ENGLISH 2850: GREAT WORKS OF LITERATURE II
Baruch College, Spring 2017
Mon/Wed 5:40-7:20
Professor Jeff Peer
Office: 7-290K  Office Hours: Wed 4:00pm – 5:00pm
Email: jpeer@gradcenter.cuny.edu

Required Texts: GET THESE EDITIONS


Additional readings will be made available on the class website. Remember to check it!

The Picaresque and Its Legacy: A Survey of Early Modern to Contemporary World Literature

Course Description

Wanderers, vagabonds, rogues and tricksters: these are the characters you will meet in the literature of the picaresque. In this English 2850 survey course, you will read a selection of works ranging from 1554 to the present, introducing you to a variety of literary periods, cultures and styles. Our guiding theme will be a literary genre known as the picaresque; it was born in Golden Age Spain, spread across Europe throughout the 18th century, and is even today frequently reinvented and rewritten.

Picaresque stories are about individuals forced to rely on themselves during times of social upheaval and chaos, characters who have no choice but to take to the road, get by on their wits, dupe others and get duped themselves. These stories are adventure stories, but they are also stories about human society – only they are told from the margins. These heroes are not the type often remembered in history books; they represent the masses of the ordinary, the poor, the down-and-out and the helpless, caught in history and then forgotten by it. And they invite us to laugh at the hypocrisies of their societies, and at all the people who think they are better off.

Our journey through the literature of the picaresque will not follow a strictly historical path. Rather, we will consider these stories from as many different vantage points as possible, including sociological, mythological and literary perspectives.

In this course, you will hone your analytical reading skills on a variety of complex texts. Materials will include some historical and cultural background readings for context. You will practice developing creative literary interpretations and expressing them in nuanced, elegant, critical essays.

Some goals for the semester will be to learn:

- How to develop a personal interpretation of what a literary text means – to you – by paying close attention to an author’s choice of detail, vocabulary and style;

- How to discuss literary genres, and the multicultural environments and complex historical moments from which they spring;
• Increased confidence in offering a critical evaluation and appreciation of a literary work’s strengths and limitations;

• Increased confidence in the oral presentation of ideas; and

• Increased ability to write critical essays employing a strong thesis statement, appropriate textual citations, and contextual and inter-textual evidence for your ideas.

**Course Requirements**

• Reading Responses/Quizzes: We will have eight informal reading quizzes (short answers to questions about the day’s reading). These quizzes will be unannounced and can occur on any class day and will always be at the beginning of class. For some of these quizzes, you will be allowed to reference your text. Remember to have your reading with you so you’re prepared not only to participate in class discussions but also to write. If you’re absent or late on the day of a quiz, you will receive a grade of 0. There are no make-ups for quizzes but I will drop your lowest quiz grade.

• Blog Posts: You will sign up to compose a blog post in response to one day’s reading and launch the day’s discussion with a 3-minute presentation. You will also have to respond to four of your classmates’ posts over the course of the semester. A more detailed description of the assignment will be provided.

• First Essay: A detailed description of the assignment will be provided.

• Second Essay: A detailed description of the assignment will be provided.

• Final Project and Presentation: A detailed description of the assignment will be provided.

• Late work is not accepted. You are responsible for handing in, on time, any work assigned or due during any absence.

**Attendance:** Every absence beyond three will lower your course grade by one half step (an A- becomes a B+, a B+ becomes a B). I do not give excused absences since you have up to three absences to use at your discretion. Still, if you know you will miss a class (e.g. for a religious observance or event of personal importance), let me know as much in advance as possible. Class will begin and end at the scheduled time and late arrivals and early departures are very disruptive. Therefore, every two late arrivals or early departures will count as one absence. If you arrive late to class, it is your responsibility to speak with me at the end of the session to make sure you are recorded present and to find out any information you may have missed. Any time you are late or depart early by more than fifteen minutes, you will be counted absent.

