

**Course Code & No. - Section:** ENGL 400 - Section 1  
**Course Title (Credits):** Universal Themes in Literature (3)  
**Term & Year:** Spring / 2014  
**Course Ref. No. (CRN):** 10297

**Instructor:** Dr. Robert King  
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**Office:** Prim 205  
**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Class Meeting Time:** MW 4-5:15 p.m.  
**Location:** Patterson Hall 213

**Prerequisites (from Catalog):** ENGL 101  
**Corequisites (from Catalog):** None

### Course Description

This class explores selected works of world literature by focusing on certain themes that connect them. Comparative analyses of major works are required.

### Student Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a basic grasp of literary themes in the history of English Literature;
2. Be able to identify and evaluate the basic literary themes and some basic modes of conveying them;
4. Fill in gaps in knowledge of the history of literature, esp. modern and contemporary;
5. Improve reading comprehension and critical thinking skills;
6. Respond verbally and in writing to literature;
7. Write a formal, critical essay in context of one of the major themes studied in class.

### Methods of Assessing Student Outcomes

Student outcomes will be assessed using the following:

1. Classroom participation and discussion, leading up to a midterm and a final exam;
2. A 2 page diagnostic essay, a 6 page essay on form and content in literature, and a 12 page formal, critical term paper approved by the instructor in advance;
3. Successful completion of homework and other assignments.
4. Quizzes.

### Instructional Strategies

This course will be a combination of lecture and discussion based upon close reading of the text. Discussion will become increasingly important as we move further into the material.

### Required Texts

Beckett, Samuel. *Molloy*. New York: Grove Press, 1994.  
Coetzee, J.M. *The Life and Times of Michael K*. New York: Penguin Books, 1985.  
Kraus, Chris. *Torpor*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006.

Rumi, Jalal al-Din. *The Essential Rumi*. Trans. Coleman Barks and John Moyne. New York: Harper One, 2004.  
Yeats, William Butler. *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*. Ed. Richard J. Finneran. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013.

## **Recommended Texts**

Aaron, Jane E. *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook*. Seventh Ed. New York: Pearson, 2010.  
Fish, Stanley. *How to Write A Sentence and How to Read One*. New York: Harper, 2012.

## **Attendance**

Attendance in so concentrated a course will be especially important. Any missed classes must be made up in order to pass the course. If you miss 6 classes, you fail the course, regardless of standing academic performance. If you miss five classes, you will drop a letter grade. As well, regular tardiness is basically equivalent to an absence in class (2 x tardy = 1 absence). Once class begins, all members of the class will be expected to remain for the duration of the class.

## **Class Behavior**

Food will not be permitted in this class. Always come prepared with your textbooks and necessary materials to take notes. I strongly discourage the use of computers for note-taking. If you need to use a computer to take notes, please first ask for permission. In addition, there will be no use of cell phones during class, including texting. If you are seen using a cell phone for any reason without prior permission, you will be asked to leave the classroom for the session. We will be using our texts frequently in class; therefore, please bring them to each meeting.

## **Prim Library Resources**

Using the library's resources effectively (not just the internet) contributes to developing each of SNC's core themes by exposing students to high quality academic resources, diverse opinions, new ideas, and a future that includes building on a liberal arts education. In this course, you will be expected to utilize the library's resources (either onsite or remotely) as you complete your assignments.

Prim Library has many resources which are helpful for your research. You may find the following information helpful:

Electronic databases (for peer-reviewed research articles, reviews, newspaper and magazine articles): Electronic databases most likely to include articles related to your research are EBSCO, Academic Search Premier, JSTOR, and ProQuest.

Lib Guides: <http://Libguides.sierranevada.edu> These web pages contain instructions about how to use resources available at Prim Library, how to evaluate the appropriateness of information from the Internet for a research paper, how to cite sources, and other topics related to finding and using information.

For any books not housed at SNC, you can use inter-library loan (ILL) to borrow books from major university libraries, free of charge. Speak with someone at the front desk at the Prim Library for help.

