

## English 283

### SPECIAL TOPICS IN BRITISH LITERATURE-INNOCENCE AND EXPERIENCE

#### BULLETIN INFORMATION

ENGL 283 – Special Topics in British Literature-Innocence and Experience (3 credit hours)

#### Course Description:

In this course we will survey British literature from the eighteenth century to the present by looking at what William Blake called “the two contrary states of the human soul”: innocence and experience.

#### SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW

Our approach will be descriptive and thematic: we will look at how innocence and experience are defined in the various works we read and we will seek to articulate the stance each work takes on the relation between these two contrary states. We will work through questions like: What characterizes these two states? What is the relation between them? And how have writers used the passage from one to the other to reflect upon the conditions of the world they live in and to explore issues about growing up, moving on, and losing or maintaining a sense of self in society? These are some of the questions we will ask as we read and write about selected works of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction.

#### ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES

##### Upon successful completion of English 283, students will be able to:

1. Articulate careful and close interpretations of literature
2. Identify important thematic features across a series of British texts
3. Demonstrate an understanding of and apply an analytical vocabulary to literature
4. Demonstrate through discussion and written work an awareness of major contexts for understanding British literature
5. Write effective analytical essays interpreting literary texts.

#### SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS

1. Required Books (available at the Russell House Bookstore):
  - Aravind Adiga, *The White Tiger* (Free Press)
  - Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (Broadview)
  - Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre* (Broadview)
  - Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (Random House / Vintage)
  - James Joyce, *Dubliners* (Random House / Vintage)
2. Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard (under the merged “course materials” section for ENGL 283)

## **SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAMS**

- 1. Two papers:** a 3-4 page close reading and a 5-6 page comparative analysis. Instructions will be posted on Blackboard in advance of due dates. 15% and 25% (40% total)
- 2. Midterm exam** (short answer questions, identification passages). 15%
- 3. Final exam** (short answer questions, identification passages, essay). 25%
- 4. Participation:** includes weekly quizzes (you can drop your two lowest quiz grades), response papers (in class and online), and active participation in class discussion. 20%

## **SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS/PROJECTS**

- Week 1: Discussion sections meet to discuss syllabus and course theme
- Week 2: Course introduction: children, nature, artists, and lunatics  
William Blake, Songs of Innocence (Blackboard)  
Discussion section: Blake, Innocence
- Week 3: Blake, Songs of Experience (BB)  
Discussion section: Blake, Experience
- Week 4: William Wordsworth, "Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey" (BB)  
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (BB)  
Discussion section: Wordsworth v. Coleridge and paper assignment #1
- Week 5: Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey, pp. 37-98 (chaps 1-10)  
Austen, Northanger, pp. 99-137 (chaps 11-15)  
Discussion section: Austen, Northanger
- Week 6: Austen, Northanger, pp. 138-203 (chaps 16-25)  
Austen Northanger, pp. 204-240 (chaps 26-31)  
Discussion section: Austen, Northanger; paper #1 due
- Week 7: Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre, pp. 63-176 (chaps 1-11)  
Bronte, Jane Eyre, pp. 177-259 (chaps 12-17)  
Discussion section: Bronte, Jane Eyre
- Week 8: Bronte, Jane Eyre, pp. 462-556 (chap 32-end); exam review  
Midterm exam  
Discussion section: midterm and paper assignment #2
- Week 9: James Joyce, Dubliners: "The Sisters," "An Encounter," "Araby"  
Joyce, "Eveline," "Clay"
- Week 10: Joyce, "The Dead"  
Joyce, "The Dead," cont.; in class: clips from The Dead (1987; dir. John Huston)

Discussion section: Joyce, Dubliners

Week 11: Kazuo Ishiguro, Never Let Me Go, pp. 3-89 (chaps 1-7)  
Ishiguro, Never let me, pp. 90-145 (chaps 8-12)  
Discussion section: Ishiguro, Never let me Go

Week 12: Ishiguro, Never let me, pp. 146-217 (chaps 13-18)  
Ishiguro, Never let me, pp. 218-288 (chaps 19-23)  
Discussion section: Ishiguro, Never let me

Week 13: Aravind Adiga, The White Tiger, pp. 1-78  
Adiga, White Tiger, pp. 79-107  
Discussion section: Adiga White Tiger; paper #2 due

Week 14: Adiga, White Tiger, pp. 107-189

Week 15: Adiga, White Tiger, pp. 191-276  
Conclusions and review for final  
Discussion section: Adiga, White Tiger, and review

**FINAL EXAM according to university exam schedule**