

Classics: Homer to Dante

DAVID WILSON-OKAMURA · ENGL 3600 · AUTUMN 2020 · EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

Aug. 10	M	What is a classic? HOMER, <i>Odyssey</i> , books 1–3
12	W	Quiz 1. <i>Od.</i> 4–6; <i>Od.</i> 7–9. NOTE: the reading load is heavy in the first two weeks and then gets lighter.
14	F	Quiz 2. <i>Od.</i> 10–12; <i>Od.</i> 13–15
17	M	Quiz 3. <i>Od.</i> 16–18; <i>Od.</i> 19–21
19	W	Quiz 4. <i>Od.</i> 22–24; VIRGIL, <i>Aeneid</i> , book 1
21	F	Quiz 5. <i>Aen.</i> 2; <i>Aen.</i> 3
24	M	Take-home midterm exam 1 due at 9:30 am. Subject: Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>. Discussion: <i>Aen.</i> 4; <i>Aen.</i> 4 (cont.)
26	W	Quiz 6. <i>Aen.</i> 5; <i>Aen.</i> 6
28	F	Quiz 7. <i>Aen.</i> 6 (cont.); <i>Aen.</i> 7
31	M	Quiz 8. <i>Aen.</i> 8; <i>Aen.</i> 9
Sept. 2	W	Quiz 9. <i>Aen.</i> 10; <i>Aen.</i> 11
4	F	Quiz 10. <i>Aen.</i> 12; <i>Aen.</i> 12 (cont.)
7	M	Labor Day
9	W	Quiz 11. DANTE, <i>Inferno</i> , cantos 1–4 (prologue and pre-hell); <i>Inf.</i> 5–9 (lust, gluttony, greed, wrath, the gate of Dis)
11	F	Take-home midterm exam 2 due at 9:30 am. Subject: Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>. Discussion: <i>Inf.</i> 10–13 (heresy, violence against people and property, suicide); <i>Inf.</i> 14–17 (violence against God)
14	M	Quiz 12. <i>Inf.</i> 18–22 (seduction, flattery, simony, sorcery, barratry); <i>Inf.</i> 23–27 (hypocrisy, thieves, fraudulent counselors)
16	W	Quiz 13. <i>Inf.</i> 28–31 (sowers of discord, alchemists, forgers, liars); <i>Inf.</i> 32–34 (traitors)
18	F	Quiz 14. <i>Purgatorio</i> 1–3 (shores of Mt. Purgatory); <i>Purg.</i> 9–13 (terrace of pride)
21	M	Quiz 15. <i>Purg.</i> 17–21 (organization of purgatory; Virgil and Statius); <i>Purg.</i> 22, 25–27 (gluttony; terrace of the lustful; Virgil's leave-taking)
23	W	Quiz 16. <i>Paradiso</i> 1; <i>Par.</i> 2–5 (hierarchy)
25	F	Quiz 17. <i>Par.</i> 18–20 (Jupiter); <i>Par.</i> 21–22 (Saturn), 33 (beatific vision)
28	M	Final exam or paper due at 11:30 am.

REQUIREMENTS

Quizzes (25%). There will be 17 reading quizzes, administered through Canvas. Each reading quiz will be due at 9:30 am on the date listed above and become available 24 hours before it is due. Quizzes are open-book and open-note; see ACADEMIC INTEGRITY below. Once you begin a quiz, you will have 15 minutes to finish. The following accommodation will be made for quizzes that are missed for any reason, including illness: at the end of the semester I will drop everyone's lowest 4 quiz scores, including zeroes. This accommodation will be automatic for all students. If further accommodation is required (for example, because of a protracted illness), contact me.

Midterm exams (40%). There will be two take-home exams due at 9:30 am on the dates listed above. Exams will become available in Canvas 72 hours before they are due. Exams received late will be subject to a 20% grade reduction. No exams will be accepted more than 48 hours after an exam is due. On grading, see below.

Final exam or paper (35%). There will be a take-home final exam due at 11:30 am on the date listed above. The exam will become available in Canvas 72 hours before it is due. Exams received late will be subject to a 20% grade reduction. No exams will be accepted more than 48 hours after an exam is due. On grading, see below.

All exams are open-book and open-note. See **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY** below on use of outside sources.

Exam essays will be graded as follows:

F	D	C	B	A
Fuzzy on what actually happens in the book.	Displays little or no familiarity with relevant class discussion.	Incorporates one or two relevant points from class discussion.	Incorporates several relevant points from class discussion.	Incorporates one or more original observations in addition to relevant points from class discussion.
If your admissions essay had been written like this, you would not have been admitted to ECU.	Little evidence of proofreading; reads like a first draft.	Sentences are complete, arranged in a logical order.	Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence stating the paragraph's main idea. Subsequent sentences develop that idea in a logical order. Names are spelled correctly.	Exhibits elegance or wit in addition to the virtues of a B essay.