## **Sanctions for Cheating and/or Plagiarism**

### **The Honor Code**

The faculty of SNC believes students must be held to high standards of integrity in all aspects of college life in order to promote the educational mission of the College and to encourage respect for the rights of others. Each student

brings to the SNC community unique skills, talents, values and experiences which, when expressed within the community, contribute to the quality of the educational environment and the growth and development of the individual. Students share with members of the faculty, administration and staff the responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment conducive to learning and personal development, where actions are guided by mutual respect, integrity, responsibility and trust. The faculty and students alike must make diligent efforts to ensure high standards are upheld by their colleagues and peers as well as themselves. Therefore faculty and students accept responsibility for maintaining these standards at Sierra Nevada College and are obligated to comply with its regulations and procedures, which they are expected to read and understand.

### **Consequences of Violating the Student Honor Code**

SNC students and faculty share the responsibility for maintaining an environment of academic honesty. Thus, all are responsible for knowing and abiding by the SNC Faculty/Student Honor Code published in the current SNC Catalog. Faculty are responsible for presenting the Honor Code and the consequences of violating it to students at the start of their classes AND for reporting all incidences of academic dishonesty to the Provost. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes CHEATING, PLAGIARISM and FABRICATION and for refraining from these and other forms of academic dishonesty. Violations of the Honor Code become part of a student's academic record.

1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Student receives a zero for assignment/exam and counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Student fails course and receives counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Student is expelled.

### **Grading Policy**

Grading will be based upon written work, presentations, the midterm and final exam, and classroom participation. Although exams will be the primary means of grade assessment, improvement from the midterm to the final can be very important in terms of the final grade. A simple average of the grades from the exams, presentations, and participation will be the baseline for the final grade.

### **Grading Scale**

Exams               = 70% of course grade  
Formal Paper       = 20%  
Participation       = 10%

100 – 98 %   = A+  
97 – 90%     = A  
89 – 88%     = B+  
87 – 80%     = B  
And so on...

### **ADA Accommodations**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students with a documented disability are eligible for support services and accommodations. If a student wishes to request an accommodation, please contact the Director of Academic Support Services, Henry Conover, at (775) 831-1314 x7534, [hconover@sierranevada.edu](mailto:hconover@sierranevada.edu), office in Prim Library: PL-304.

## The SNC Email System

The SNC email system is the official communication vehicle among students, faculty members and administrative staff and is designed to protect the confidentiality of student information as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 Act (FERPA). Students should check their college email accounts daily during the school year.

Students have a right to forward their SNC e-mail to another e-mail account (for example, @hotmail or @gmail). However, confidentiality of student information protected by FERPA cannot be guaranteed for SNC e-mail forwarded to an outside vendor. Having email redirected does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with official communication sent to his or her SNC email account.

## The Sierra Nevada College Mission Statement

Sierra Nevada College graduates will be educated to be scholars of and contributors to a sustainable world. Sierra Nevada College combines the liberal arts and professional preparedness through an interdisciplinary curriculum that emphasizes entrepreneurial thinking and environmental, social, economic and educational sustainability.

## The Core Themes

Liberal Arts	Professional Preparedness
Entrepreneurial	Thinking Sustainability

## Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Homework Due
W 1/22	Introduction: What is Universality?	Plato, <i>The Republic</i> Badiou, 8 Theses on the Universal
M 1/27	The Themes through the Literary Experience; What is the Literary?	Excerpts from Homer & Joyce: <i>Ulysses</i> and <i>The Human Journey</i> ; Schlovsky & <i>Making Strange</i> excerpt
W 1/29	What is the Human? Self and Identity	Shakespeare, excerpt of <i>Hamlet</i> "What a Piece of Work is a Man?"; <b>Diagnostic Writing Assignment, 2pgs.</b>
M 2/3	The Themes	Yeats, <i>The Song of the Happy Shepherd</i>
W 2/5	Alterity and the Other	Kafka, <i>The Hunger Artist</i> , 84-94; Hawes, <i>Why You Should Read Kafka Before You Waste Your Life</i> , <i>Introduction the Face of Kafka</i> , pgs 1-3 (provided by instructor)
M 2/10	Love	O'Hara, <i>Morning</i> (provided by instructor); Rumi, <i>You Were Born Together and Together You Shall Be</i> .
W 2/12	Love	Rumi, Cont'd.
<b>M 2/17</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>
W 2/19	What Can A Sentence Do to Deliver a Theme?	Saramago, <i>Blindness</i> excerpt; Hrabal, <i>Too Loud A Solitude</i> excerpt; Many other examples, provided by instructor; Fish, <i>How to Write A Sentence and How to Read One</i> .
M 2/24	Destruction	Descartes, <i>Meditation 1</i> ; Beckett, <i>Molloy</i> , pgs. 7-12
W 2/26	Death and Exhaustion	Beckett, <i>Molloy</i> , pgs. 13-46 6pg. essay due on form/content relations in literature
M 3/3	Birth and Creation	Coetzee, <i>The Life and Times of Michael K.</i> , pgs. 3-56
W 3/5	Mothers	Short Lecture, Mothers in Literature; Coetzee, <i>The</i>

