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Fall 2018

Course Syllabus (FA18) COLI 110--World Literature I: "Worlds of Absurdity and Nothingness"

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Course Description:

An approach to the question of absurdity through world literature and a few philosophical and critical texts with a view towards possible modes of resolution.

This course will fulfill the General Education Composition (C) requirement. Binghamton University requires students enrolled in C-courses to write and revise a minimum of 20 pages of expository prose within the framework of each course with the minimum expectation of the following Objectives and Learning Outcomes.

Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

(1) Demonstrate an understanding of the course content through formal academic writing; (2) demonstrate the ability to construct effective prose that demonstrates critical thinking and advances sound conclusions appropriate to the course and discipline; (3) demonstrate the ability to revise and improve writing in both form and content.

Course Requirements and Grading:

(1) Four (4) papers of 5-6 pages, which the student will revise in response to instructor feedback: **(60%)**. Papers are to be type-written and double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, in 11- or 12-point font and MLA format. **Papers are due in class on the dates listed in the syllabus.** Please include your name and page numbers in the lower right hand corner of each page of your documents. Please visit the University Writing Center at **LN 2412** if you find yourself in need of writing assistance.

(2) A reading journal, in which students will identify core and sub-arguments and respond to them briefly but thoughtfully by way of formulating theses for the aforementioned papers, and identifying points of interest to facilitate in-class discussions. **Journals are due along with each of the first three papers: (30%)**.

(3) A 10-minute presentation of the final paper in development **(10%)**.

***Late submissions of without prior approval from instructor will not be accepted, and the student will receive no credit for the applicable assignment.**

Expectations and Responsibilities:

Students are expected to arrive to class on-time and ready to discuss the assigned texts for the day. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own academic success and to support that of their colleagues, thereby promoting the success of the course as a whole. Active participation will facilitate these goals. Students will be allowed one (1) absence during the semester; absences beyond this limit will result in the reduction of your grade by one half grade-point per absence (for example, a grade of **A** for the course will be reduced to **A-**). The same policy will apply to late submissions of papers and journals. Binghamton University grading standards require students to spend at least 12.5 hours (3 hours in class; 9.5 hours outside of class) per week on course-related work for 4-credit courses meeting during the Fall Semester. <https://www.binghamton.edu/academics/provost/documents/syllabus-credit-hours-0314.pdf>

*Please use computers in class for note-taking only, and silence cellular phones and other electronic devices before the start of class.

*Please inform the instructor of any special learning needs you may have no later than the week following the Course Add/Drop deadline.

Students, faculty, staff, and University administrators understand the pressures associated with higher education, and we urge each of you take good, holistic care of yourselves, your friends, and your families and reach out to this network early should you find yourself in need. The following is a list of on-campus resources available to you:

1. Recreation Center (West Gym; East Gym): 607-777-PLAY
2. University Counseling Center: 607-777-2772
3. Decker Student Health Services Center: 607- 777-2221
4. Interpersonal Violence Prevention: 607-777-3062
5. Harpur Advising: 607-777-6305
6. Office of International Student & Scholar Services: 607-777-2510
7. Dean of Students Office: 607-777-2804
8. University Police: From a campus phone, dial 911; from a cell phone, dial 607-777-2222.
9. Bear Necessities Food Pantry: Rockefeller Center 168, M-F 1:45-3:45pm

A Note on Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism consists in the unacknowledged use of another person's work. Students enrolled in this course are required and expected to do their own work. Instances of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, will be punished in accordance with University policy. Students in need of clarification of the University's policy on academic integrity are encouraged to review it online at the following link: http://www.binghamton.edu:8080/exist9/rest/lists2013-14/2_academic_policies_and_procedures_all_students/academicPoliciesAndProcedureAllStudents.xml?xsl=/db/xsl/compose.xsl#d1591e36

All scheduled readings are required unless the instructor notes otherwise. Please note that the instructor reserves the right to alter the reading schedule on short notice as needed. The following is a list of texts available for purchase in the University Bookstore; the remaining items will be available on Blackboard.