Students with more than four absences will be required to speak with me privately and will be subject to a WU grade. From the official Baruch College attendance policy: “If a freshman or sophomore is absent in excess of twice the number of class sessions per week, the instructor must give the student a WU grade, which counts as an F. The instructor may give a junior or senior a WU grade if he/she has excessive absences. Attendance and lateness clearly play a role in class participation. Instructors have the right to weigh attendance, lateness, and class participation in determining grades.”
**Grading:** Your course grade will be based on a 1005-point scale. Points correlate to letter grades as follows:

- 930-1005 points = A
- 900-929 = A-
- 871-899 = B+
- 830-870 = B
- 800-829 = B-
- 771-799 = C+
- 730–770 = C
- 700-729 = C-
- 671-699 = D+
- 600-670 = D
- Below 600 = F

You can earn up to 1005 points, according to the following breakdown:

- **Reading Responses/Quizzes** = 105 points (8 quizzes, 15 points each, lowest grade dropped)
- **Blog Posts** (due dates vary) = 100 points (60 points for your blog post; 10 points for each response to a classmate’s post)
- **First Essay** (assignment details to follow) = 250 points
- **Second Essay** (details to follow, due in stages) = 400 points
- **Final Project and Presentation** (optional) = 150 points

Please note: if you choose not to complete the optional assignment and presentation, the max number of points you can earn is 855 for a max possible course grade of B. If you choose to do the optional assignment, the max number of points you can earn is 1005.

**Completion of Work**

**DO NOT PROCRASTINATE** on your writing assignments. Good essays are never written the night before they are due. Preparatory draft assignments will force you to begin the writing process early.

**LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

**Cheating and Plagiarism**

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. The following definitions are based on the College’s Academic Honesty website:

**Cheating** is the attempted or unauthorized use of materials, information, notes, study aids, devices, or communication during an academic exercise. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Copying from another student during an examination or allowing another to copy your work
- Unauthorized collaborating on a take home assignment or examination
- Using unauthorized notes during a closed book examination
- Using unauthorized electronic devices during an examination
• Taking an examination for another student
• Asking or allowing another student to take an examination for you
• Changing a corrected exam and returning it for more credit
• Submitting substantial portions of the same paper to two classes without consulting the second instructor
• Preparing answers or writing notes in a blue book (exam booklet) before an examination
• Allowing others to research and write assigned papers (including the use of commercial term paper services)

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writing as your own:

• Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes (a functional limit is four or more words taken from the work of another)
• Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging them
• Using information that is not considered common knowledge without acknowledging the source
• Failure to acknowledge collaborators on homework or laboratory assignments

My policy is to give a failing grade to any assignment that has been plagiarized or an assignment on which you have cheated. On your second offense, you will fail the course. In addition, I am required by college policy to submit a report of suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students. This report becomes part of your permanent file.

In-class behavior

You must read the assigned text and bring a paper copy of it with you to class. Every day. Every class. This means you will often have to print the reading out yourself. I will be checking that you have it, as well as giving reading quizzes. Come prepared to participate. Have something to say. Write discussion points. Participation is an important part of your grade.

You will be expected to post to the class blog once, and to respond to three fellow students’ posts. It is your responsibility to make sure you have access. You must post at least twenty-four hours before class begins, and respond at least two hours before class begins.

I ask that you use your cell phones, tablets and laptops for good rather than evil. You may use them during class for research. I will quickly realize if your phone is a distraction.

Never use your cell phone to read the assignment in class. Print it out.

Disability Statement

Baruch College is committed to making individuals with disabilities full participants in the programs, services, and activities of the college community through compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. It is the policy of Baruch College that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability will be denied access to any program, service, or activity offered by the university. Individuals with disabilities have a right to request accommodations. If you require any special assistance or accommodation, please contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities at (646) 312-4590, and let me know as soon as you can, ideally
during the first three weeks of the semester. I encourage persons with disabilities or particular needs that impact course performance to meet with me to co-design accommodations. For additional information see: http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/facultyhandbook/DisabilitiesInformation.htm

**Baruch Writing Center and Student Academic Consulting Center (SACC):**

All writers need feedback from many different readers. You will give and receive feedback from your classmates during and outside of class. You may also choose to visit the writing center or SACC. I strongly encourage that. The Writing Center offers free, one-to-one (in-person and online) and small-group workshop writing support to all Baruch students. They can help at any stage in the process, from brain-storming to editing. Schedule your appointment well in advance of when your writing is due, at: https://bc.mywconline.com/. Visit the Writing Center in NVC 8-185 or at the Newman Library Reference Desk, or log on to their website, writingcenter.baruch.cuny.edu.

**Reading Schedule**

**Reading:** Remember to read selections for the day that they appear on the schedule; if you have not done the reading, you will not receive credit for participation. Always bring that day’s reading with you to class. **You must have a paper copy**! Bring either the book or print-out. No reading electronically.