		<i>Life and Times of Michael K.</i> pgs. 57-99
M 3/10	War	<b>Quiz on Mothers and Michael K.</b> Coetzee, <i>The Life and Times of Michael K.</i> pgs. 100-192
<b>W 3/12</b>	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>
<b>M 3/17</b>	<b>NO CLASS (spring break)</b>	<b>NO CLASS (spring break)</b>
<b>W 3/19</b>	<b>NO CLASS (spring break)</b>	<b>NO CLASS (spring break)</b>
M 3/24	Bildungsroman, from Young Werther to Kathy Acker	Kathy Acker, <i>Blood and Guts in High School</i> , 7-31, Goethe, <i>The Sorrows of Young Werther</i> , excerpt
W 3/26	Recognizing The Development of Theme, Plot and Form	Kathy Acker, <i>Blood and Guts in High School</i> , 44-116 Henry James, <i>Daisy Miller</i> excerpts, Innocence Vs. Ignorance
M 3/31	Violence	<b>Quiz on Themes in Blood and Guts;</b> Kathy Acker, <i>Blood and Guts in High School</i> , 117-165
W 4/2	The Personal and The Political in Literature; Culture in Collapse	Chris Kraus, <i>Torpor</i> , pgs. 13-88
M 4/7	MetaFiction, The Real, Reality, and its Construction	Chris Kraus, <i>Torpor</i> , pgs. 89-146; Handout on Lacan and RSI, provided by instructor
W 4/9	Time, History, and Holocaust	<b>Quiz on Metaphor in Torpor;</b> Chris Kraus, <i>Torpor</i> , pgs. 146-160; Jonathan Littell, <i>The Kindly Ones</i> , excerpt (other literary traumas and representations of the Holocaust)
M 4/14	Trauma and Survival	Chris Kraus, <i>Torpor</i> , pgs. 161-202
W 4/16	Memory and Meaning	Chris Kraus, <i>Torpor</i> , pgs. 203-232 Proust Remembrance of Things Past, brief excerpt on memory; Back to Beckett and Michael K., handout on meaning making w/Joseph Ceravolo's <i>Drunken Winter</i> poem
M 4/21	Michael K. Vs. Chris Kraus, Living-On	<b>Quiz on Literary Mimesis;</b> Chris Kraus, <i>Torpor</i> , pgs. 233-260; John Ashberry's <i>Le Livre est sur la table</i> , provided by instructor
W 4/23	Desire	Chris Kraus, <i>Torpor</i> , pgs. 261- End; <b>Last Day to Submit Draft of Formal Paper (12 pages)</b>
M 4/28	Life	Martin Hagglund on Chrono-Libido in Woolf, Proust, and Nabokov, excerpt provided by instructor
W 4/30	Death	Emily Dickinson, <i>Because I Could Not Stop For Death</i> ; Dylan Thomas, <i>Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night</i> ; W.B. Yeats, <i>An Irish Airman Forsees His Death</i>
M 5/5	<b>Final Review</b>	<b>Final Review</b>
W 5/7	<b>READING DAY</b>	<b>READING DAY</b>
<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<b>Final Exam</b> (see finals schedule)	<b>Final exam; FINAL PAPER DUE (12-15 pages)</b>