Required Texts Available for Purchase:

The Music of Chance, Paul Auster
The Loser, Thomas Bernhard
The Myth of Sisyphus, Albert Camus
Siddhartha, Herman Hesse
The Castle, Franz Kafka
The Dice Man, Luke Rhinehart
No Exit, Jean-Paul Sartre
Kokoro, Natsume Soseki
Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu

Optional Text Available for Purchase:

The Different Modes of Existence— Étienne Soriau

Class/Reading Schedule

Week 1

Thurs, 08/23: Introductions and overview

Week 2

Tues, 08/28: Paul Auster—“The Art of Hunger”; Murakami Haruki—“Tony Takitani”;
Rainer Maria Rilke—“Letters to a Young Poet”

Thurs, 08/30: Thomas Nagel—“The Absurd”; *The Holy Bible—Ecclesiastes*;
Ichikawa Jun—*Tony Takitani*

Week 3

Tues, 09/04: Albert Camus—*The Myth of Sisyphus*, Part 1: “An Absurd Reasoning”;
Thomas Bernhard—*The Loser*, ~p. 69

Paper #1 Topics Assigned

Wed, 09/05: Course Add/Drop Deadline

Thurs, 09/06: Camus—*Myth*, Part 2: “The Absurd Man”; Bernhard—*The Loser*, ~p. 140

Week 4

Tues, 09/11: No Classes—Rosh Hashanah

Thurs, 09/13: Camus—*Myth*, Part 3: “Absurd Creation”; Bernhard—*The Loser*, ~end

Paper #1 Draft and Journal Due

Week 5

Tues, 09/18: Paul Auster—*The Invention of Solitude*, pp. 1-84;
Martin Heidegger—Selections from *Being and Time*

Thurs, 09/20: Auster—*Solitude*, pp. 85 -end; Barrett—*Irrational Man*, Appendix I: “Negation, Finitude,
and the Nature of Man”

Paper #1 Draft Returned

Week 6

Tues, 09/25: *The Holy Bible—Job*; Jean-Paul Sartre—*No Exit*

Thurs, 09/27: Paul Auster—*The Music of Chance*, Chs. 1-3

Paper #1 Revision Due; Paper #2 Paper Topics Assigned

Week 7

Tues, 10/02: Auster—*Music*, Chs. 4-6; Bernd Herzogenrath—*An Art of Desire: Reading Paul Auster*,
Ch. 8, “Unresolved Harmonies: *The Music of Chance*”

Thurs, 10/04: Auster—*Music*, Chs. 7-9

Paper #1 Revision Returned

Week 8

Tues, 10/09: Franz Kafka—*The Castle*, Chs. 1-6; Gilles Deleuze—*A Thousand Plateaus*, Introduction: “Rhizome”; Plateau 6: “How Do You Make Yourself a Body Without Organs?”

Paper #2 Draft and Journal Due

Thurs, 10/11: **No Classes—Fall Break**

Week 9

Tues, 10/16: Kafka—*Castle*, Chs. 7-18

Thurs 10/18: Kafka—*Castle*, Chs. 19-25

Paper #2 Draft Returned; Paper #3 Topics Assigned

Week 10

Tues, 10/23: Luke Rhinehart—*The Dice Man*, Chs. 1-20; Deleuze—*Plateaus*, Plateau 10: “Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible,” 233-260

Thurs, 10/25: Rhinehart—*The Dice Man*, Chs. 21-50; Deleuze—*Plateaus*, Plateau 10, 260-286

Paper #2 Revision Due

Week 11

Tues, 10/30: Rhinehart—*The Dice Man*, Chs. 51-86; Deleuze—*Plateaus*, Plateau 10, 286-309

Course Withdrawal and Change of Grade Option Deadline, 4:30pm

Thurs, 11/01: Bruce Lee—*Tao of Jeet Kune Do*: “On Zen” ~ “The Formless Form”

Paper #2 Revision Returned

Week 12

Tues, 11/06: Herman Hesse—*Siddhartha*, “The Brahmin’s Son” ~ “Amongst the People”; Dōgen—“Mountains and Rivers Sutra”

Thurs, 11/08: Hesse—*Siddhartha*, “Samsara” ~ “Govinda”

Paper #3 Draft and Journals Due

Week 13

Tues, 11/13: Lao Tzu—*Tao Te Ching*; Selections from *I Ching*;
Nishida Kitarō—*Absolute-contradictory Self-identity*, Pt. 1

Paper #3 Draft Returned

Thurs, 11/15: Natsume Soseki—*Kokoro*, “Sensei and I”

Week 14

Tues, 11/20: Natsume Soseki—*Kokoro* (Finish)

Paper #3 Revision Due; Final Paper Topics and Working Theses Due

Thurs, 11/22: **No Classes—Thanksgiving Break**

Week 15

Tues, 11/27: Presentations and Peer Feedback; Paper #3 Revision Returned

Thurs, 11/29: Presentations and Peer Feedback

Week 16

Tues, 12/04: Presentations and Peer Feedback

Thurs, 12/06: Presentations and Peer Feedback

Tues, 12/11: No Class—Finals Week, 12/10-14

Thurs, 12/13: Final Paper due by email at 6pm