

Classics: Homer to Dante

DAVID WILSON-OKAMURA · ENGL 3600 · AUTUMN 2016 · EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

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| Aug. 22 | M | What is a classic? | |
| 24 | W | HOMER, <i>Odyssey</i> , books 1–3. Use glossary for names. | |
| 26 | F | <i>Od.</i> 4–6 | |
| 29 | M | <i>Od.</i> 7–9 | |
| 31 | W | <i>Od.</i> 10–12 | |
| Sept. 2 | F | <i>Od.</i> 13–15 | |
| 5 | M | Labor Day | |
| 7 | W | <i>Od.</i> 16–18; | |
| 9 | F | <i>Od.</i> 19–21 | |
| 12 | M | <i>Od.</i> 22–24 | |
| 14 | W | VIRGIL, <i>Aeneid</i> , book 1. Use glossary for names. | |
| 16 | F | <i>Aen.</i> 2 | |
| 19 | M | <i>Aen.</i> 3 | Synthesis 2 due |
| 21 | W | <i>Aen.</i> 4 | |
| 23 | F | <i>Aen.</i> 5 | |
| 26 | M | <i>Aen.</i> 6 | |
| 28 | W | <i>Aen.</i> 6 (cont.) | |
| 30 | F | <i>Aen.</i> 7 | |
| Oct. 3 | M | <i>Aen.</i> 8 | Synthesis 3 due |
| 5 | W | <i>Aen.</i> 9, 10 | |
| 7 | F | <i>Aen.</i> 11 | |
| 10 | M | Fall Break | |
| 12 | W | <i>Aen.</i> 12 | |
| 14 | F | <i>Aen.</i> 12 (cont.) | |
| 17 | M | DANTE, <i>Inferno</i> , cantos 1–4 (prologue and pre-hell). Read the notes for each canto as well. | Synthesis 4 due |
| 19 | W | <i>Inf.</i> 5–9 (lust, gluttony, greed, wrath, the gate of Dis) | |
| 21 | F | <i>Inf.</i> 10–13 (heresy, violence against people and property, suicide) | |
| 24 | M | <i>Inf.</i> 14–17 (violence against God) | |
| 26 | W | <i>Inf.</i> 18–22 (seduction, flattery, simony, sorcery, barratry) | |
| 28 | F | <i>Inf.</i> 23–27 (hypocrisy, thieves, fraudulent counselors) | |
| 31 | M | <i>Inf.</i> 28–31 (sowers of discord, alchemists, forgers, liars) | Synthesis 5 due |
| Nov. 2 | W | <i>Inf.</i> 32–34 (traitors) | |
| 4 | F | <i>Purgatorio</i> 1–3 (shores of Mt. Purgatory) | |
| 7 | M | <i>Purg.</i> 9–13 (terrace of pride) | |
| 9 | W | <i>Purg.</i> 17–21 (organization of purgatory; Virgil and Statius) | |
| 11 | F | <i>Purg.</i> 22, 25–27 (gluttony; terrace of the lustful; Virgil's leave-taking). | |
| 14 | M | <i>Purg.</i> 28–31 (arrival of Beatrice) | Synthesis 6 due |
| 16 | W | <i>Purg.</i> 32–33 (prophecy) | |
| 18 | F | <i>Paradiso</i> 1 | |
| 21 | M | <i>Par.</i> 2–5 (moon) | |
| 23–25 | WF | Thanksgiving Break | |
| 28 | M | <i>Par.</i> 18–20 (Jupiter) | |
| 30 | W | <i>Par.</i> 21–22 (Saturn) | |
| Dec. 2 | F | <i>Par.</i> 28–33 (beatific vision) | |
| 5 | M | What is a classic? Final deadline for all work. | Synthesis 7 due |
| 14 | W | Exam-period activity (8:00–10:30) | |

Aims

1. To quicken your powers of observation, inquiry, and argument by means of study, conversation, and continual practice.
2. To make the acquaintance of three authors who will give you images to think with for the rest of your life.

Synthesis 1 due

Synthesis 2 due

Synthesis 3 due

Synthesis 4 due

Synthesis 5 due

Synthesis 6 due

Synthesis 7 due

REQUIREMENTS

Biweekly Synthesis (75%). Every other Monday (plus Sept. 7, which is the Wednesday after Labor Day), you will submit a written synthesis of the previous two weeks' discussion.

