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Zero Textbook Cost Syllabus for ENG 2800 (Great Works of Literature I)

Joseph Riccio
CUNY Bernard M Baruch College

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English 2800 (SMWC): Great Works of World Literature I

Joseph Riccio, [REDACTED]

Monday and Wednesday, 5:40-7:20pm

Office Hours: Friday, 3:00-4:30pm on [Zoom](#) (or by appointment)

In this course, we'll be exploring a wide range of texts from ancient, medieval, and early modern cultures; from oral and written literary traditions; in a variety of genres (epic, lyric, tales, and drama). We will trace the development of themes, ideas, and characters across time and space. Our conversations about these texts will be shaped loosely around the role of literature and storytelling in relation to empires and various formations of power. We will read each of these works in context, thinking about the cultures that produced them, and consider how they relate to our own present moment. And, ultimately, we will continuously ask the question: what makes a work great, anyway?

Goals

Students who complete ENG 2800 should be able to:

- interpret meaning in literary texts by paying close attention to authors' choices of detail, vocabulary, and style
- discuss the relationship between different genres of literary texts and the multicultural environments from which they spring
- articulate a critical evaluation and appreciation of a literary work's strengths and limitations
- present their ideas orally
- write critical essays employing: a strong thesis statement, appropriate textual citations, and contextual and intertextual evidence for their ideas

Books

This course is a zero textbook cost course. That means I will be providing pdfs of our readings. You are more than welcome to purchase physical copies of any of our texts, and I encourage you to print readings if you prefer physically holding and marking up pages. But, there are no required textbooks to purchase.

Assignments

Participation:

Engaged, informed participation is vital to your success in this course. This means attending class regularly having read the assigned text. It also means being prepared to speak about the text. Participation also includes any in-class writing exercises. Read closely and carefully and ask questions. Remember, if there is something in the text that you find weird or puzzling, that is almost always a great starting point for analysis. Bring it up!

Starting Week 4, we will begin to have “Discussion Leaders” who will be responsible for coming to the class with: a historical context (if you choose a new text), a brief overview, an extracted passage from the reading, and at least two discussion questions for the class. I only expect about a 5-10 minute informal presentation. You will also turn in to me a physical copy of a 300 word reflection. During Week 2, I will pass around a sign-up sheet for each reading and a more detailed prompt. This will be integrated into your participation grade.

Analytic Essays

You will write two argument-driven, analytical essays for the course. One will be a close-reading of a passage from the *Odyssey*, and the other will be a thematic comparative analysis between two or more texts. You will receive detailed prompts for both as the due dates near.

Midterm & Final

We will collectively create prompts for your midterm and final, based on our class discussions. Your midterm will be in-person, on November 7th, with a blue book. Your final will be a “take-home” final (really, just another essay!)

Grading Breakdown

Participation: 20%

Analytic Essay 1: 15%

Analytic Essay 2: 20%

Midterm: 20%

Final: 25%

Attendance Policy

Much of the learning in this course happens through active class participation. Attendance is especially important. Missing class means missing out on class discussion, which means missing out on a deepening exploration of our texts. For these reasons, you should attend all class sessions. But sometimes, that’s just not possible. If you must miss class, let me know ahead of time if possible. If you miss unexpectedly, check the schedule on our course Blackboard and make friends with someone in class to see what you missed.

Accessibility

It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or encounter any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please meet with me outside of class so we can explore potential options. I am happy to consider creative solutions as long as they do not compromise the intent of the assessment or learning activity.

Students with disabilities may also wish to work with Student Disability Services to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in this course, including official accommodations. Student Disability Services works with students and faculty members to identify reasonable accommodations. You can contact them at disability.services@baruch.cuny.edu, call 646/312-4590, and can also visit the website to learn more at <https://studentaffairs.baruch.cuny.edu/student-disability-services>.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writing as your own, such as:

- 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

Community Resources

[Counseling Center](#) – We acknowledge that as a student, you are balancing many demands. During the semester, if you start to experience personal difficulties or stressors that are interfering with your academic performance or day to day functioning, please consider seeking free and confidential support at the Baruch Counseling Center. For more information or to make an appointment, please visit their website hyperlinked above or call 646-312-2155.

[Dean of Students Website](#) – On this site, you can access information about the following (among other things):

- [Baruch Emergency Fund](#) (which provides financial support to students in need)
- [Food Access](#) (e.g., bagged meals, hot lunches to go, a food pantry)
- [COVID-19 resources](#). This is a running list of expanded food access options beyond Baruch (e.g., City Harvest, Met Council), housing support, job and unemployment related resources, physical and mental health resources, resources for immigrants, and public health related items.