Students who earn a grade of 90% or higher on Midterm Exam 2 will have the option of submitting a paper, 1,800 words or longer, instead of a final exam. The paper is due the same time as the take-home final. The subject of the paper can be any aspect of any book or books we are reading for this course. Students who qualify to substitute a paper for the final exam and wish to do so are required to consult with the instructor during office hours at least one week before the due date. Papers must include a word count and list of works cited (usually just the textbooks) in MLA format. See **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY** below on use of outside sources. Papers will be graded as follows:

F	D	C	B	A
Content so banal the paper self-destructs in despair before instructor can read it.	Thin or disorganized content, including papers in which plot summary predominates.	Several points, original or from class discussion, clearly explained.	Several points, original or from class discussion, are arranged to form a larger argument.	Original observations are arranged to form a larger, original argument.
No word count or too short.	No word count or too short.	Word count \geq assigned length.	Word count \geq assigned length.	Word count \geq assigned length.
If your admissions essay had been written like this, you would not have been admitted to ECU.	Little evidence of proofreading; reads like a first draft.	Essay is written in complete sentences. Paragraphs may start abruptly; transition sentences are the fix.	First paragraph is an introduction to the paper as a whole. Body paragraphs form a sequence.	Anticipates objections, acknowledges limitations.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The following applies to all graded assignments. In this course, students are discouraged from consulting sources outside of class discussion and the required textbooks. If students do adopt content or wording from outside sources, the adoption must be documented in MLA format. The sanction for plagiarism and other violations of the university's academic integrity policy will vary according to the nature of the violation. Severe violations, such as plagiarism, will usually be sanctioned with an F for the course. All violations will be reported to the university.

GRADING SCALE

A = 94–100, A- = 90–93, B+ = 87–89, B = 84–86, B- = 80–83, C+ = 77–79, C = 74–76, C- = 70–73, D+ = 67–69, D = 64–66, D- = 60–63, F = 0–59. Decimals $\geq .5$ are rounded up.

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS, PHONE, EMAIL

Office hours: MWF 1:20–3:00. Office hours will be conducted by video conference (see Canvas for link) or telephone.

Home telephone: 252-758-2585

Email: david@virgil.org. I use email every day, but instead of exchanging messages, let's have a conversation during office hours.

Canvas inbox: I don't use or check this.

ACCOMMODATIONS

East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 (Voice/TTY 252-737-1016).

EMERGENCIES, UNIV. CLOSURES, CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTION

If classes are interrupted for any reason, I will give instructions by email. If email is not available, follow the schedule of readings in the syllabus until email service is restored.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance and participation are not a percentage of the course grade. It is impossible, however, to pass the course unless you take notes on class discussion.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Dante. *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*.

Homer. *The Odyssey*.

Virgil. *The Aeneid*.

ISBNs are omitted because, while I recommend the translations by Allen Mandelbaum available from the bookstore, I don't insist that you purchase the editions I ordered. For Dante, you'll need something with notes; Mandelbaum's notes are good, because there aren't so many that they overwhelm the text. But for Homer and Virgil, there's a wide range of excellent choices; I also like Fitzgerald's *Aeneid* and the prose translation of Homer's *Odyssey* by T. E. Lawrence (a.k.a., Lawrence of Arabia).

HUMANITIES COMPETENCY

The following language is uniform for all Humanities Competency (HUC) courses:

Courses in the Humanities and in interdisciplinary areas linked to subjects in the humanities challenge students to critically examine their beliefs and the beliefs of others about what can broadly be called “human existence” or referred to as “what it is to exist as a human being.” Humanities courses address a range of issues that ancient texts show have captured people’s attention for over 3000 years. These problems include matters of value, and the courses that address them require students to critically assess diverse understandings of life’s aesthetic, ethical and moral dimensions. Humanities courses require students to learn one or more methods of critical analysis and to understand the value of knowledge both for its own sake and for its application. The knowledge gained by taking courses in the Humanities contributes to each student’s understanding of how to choose a life worth living.

The following program learning outcomes define the Humanities Competency. Students who have completed the General Education Humanities requirement can:

1. Distinguish artistic, literary, philosophical, or religious creations from other types of work and describe how they address enduring human concerns and the human condition.
2. Apply discipline-specific criteria and evaluate the significance of specific literary, artistic, philosophical or religious works to enduring human concerns and the human condition.
3. Apply discipline-specific knowledge in the humanities to contrast their understanding with that of others of the significance of specific artistic, literary, philosophical or religious works to enduring human concerns and the human condition.

These outcomes are implemented in ENGL 3600 as follows. Students who have successfully completed this course are able to:

1. Distinguish epic poems such as Homer’s *Odyssey* from philosophic treatments of the same questions. E.g., what is the purpose of life? how is happiness achieved? (HUC1)
2. Apply the methods of literary analysis to interpret fictional presentations of enduring problems. E.g., in the *Aeneid*, how does a republic dwindle into a dictatorship? (HUC2)
3. Apply the methods of literary history to show how the use of epic conventions such as invocation varies in response to different social needs and cultural norms. (HUC3)