

**BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

**English 338
World Literature I in Translation
Dr. Renee H. Shea
Spring 2004**

Office: MLK 0228

Office Hours

Monday and Friday by appointment
Tuesday 2 – 5
Wednesday 3 – 5
Thursday 2 – 5

Contact Information

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Course Description

World Literature in Translation I is a survey of major works of international literature from classical antiquity to the Renaissance, including epics, lyric poetry, tragedies, melodramas, prose, and prose fiction. Emphasis is on the major works and writers who have had the most direct impact on modern institutions, philosophies, and literature.

Required Texts

Davis, Paul et. al. *Western Literature in a World Context: The Ancient World through the Renaissance* (Volumes 1, 2, and 3). New York: Bedford St. Martin's Press, 2003.
www.bedfordstmartins.com/worldlit

Dove, Rita. *The Darker Face of the Earth*.

General Course Objectives

- * To broaden the student's literary and cultural exposure beyond American and English literatures
- * To expose the student to some of the writers who have directly influenced modern thought and institutions
- * To provide the student with a background for the analysis of literature heavily influenced by Greek and Roman ideals, literary techniques, and styles
- * To expose the student to media interpretation and dramatization of selected literary works

- * To provide the student limited experiences in taking objective examinations on literature, in keeping with Praxis and the GRE formats
- * To expose the student to “re-interpretations” of classic works, whether as contemporary re-visionings, film, or children’s literature.

Expected Student Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to

- * Recognize literary symbols, allusions, ideas, and concepts that have influenced or been incorporated into modern literature
- * Analyze passages from literature based on specific questions about them
- * Associate writers with excerpts, based on the student’s understanding of the writer’s themes and styles
- * Demonstrate proficiency in responding to analytical questions about the literature
- * Compare later writers’ use and interpretation of earlier works, themes, and archetypes with the original work
- * Conduct original research to explore and interpret literary themes

Teaching Modes

In-class discussions, lecture, oral presentations, student response papers, research, examinations, film, Internet, PowerPoint

Course Requirements

Students are expected to

- * Attend and participate in class
 - * Read assigned works before scheduled discussions
 - * Take all three required examinations
 - * Submit three required essays on time
 - * Work collaboratively with classmates when appropriate
 - * Conduct research when assigned
 - * Adhere to standard English usage and essay development for both brief responses on exams and the essay assignments
 - * Present an official excuse when requesting permission to make up examinations or to submit late assignments*
- More than two unexcused absences will result in the final course grade being lowered by one grade. (In this class, two unexcused absences amounts to two full weeks!)

Course Grade

The course grade will be made up according to the following percentages:

Three examinations, including the final (15% each)	45%	
Three essays (15% each)		45%
Class attendance and participation	10%	

Exam #1 will focus on *Gilgamesh*, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

Exam #2 will focus on *Beowulf* and Dante's *Inferno*

Exam #3 will focus on *The Tempest* and related readings.

(Note: The last exam will be held at the time of the final, but it is not a cumulative exam.)

Essay #1 will be a comparison/contrast: i.e., an analysis of how a contemporary writer or filmmaker uses the conventions of the epic or adapts a specific work (such as *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* as a retelling of *The Odyssey*). (Length: ~1000 words)

Essay #2 will focus on Rita Dove's play *The Darker Face of the Earth*, a retelling of the Oedipus myth set on a plantation in the antebellum South. (Length: ~1000 words)

Essay #3 will involve considerable choice to follow individual interest, whether it is classroom application, research into another culture, or contemporary film. Possibilities include:

Comparison of a non-European work with a major representative of European texts (e.g., creation myths)

Exploration of a major representative text as it has been reconfigured by a later writer (e.g., John Gardner's *Grendel* with *Beowulf*)

Examinations of different representations of the same work (e.g., different children's and young adult versions of *The Iliad*).

Development of an anthology appropriate for use at a specific grade level.

The first two essays will be submitted in traditional format. The third one may involve graphics, video, audio, etc. and may be submitted on diskette or CD-Rom. Students may also elect, with my approval, to present this project collaboratively. Because of the different formats, length will vary.