[Baruch Computing and Technology Center](#) – On this site you can access information about: CUNYFirst; Blackboard; Email; Laptop, Chromebook, iPad access; information on Zoom and other teleconferencing software; access to software like Microsoft Office; and a lot more.

- If you have trouble accessing the information you want at the BCTC site, you might try contacting the Help Desk at helpdesk@baruch.cuny.edu or (646) 312-1010. Generally

speaking, the Help Desk is for issues with hardware or software, but they are available for any questions you have about technology access.

[Writing Center](#)

The Writing Center offers free, one-to-one (in-person and online) and small-group workshop writing support to all Baruch students. The Center's consultants work collaboratively with you to deepen your writing and English language skills. At any step in the process, whether it's brainstorming a thesis or cleaning up your final draft, they'll help you become a more confident and versatile writer. I encourage you to schedule your appointment well in advance of when your writing is due. You can schedule an appointment at: <https://bc.mywconline.com/>.

[Health Center](#) – The Baruch Health Center is physically open and you can go there for medical treatment (see full range of what the Health Center treats here).

Course Schedule

Week 1: The Beginning & The Epic

Mon Aug 29: Welcome; [Gilgamesh](#) Tablet I

Wed Aug 31: *Gilgamesh* Tablets II-V

Week 2: Gilgamesh

Mon Sept 5: NO CLASS

Wed Sept 7: *Gilgamesh* Tablets VI-XI

Week 3: The Odyssey

Mon Sept 12: [Republic](#), Book X (excerpted)

[The Odyssey](#), Books 1-2

Wed Sept 14: *The Odyssey*, Books 3-4

Week 4: The Odyssey

Mon Sept 19: *The Odyssey*, Books 5-8

Wed Sept 21: *The Odyssey*, Books 9-10

Week 5: The Odyssey

Mon Sept 26: NO CLASS

Wed Sept 28: *The Odyssey*, Books 11-13

Thu Sept 29: Classes follow Monday Schedule – No New Readings

Week 6: The Odyssey

Mon Oct 3: *The Odyssey* Books 16-19

Wed Oct 5: NO CLASS

Week 7: The Odyssey

Mon Oct 10: NO CLASS

Wed Oct 12: *The Odyssey*, 20-24; **Essay 1 Due (physical copy)**

Week 8: Antigone & Poetry

Mon Oct 17: Staged Reading: *Antigone*

Instead of meeting in the classroom, we'll meet at Engelmann Recital Hall in the
basement of the Vertical Campus building

Wed Oct 19: Poetry (Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Chinese)

- Selections from [Sappho: One Hundred Lyrics Lyrics](#) (selections TBD)
- [Eleven Love Poems Catullus \(Blog\)](#)
- [Egyptian Love Poetry](#)
- [Love Poetry of Tang Dynasty \(Blog\)](#) (selections TBD)

Week 9: Medea

M Oct 24: [Medea](#) lines 1-1083

W Oct 26: *Medea* finished

Week 10: Medea in Time

M Oct 31: Ovid, [Metamorphoses](#) Book VII “The Story of Medea and Jason”

Dante, *Inferno* [Canto I](#) and [Canto XVIII](#)

W Nov 2: Chaucer, [“The Legend of Hypsipyle and Medea”](#)

Midterm Review

Week 11: Midterm and Fairy Tales

M Nov 7: [Midterm: Bring Blue Book](#)

W Nov 9: Japanese Fairy Tales

From USF Lit2Go: [“Japanese Fairy Tales”](#)

Monogatari, [“The Bamboo-Cutter and the Moon-Child”](#)

Additional selections based on discussion leads from USF Lit2Go website

Week 12: One Thousand One Nights

M Nov 14: [One Thousand and One Nights](#)

- The Story of King Shahrayar and Shahrazad, His Vizier’s Daughter;
- The Tale of the Ox and the Donkey;
- The Tale of the Merchant and His Wife

W Nov 16: *One Thousand and One Nights* (cont.)

- The Story of the Merchant and the Demon;
- The First Old Man’s Tale;
- The Second Old Man’s Tale

Week 13: The Pillow Book

M Nov 21: [The Pillow Book](#) (excerpted TBD)

W Nov 23: NO CLASS

Week 14: Macbeth

M Nov 28: [Macbeth](#) Act I; **Essay 2 Due (physical copy)**

W Nov 30: Macbeth Act II

Week 15: Macbeth

M Dec 5: Macbeth Act III and IV

W Dec 7: Macbeth Act V

Week 16: Grand Finale

M Dec 12: Final Day

W Dec 14: No Class – Reading Day

Friday December 16: Final Paper Due