

Literature and Human Values: Labor, Power, Class

English 2099G; sophomore-level; 3 credits; 7 students

Instructor: Anne Zahlan, Ph.D., Professor of English

Eastern Illinois University; Charleston, Illinois

Honors College Dean: Bonnie Irwin, Ph.D.

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Course Description: This course involves reading, discussing, and writing about plays and novels that raise questions as to how societies are organized: Who orders whom around and by what authority? Which groups are respected and which groups despised? How is work assigned and whose labor is valued and rewarded?

The course examines how language and literary form reflect, shape, or undermine the ideologies that determine social realities. It helps students acquire insight into the literary representation of social order and requires them to engage in critical thinking and intellectual questioning about issues of labor, class, and power. The course is writing intensive.

Texts:

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*

Karel Capek, *R.U.R.*

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

Clifford Odets, *Waiting for Lefty*

Nawal El-Saadawi, *Woman at Point Zero*

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Suggested: *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th edition

(Each student should also have a *Handbook* of usage and a collegiate desk dictionary.)

Dr. Z's Office Hours: Tuesdays: 2-5; Thursdays: 2-4

Syllabus

Date	Topic
Week 1	Introduction and Assignments; Introduction to <i>The Great Gatsby</i> ; In-Class Writing
Week 2	Fitzgerald, <i>The Great Gatsby</i> (Have the novel read for today.) Assignment of Paper I
Week 3	Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> (Read the play for tonight; Dramatic Readings as assigned)
Week 4	Achebe, <i>Things Fall Apart</i> Read Parts One and Two for tonight.) (Last words on <i>Earnest</i> as appropriate)
Week 5	Conclude <i>Things Fall Apart</i> . Dickens, <i>Hard Times</i> : Read and prepare Part One for tonight.
Week	<i>Hard Times</i> : Read Parts One and Two for tonight (finish the novel if possible.)

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Week 7	<i>Hard Times</i> concluded Odets, <i>Waiting for Lefty</i> (Read play for today.)
Week 8	<i>Waiting for Lefty</i> (Dramatic Presentations) Mid-Term Exam (Bring test booklets to class.)
Week 9	Visiting Lecture on U.S. Labor Movement David Radavich, former president of the EIU chapter of University Professionals of Illinois (IFT/AFT, AFL/CIO) Review <i>Hard Times</i> and <i>Waiting for Lefty</i> Paper I: typed, polished, documented draft due in class. (Be sure to store your paper on a flash drive or diskette and/or to make two copies; the workshop copy will be marked up in class.) Assignment of Paper II (Prospectus due 10 November) [Thursday 21 October: Late penalties (5 pts. per day) begin for Paper I submission by any student who did not participate in Evaluation Workshop.]
Week 10	El-Saadawi, <i>Woman at Point Zero</i> (Read the book for tonight.) Revised Paper I due in class or by 4:00 pm Thursday in my office or mailbox. (Hand in draft with editorial marks and evidence of revision, Peer & Self Evaluation sheets, & your revised version of the paper to be graded.)
Week 11	Capek, <i>R.U.R.</i> (Read the play for tonight; dramatic readings)
Week 12	Atwood, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> : Read and prepare first half of novel. Prospectus for Paper II due in class. Conference Sign-Up
Week 13	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> : finish reading the book for tonight. Discussion of Prospectus; Research Presentations scheduled
Week 14	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY--NO CLASS MEETINGS
Week 15	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> concluded; Review the Epilogue for tonight. RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS AS SCHEDULED (Attendance required during presentations; no make-ups for missed presentations) (OPTIONAL) PAPER II DUE FOR COMMENTS ON THIS DATE (POLISHED, TYPED & DOCUMENTED)
Week 16	Paper II (final version) due in class on this date. (One copy of your paper will go to the Honors Office for your records. If you want a marked copy of your paper returned, hand in two copies.) RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS AS SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM REVIEW SHEETS FINAL EXAM (CUMULATIVE) (Bring test booklets to your final exam.)

Grade Calculation

Participation (including Drama Presentations) and Daily Preparation (including quizzes): 30%

Mid-Term Exam: 10%; Cumulative Final Exam: 20%

Paper I: 15%; Paper II (including Prospectus): 20%
Research Paper Oral Presentations--5%

Course Journal Assignment

Keep a separate notebook or journal in which you write your responses to reading assignments and class discussion. For each work that we read, please identify in your journal those issues of labor, class, and power that you see in the text and your own thoughts about them. Identify also attitudes to the issues--the social and political views expressed in the text. In your journal, also take notes on your background reading in history, political science, and current events. From time to time, you will be asked to write responses in class, and you should add them into your journal when they are returned. You will find a journal very useful in reviewing for exams and in planning your papers and oral presentations. I will not collect or grade journals.

Dramatic Readings

Groups of students will be asked to present scenes from the three plays that we are reading and to present rehearsed reading performances to the class.

Groups should be prepared to explain the significance of the scenes and to comment on their interpretation of scenes and plays.

Contact person: Anne Zahlan, arzahlan@eiu.edu.