>Behind the Lines</u> film   |
| Week 13     | Poetry of Lawrence, early Yeats, & Dylan Thomas   |
| Week 14     | Poetry of W.H. Auden & Ted Hughes   |
| Week 15     | Poetry of Philip Larkin   |
| Week 16     | Final Exam  |

**\*\*Three exams (roughly in weeks 5, 10, & 16).**

**\*\*One extensive report/class presentation on an individual author. Separate handout to be distributed on the requirements for this major assignment. See last page of course syllabus.**

**\*\*Parts of tests 1-3 may include take-home essays and/or journal entries.**

**\*\*Roll will be taken each class. To do well in this course, class attendance is essential. See the Chaminade attendance policy: three unexcused absences in a course can lead to a one letter grade reduction for the final course grade. Contact me regarding valid absences.**

**\*\*Note that a large part of the final grade will be based upon inclass responses, both written & oral. Punctuality, please!**

|  |     |   |
|--|-----|---|
| V. <u>Grading:</u>                                 | 20% | Test #1   |
|  | 20% | Test #2   |
|  | 20% | Test #3   |
|  | 20% | Research Report/Presentation  |
|  | 20% | Inclass responses, written & oral. Quizzes to make sure you are keeping up in the readings. |
| Other factors: --Motivation/attitude/attentiveness |     |   |
| --Attendance/participation                         |     |   |
| --Special quality of research report presentation  |     |   |

## VI. 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.

## English 421 (Modern British Literature)

### Course Goals:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical & cultural context for modern British literature.
2. Demonstrate an understanding & mastery of selected major modern British literary texts (& their contexts).
3. Demonstrate how to examine indepth critically a literary work.
4. Demonstrate ability to do independent current research in order to complete a major study of one major British poet or writer.

### Course Assignments:

1. Maintain a journal of daily observations & reflections on selected literary works & other readings (& criticism) given this term.
2. Give oral responses in small group settings or to the entire class to selected questions about the works assigned.
3. Take pop quizzes on literary works (& their contexts) to show that you are keeping abreast of the assigned readings and to complete take-home exams on key literary works (& their contexts) considered in this course.
4. Do a major independent research report/presentation on a key modern British poet or writer.