Literature and Justice –MWF, 11:30-12:20, Bobet XXX

THIS IS A COMMON CURRICULUM COURSE. Prerequisite Engl T122 or A205.

Instructor: Marcus Smith Bobet 419, X2481, marcus@loyno.edu
Office Hours: MWF 10-11:30; MW 2:30-3:30 & BY APPOINTMENT.

Course Description:

Literature and Justice. This course uses narrative and other literary texts to provide images and symbols for the elusive concept of “justice.” It examines literary texts to see how they illuminate several notions of justice: “fairness,” a “higher law” vs. the norms of society; revenge as efficient justice; justice vs. the legal “system,” popular notions of equity. Conversely, we will define several distinct concepts of justice and use these to read literary works. The course aims to develop more complex notions of the elements of justice and injustice and how literature can sometimes explore issues more vividly than legal and political texts. In his Tractatus, Wittgenstein said that philosophy was not a body of doctrine resulting in philosophical propositions, but an activity that aimed at the “logical clarification.” In this course, I try to take a similar approach to the subject of literature and Justice. Marcus Smith

Here is a rough schedule of reading and discussion assignments. I will adjust this on a continuing basis.

Aug 28-Sept. 1
Shirley Jackson, The Lottery
Commentary: http://www.netwood.net/~kosenko/jackson.html
John Rawls “Natural Lottery” argument, http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A3136042

Sept 4-8
M Labor Day holiday
Sophocles. Antigone.
Text: http://www.bartleby.com/8/6/ (three separate links)
Commentary: http://www.theatrehistory.com/ancient/bates017.html

Sept.. . 11-15
Glaspell. Trifles and A Jury of Her Peers
Text of Trifles: http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/eng384/trifles.htm
Sept.. 18-22
Robin Hood. (excerpts)
Text:  http://encyclopediaindex.com/b/2rbnh10.htm
See The Robin Hood Project at the University of Rochester:
http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/rh/rhhome.stm

Sept 25-29
Hamlet

Oct. 2-6
Hamlet
Simenon, Maigret and the Killer

Oct. 9-13
Plessy v. Ferguson.
Text here:  http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/33.htm
Commentary:  http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/acs/1890s/plessy/plessy.html

Oct. 16-20
M Fall break holiday
Ox-Bow Incident (film)
Commentary:  http://www.filmsite.org/oxbo.html

Oct. 23-27
Morrison. Beloved

Oct. 30-Nov. 3
Capote. In Cold Blood. Book and Film

Nov. 6-10
Coetzee, Disgrace

Nov. 13 – 17
Reports

Nov. 20 – 24
Reports
W-F 22-24 Thanksgiving holidays

Nov. 27 – Dec. 1
Reports

Dec. 4 – 8
COURSE POLICIES, GRADING, ATTENDANCE AND OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

One short (4-5 page) paper (20% of final grade)

One longer paper (10+ pages) (30% of final grade). Developed drafts will be presented in class starting November 13. I will ask for proposals by November 3.

Journals (20% of final grade) Your journals should be composed of exercises, reading notes, notes from class discussion, relevant items from your movements in the world outside of class. You should develop a pattern of adding daily entries 1 to 2 pages long. These daily writing assignments will sometimes involve a follow-up assignment. They will often be taken from class discussions. I will expect you to bring your journals/notebooks to class and to be prepared to share with the class as part of a discussion. I will have you post assignments on BlackBoard and these can be developed into journals sections and in many cases into short and long papers. An edited version of your BlackBoard assignments and other assignments will be the primary basis for evaluating this part of the course.

Several short quizzes (20% of final grade)

Final exam (10% of final grade)

Attendance is absolutely necessary. Four absences for any reasons will lower your final grade by as much as one full letter grade. If you are absent for five or more classes, your grade will be an “F.” I do not give make-up quizzes. Last day for an administrative withdrawal is Friday, October 27.

This is a reading intensive class. If you are not prepared to spend substantial time outside class doing the reading, and thinking about the reading, and talking about these readings, do not enroll in the class. Success in this class rests substantially on everyone’s continuous active participation. I understand participation to mean, at a bare minimum, (1) coming to class having completed the reading, (2) contributing to discussions, including making short presentations, (3) monitoring your contributions so that the discussions are not dominated by the views of only a few persons, and (4) being able to listen and respond sympathetically to your classmates. I have always believed that a distinctive feature of Jesuit education is that the student is expected to participate actively in his or her development. Slackers are advised to find another beach.
All writing assignments must be word-processed. The only exception is in-class drafts. Follow MLA guidelines for conventions of form and documentation. All papers and assignments must be handed in on time. Late papers, except in true emergencies, will be graded down.

I use the Internet to supplement class discussions. You will be required to enroll in a class list serve in the first week and also to log in every day to the Blackboard section for this class. THIS IS MANDATORY.

Students who need to receive accommodation should contact Disability Services at 865-2990 as soon as possible so that warranted accommodations can be arranged. Disability Services is located in the Academic Resource Center in Monroe Hall 405. Be sure I am notified of any accommodation you are requesting.

In order to receive a passing grade for this class, you will have to complete all assigned work.

You should always keep a back-up copy of your papers, either on disc or on paper.

Use MLA guidelines: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html#formatdoc](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html#formatdoc)

Plagiarism and cheating on exams will be punished with penalties up to and including failure for the course. Handing in another's work as your own is, of course, plagiarism. Any time you paraphrase, quote, or borrow the vocabulary or line of argument of another author you must acknowledge with the standard professional methods. If you do not do this, you are committing plagiarism. If you are unsure of the definition of plagiarism, please visit the WAC lab or see me.

Students are encouraged to visit the English Department's Writing Lab (located in Bobet 341) for help with their papers. Call 865-2278 for hours and to schedule an appointment. The WAC lab is also available for help with writing and research. The WAC lab is in Bobet 100.