What does a good synthesis look like? First, it is not a response or reaction paper. If you find yourself writing a sentence that begins "I believe" or "I feel," back up. Second, it's not a plot summary; you don't need a college-level class to write a plot summary. If you find yourself retelling the story, back up. If it's not a response or plot summary, what is it? An A-level synthesis will do two things:

1. Summarize the big ideas from the previous two weeks of discussion. The maximum length is only 1,200 words, so be selective. Choose your words and examples carefully. Combine topics wherever possible; that's why it's called a synthesis. You don't need to record who said what.
2. Evaluate the previous two weeks of discussion. Skip the generalities ("It was a good discussion"). Instead, get in the habit of asking yourself, "What did we leave out?" With rich books like these, omissions are inevitable. Don't stop, though, with saying "We didn't talk about *x*." That's too easy. Make an observation about *x* and push the conversation forward.

As a general rule, one part evaluation to three parts summary is a good balance.

- Length: 900–1,200 words. Write the total word count on p. 1.
- Staple. Get in the habit of numbering pages in all your documents.
- Use spell-check. If you need to review some punctuation or grammar, I recommend *Grammar in Plain English* by Harriet Diamond and Phyllis Dutwin.
- Double-space. Take pity on my eyes and use 12 point Times Roman (or a similar font of the same size).

Essays will be graded on a 10-point scale according to the following characteristics:

| Characteristics of an F Paper | Characteristics of a D Paper | Characteristics of a C Paper | Characteristics of a B Paper | Characteristics of an A Paper |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Summarizes plot rather than class discussion; you could have most of this paper without actually taking the class. | Material from class discussion is scanty or disorganized. The cure is usually better notetaking during class. | Main points from class discussion are accurately summarized, clearly organized. | Material from class discussion is reorganized to make some larger points (=synthesis). Argument has room to accommodate the full two weeks. | Synthesis + evaluation. Poses fresh questions, offers new hypotheses. Includes, and then ranges beyond, what was said in class. |
| 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 college admissions essay had been written like this, you would not be at ECU. | Numerous errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation distract from content; reads like a first draft. | Individual sentences are clear, but paragraphs start abruptly; transition sentences are the fix. | First paragraph is an introduction to the paper as a whole. Paragraphs are sequenced to form an argument. | The writing is finely crafted, elegant as well as clean. |

Quizzes (25%). On most days there will be a reading quiz. There will be 26 quizzes total, and each quiz will be worth 1% of the total course grade. There will be no make-ups for missed quizzes. However, because there is an extra (26th) quiz, you can miss one quiz without harming your grade. Think of it as a free pass: you can use it to go to the beach, or you can use it when you're sick. Because this system is based on numbers, you don't need to explain why you missed class; the math will take care of it automatically. Of course, you'll still be responsible for the material discussed in class. But once you've used that free pass, it's gone. My advice is to save it for when you're sick or need to care for a relative.

Midterm and Final Exams. There will be no midterm or final exams in this course. However, all work for this course must be completed on or before the last day of class, Dec. 5.

Please don't read, send, or monitor **text messages** in class. Please do turn off your **cell phone ringer** before class begins. **Laptops and tablets** might be helpful in some courses, but not this one; please keep them shut during class.

EXTENSIONS

Everyone gets a 48-hour extension on two analyses over the course of the semester. You choose which ones. You don't need to ask me ahead of time: instead, when you hand in your paper at the next class, just staple a separate page on top with your name, the date, and this statement: "I'm taking my first (or second) extension on this paper." In the interest of fairness, no one will be granted a third extension.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas in such a way that they seem your own. Give credit where credit is due; otherwise, you are cheating. If you plagiarize in this class, expect an F for the course. All plagiarism will be reported to the university, and additional sanctions may be imposed. If you have questions about plagiarism, ask them before the paper is due. Finally, be sure that the paper you do hand in is your final draft. If it's plagiarized, and you explain that you gave me "the wrong draft," I will feel sorry for both of us, but you will still get an F for the course. So check before you turn something in and make sure it really is your final draft. Better yet, avoid plagiarism in all of your drafts.

OFFICE HOURS, PHONE, EMAIL

Office: Bate 2137; office phone: 252-328-6714

Office hours: MWF 2:30–4:20 and by appointment. If you need to contact me on days when I don't have office hours, you can call me at home. My number is listed, but please: no phone calls after 9 p.m.

Email: david@virgil.org. But instead of exchanging emails, let's have a conversation during office hours.

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 postponed 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

The requirements of this course are impossible to fulfill if you don't attend class. But I don't take roll or require that students participate in class discussion. I might invite you to comment, but I won't insist.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Dante. *Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso*.

Homer. *The Odyssey*.

Virgil. *The Aeneid*.

I recommend the translations by Allen Mandelbaum, which I have ordered from the bookstore, but I'm not picky. 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).