

**COMPARATIVE LITERATURE 270  
WORLD LITERATURE**

**BULLETIN INFORMATION**

CPLT 270: World Literature

**Course Description:**

Selected masterpieces of world literature from antiquity to the present

Cross-listed Course: ENGL 270

**SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW**

A survey of world literature from the beginnings to the modern period, this course examines texts from a wide array of cultures, for instance, China, England, France, Germany, Greece, India, Japan, and Nigeria. We shall engage a variety of genres such as drama, novel, poetry, and short story. Authors we cover include, but are not limited to, Aeschylus, Confucius, Ovid, Abolqasem Ferdowsi, Tu Fu, Zeami, Montaigne, Borges, Lessing, and Soyinka. By reading these important writers' representative works, students are expected to develop an in-depth understanding of these texts by situating them in their respective historical and cultural contexts. Particular emphasis will be placed upon cross-cultural and comparative perspectives.

**ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course aims to help enhance students' ability to aesthetically appreciate and effectively interpret literary works, and to help sharpen their skills to write about literary texts effectively, engagingly, and persuasively.

**Upon successful completion of Comparative Literature 270, students will be able to:**

1. Demonstrate a familiarity with the authors and the works this course covers as well as a good understanding of the historical, political and cultural contexts in which these works emerged;
2. Analyze literary texts critically and comparatively, and to argue effectively and persuasively;
3. Demonstrate oral communicative skills through class discussions and presentations.

**SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS**

1. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, Volumes A, B, D, D, E and F (available for purchase at the University Bookstore)

**SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAMS**

1. **Class participation:** Much emphasis will be placed on class participation, which includes timely attendance and active and constructive participation in section. You are required to bring readings to class discussions.

2. **Presentation:** Each student is supposed to sign up to do one presentation, which is meant to enhance his/her communicative skills and the ability to lead and be engaged in a discussion on literature.
  
3. **Midterm and final exams:** The two in-class, closed-book exams are designed to test on:
  - a. Your knowledge of the writers, literary texts and the key concepts introduced through our reading of the texts;
  - b. Your basic skills to write analytically about a given topic.
  - c. I shall not give makeup tests/exams unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you absolutely have to miss a test/exam, please try your best to inform me as early as possible. Again, proper documentation is required in cases as such.
  
4. **Writing assignments:** The two writing assignments – i.e. a writing exercise and a final paper – are meant to help the students’ ability to closely read and analyze literary texts. While a selection of topics will be provided for the writing exercise, for the final paper, which will take the form of a research paper, students are supposed to come up with a topic, establish a thesis, and argue compellingly for it.
  - a. Your papers should be printed and submitted in class on the due date. Papers submitted late without the instructor's permission will be penalized by three points per day (e.g. B+ will become B if the paper is one day late). Please consult *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (Call #: Columbia Cooper Ready Reference LB2369.G53 2003) or *Chicago Manual of Style* (Call #: Columbia Cooper Ready Reference Z253.U69 2003) for the format of the papers. See also <http://www.sc.edu/library/styleresources.html> for further information on other citation guides.

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

**Introduction**

**Class 1:** Class overview, policies, office hours, presentation assignment, etc.

**Ancient Greece and the Formation of the Western Mind**

Background reading: pp. 105-113 of Volume A

**Class 2:** Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*

**Class 3:** Aeschylus, *The Eumenides*

**Poetry and Thought in Early China**

Background reading: pp. 805-14 of Volume A

**Class 4:** Confucius, *Analects*, pp. 820-31

**India’s Heroic Age and Classical Age**

Background reading: pp. 881-89 of Volume A

**Class 5:** *The Mahābhārata*, pp. 953-983

**Class 6:**        *The Mahābhārata*, pp. 983-1101

### **The Roman Empire**

Background reading: pp. 1041-45 of Volume A

**Class 7:**        Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, pp. 1137-82

### **The Rise of Islam and Islamic Literature**

Background reading: pp. 1419-28 of Volume B

**Class 8:**        *The Tragedy of Sohráb and Rostám*, pp. 1476-1524

### **China's "Middle Period"**

Background reading: pp. 1353-57 of Volume B

**Class 9:**        Tang Poetry: Li Po and Tu Fu

“Writing Exercise” paper due in class

### **The Golden Age of Japanese Literature**

Background reading: pp. 2143-47 of Volume B

**Class 10:**      *Nō* drama: *Atsumori* and *Haku Rakuten*

**Class 11:**      *Nō* drama: *Dōjōji*

**Class 12:**      Review

**Class 13:**      Midterm

### **The Formation of a Western Literature**

Background reading: pp. 1621-25 of Volume B

**Class 14:**      *The Song of Roland*, pp. 1702-67

### **The Renaissance in Europe**

Background reading: pp. 2465-75 of Volume C

**Class 15:**      Montaigne, *Essays*

**Class 16:**      Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

### **The Enlightenment in Europe**

Background reading: pp. 295-303 of Volume D

**Class 17:**      Racine, *Phaedra*

### **Realism, Naturalism, and Symbolism in Europe**

Background reading: pp. 1071-83 of Volume E

**Class 18:**      Leo Tolstoy, “The Death of Ivan Illyich”

**Class 19:**      Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*

**Class 20:**      Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard*

### **Japan: Early Modern and Modern Periods**

Background reading: pp. 583-87 of Volume D

**Class 21:**      Saikaku, “The Barrelmaker Brimful of Love,” pp.588-603

- Class 22:** The legend of Zatoichi  
Viewing: *Zatoichi*
- Class 23:** Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*

**The Modern World**

- Background reading: pp.1579-1606 of Volume F
- Class 24:** Mann, *Death in Venice*
- Class 25:** Brecht, *The Good Woman of Setzuan*
- Class 26:** Borges, *The Garden of Forking Paths*
- Class 27:** Lessing, "The Old Chief Mshlanga"
- Class 28:** Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman*
- Class 29:** Wrap-up  
Term paper due in class

**FINAL EXAM according to University exam schedule**