*Readings may be changed. Always check the course website for updates.*

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**Week 1**

**Mon Jan 30**

† Introduction

The Trickster in Folklore

Wed Feb 1

• Anansi Stories

• *From The Masks of God, by Joseph Campbell*

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**Week 2**

**Mon Feb 6**

• *The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes* - Author’s Prologue and Chapters One and Two (pgs 3-54)

Important note: You must read the W.S. Merwin translation of Lazarillo (NYRB Classics edition).

• *The Beggar’s Book* (selections)

**Wed Feb 8**

• *The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes* – Chapter Three and Four (pgs 55-88)

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**Week 3**

**Wed Feb 15**

‼ Reading Response #1 Due

• Finish *The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes* – Chapters Five – Seven (pgs 91-118)

• “Introduction” in the NYRB edition, by Juan Goytisolo
Tricksters in Love

Week 4
Wed Feb 22
• “Life of a Sensuous Woman,” by Ihara Saikaku

Week 5
Mon Feb 27
† Assignment Introduction: Essay #1
• “The Disappointment,” by Aphra Behn,

Wed Mar 1
† Close reading exercises – we will do these in class
• “Song,” and “The Flea,” by John Donne
• “A Philosophical Satire,” by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

Week 6
Mon Mar 6
‼ Essay #1 Proposal
• “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (Excerpt),” by Mary Wollstonecraft
• “Woman and Honor: Some Notes on Lying,” by Adrienne Rich

Wed Mar 8
• “Don Juan (Excerpt),” by Lord George Gordon Byron
• “Romanticism,” from Norton Anthology

Realism of the Marginalized

Week 7
Mon Mar 13
‼ Essay #1 First Draft Due
• “Realism Around The World,” from Norton Anthology
• “A Simple Heart,” by Gustave Flaubert

Wed Mar 15
† Essay Workshop (You will be required to read and comment on two student papers)

Week 8
Mon Mar 20
• “Separate Ways,” and “On the Last Day of the Year,” by Higuchi Ichiyō
• “A Brief Life (Excerpts),” by Robert Lyons Daly

Wed Mar 22
• “Clay,” by James Joyce

Fri Mar 24
‼ Essay #1 Second Draft Due at 5:40pm
Existentialist Tramps

Week 9
Mon Mar 27
• *Waiting for Godot* (Act One), by Samuel Beckett

Wed Mar 29
• *Waiting for Godot* (Act Two), by Samuel Beckett
• “Samuel Beckett,” from Norton Anthology

Week 10
Mon Apr 3
• *Waiting for Godot*, by Samuel Beckett – Watch a performance!
• “Zaabalawi,” by Naguib Mahfouz

Wed Apr 5
‼ Reading Response #2 Due
† Assignment Introduction: Essay #2
• *The Three-Penny Opera* (Excerpt), by Bertolt Brecht

Spring Recess!!!

Mon Apr 10
• Enjoy your break!

Wed Apr 12
• Enjoy your break!

Mon Apr 17
• Enjoy your break!

The American Picaresque

Week 11
Wed Apr 19
‼ Essay #2 Proposal
• *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Chapter One), by Mark Twain
• *You Can't Win* (Chapters One, Two and Six), by Jack Black

Thur Apr 20
• “The Hitchhikers,” by Eudora Welty

Week 12
Mon Apr 24
‼ Essay #2 - First Draft Due
• *On the Road* (Excerpts), by Jack Kerouac

Wed Apr 26
† Essay Workshop

Week 13
Mon May 1
† Scarecrow - We will watch selections in class
• “Diving into the Wreck (Excerpts),” by Adrienne Rich

Wed May 3
• Final Project Introduction, “Picaresque Stories, Poets and Critics”
• Reviews of “Scarecrow,” by Ebert, Bradshaw, and Wilkins
• “Poetry and Commitment,” by Adrienne Rich

Fri May 5
• Essay #2 – Second Draft Due at 5:40pm

Your Road Story

Week 14
Mon May 8
• Reviews of “American Honey” by Brian Tallerico and A.O. Scott

Wed May 10
• Final Project Pitch Due

Week 15
Mon May 15
• “The Life of Anne Moore,” by Roberto Bolaño
• from “Against Narrativity,” by Galen Strawson (Optional)

Wed May 17
• Final Presentations

Week 15
Mon Dec 12 (Last day of classes)
• Final Presentations

Fri Dec 16
• Final Projects due 5:40pm