

Syllabus for IAH [Integrative studies in the Arts and Humanities] 241B Fall 2013  
Philosophy in Literature

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Office Hours: M,W 12:30 to 2:30 and by appointment.

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Goals of this course: This course will expose you to philosophy from various eras, helping you understand how philosophy has evolved. Since many of the texts make the same point using either literary or philosophic approaches, you will discover the differences between philosophy and literature both in terms of how they are constructed and their impact on readers. And all the texts we study are considered worthwhile. But I see the primary goal of this course as giving you a sense of how to argue for your point of view, not only clearly, but also compellingly. Understanding how to do this means reading and evaluating a variety of texts.

In order of appearance:

Euripides, *Medea*. This will be available online.

Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*. I ordered the cheapest edition, but I don't care what version you use.

Frederick Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Because this is a translation, you need the version I ordered.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet," "Experience" and "The Divinity School Address" all in *Self-Reliance and Other Essays*. I don't care where you get copies of these essays, but I ordered the cheapest source I could find. You'll need to bring copies to class because we'll look closely at these texts. They will also be online.

William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*. The assignments will be available online.

Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon*. You should have to buy this, but students report they can find it online. It is quite long to print out, though, and we will look closely at it.

Peter Singer, *The Expanding Circle*. You'd have to buy this, unless you make copies of the version I have on reserve. It is not available online—as far as I know.

Martin Buber, *I and Thou*. You should use the 1970 Kaufmann translation.

Bernard Malamud, *The Assistant*. This should not be available online. Therefore, you need to buy it.

### Schedule

You should arrive at class having read the assignment for that day and prepared to take a reading test on it.

August 27 Introduction

September 3 *Medea*. Read the first 40 pages of the online version or the first 24 pages of the Dover Edition.

September 8 Finish *Medea*.

September 10 First two acts of *Our Town*

September 15 Finish *Our Town*

September 17 Nietzsche, pp. 3-40.

September 22 Nietzsche, pp. 40-80.

September 24 . Finish Nietzsche.

September 29 Test # 1.

October 1 Emerson, "The Divinity School Address."

October 6 Emerson, "The Poet"

October 8 Emerson, "Experience"

October 10<sup>th</sup> at midnight, Paper # 1 due. It must be submitted online, using Turnitin.

October 13 James, read the chapter entitled "Philosophy."

October 15<sup>th</sup> James, read the chapters entitled "Conclusions" and Postscript"

October 20<sup>th</sup> Morrison, pp. 1-80

October 22 Morrison, pp. 80-160

October 27 Morrison, 160-240

October 29 Finish Morrison

November 3 Test #2

November 5 Peter Singer, Read the chapter entitled “Reason.” In the most recent version it is pages 87-124.

November 10 Peter Singer, Read “Reason and Genes” and “A New Understanding of Ethics,” pp. 125-173.

November 12 Buber, pp. . 53-78

November 14 at midnight, Paper #2 due. Must be turned in online, using Turnitin.

November 17 Buber, pp. 79-107.

November 19 Malamud, pp. 3-55.

November 24 Malamud, pp. 55-129.

November 26 There will be no class because no one will show up, but I have a reading assignment for you to do while digesting turkey: 130-168

December 1 Finish Malamud

December 3 You may write the final exam in class today or during the time scheduled for a final in this course, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 3-5. No matter which time you write it, you will have an hour and fifty minutes to write. The final exam is also in the classroom. I will bring the bluebooks for the final.

## **RULES**

1. There will be a reading test at the start of every class. Anyone who arrives late will not have extra time to complete the test, but must turn in her or her paper with the rest of the class. At the end of the semester, the four lowest grades will be dropped and the remaining grades averaged. This average will constitute 10% of your final average. There will be no make-ups for reading tests.
2. At the end of virtually every class, there will be a writing exercise.. I will drop the four lowest grades you receive on these lessons; the average of the remaining grades will constitute 20% of your final grade. I may occasionally have you do an online assignment over the weekend instead of an in-class writing exercise and may weight them double, if they are challenging. There are no make ups for these exercises. If you leave class for a substantial period of time and return to take the writing exercise, I will give you a 0.0 on it.
3. The grades you receive on the two papers will each account for 15% of your final average.
4. The grades you receive on the two tests will each account for 10% of your final grade.
5. The grade you receive on the final exam will account for 20% of your final grade.

6. I will take class participation into account when I am trying to figure out what to do about borderline grades.

7. I will not give a make-up until I have received evidence that circumstances beyond your control prevented you from doing the work on time.

8. Late work depreciates at the rate of .1 a day. All papers will be submitted online using Turnitin. Computer problems are not excuses for late work. If you have computer problems, call the computer help desk, not me. All papers should be in Word. If I can't open a paper, it is not turned in.

9. Papers or exams on unapproved topics will not be accepted.

10. If I discover that any work submitted in this class is tainted by academic dishonesty, I will lower the grade or give the student a failing grade in the course or on the piece of work, depending on the severity of the offense.

11. University policy mandates that no student should be disadvantaged because of religious observances, but that arrangements for make ups must be made in advance of the holiday. So, if you will have problems completing coursework because of a religious holiday, please talk to me as far in advance as possible.

12. You may have good reason to use an electronic device. If so, please share it with me. Otherwise, when I see you using it, I will call on you in an attempt to help you understand that they are often a distraction to others and to yourself.

13. I will read a draft of your paper before you turn it in, but you must get it to me at least 36 hours before it is due.

14. I am willing to help you with an outline for your paper, but you must come to see me with it at least 48 hours before the paper is due.

15. You need to get to class at the start of class to take the tests. Once someone who has taken the test has left the room, I cannot let anyone begin the test. And you must stay in the room until you complete the test. Sorry, but bathroom breaks are not allowed during the test unless I can accompany you—and, for obvious reasons, I can't do that.

16. Obviously, if you miss all the reading tests and writing exercises, it will hurt your grade, but there is no official attendance policy in this class. But federal law requires that I report non-attending students to my department by the middle of the semester.

17. Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees are required to report suspected child abuse/neglect and allegations of sexual assault to the appropriate campus authorities when they become aware of such matters in the course of their employment. Sexual assault survivors are encouraged to meet

with the Sexual Assault Program at the MSU Counseling Center for confidential counseling and advocacy services.

18. It violates university policy for you to record this class and it is especially against university policy for you to post this recording on the internet.

19. MSU's required syllabus statement concerning Turnitin: Consistent with MSU's efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, instructors may use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student's work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student's work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a "similarity score." The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student's work. All submissions to this course may be checked using this tool.

Students should submit papers to Turnitin Dropboxes without identifying information included in the paper (e.g. name or student number), the system will automatically show this info to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin.