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Engl 2258  
Survey of World  
Literature II



The University of Idaho in statewide cooperation with  
Boise State University — Idaho State University — Lewis-Clark State College

# Course Guide

Independent  
Study | in Idaho

*Self-paced study. Anytime. Anywhere!*

**English 2258**  
**Survey of World Literature II**  
**(17<sup>th</sup> Century to Present)**

Idaho State University  
3 Semester-Hour Credits

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## Engl 2258: Survey of World Literature II

3 credits: ISU

### Welcome

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Hello, and welcome to English 2258: Survey of World Literature II! This course guide will take you through the course from start to finish, detailing each lesson and Lesson as well as preparing you for the proctored exams. If you have taken English 2257: Survey of World Literature I, you will see how this course builds on the readings you have studied already. If this is your first Independent Study in Idaho (ISI) course, I think you will find this student-directed approach to the study of literature exciting. The course is designed to challenge students who are new to the study of literature at the college level as well as those who have taken other literature courses in the past. You have the opportunity to get as much out of this course as you want, and your instructor is available to assist and encourage you every step of the way.

### Policies and Procedures

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Refer to the ISI website at [www.uidaho.edu/isi](http://www.uidaho.edu/isi) and select *About ISI Policies* for the most current policies, procedures, and course information, including information on setting up your accounts, exams and proctors, grades and transcripts, course exchanges and the refund schedule, library resources and other services, academic integrity, and disability support services. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the ISI office for clarification before beginning your course.

### Course Description

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Examination of major works and authors in historical perspective, with emphasis upon literary and cultural backgrounds. ISU students: Partially satisfies Objective 4 of the General Education Requirements.

*12 graded assignments, 3 proctored exams*

**Students may submit up to 1 assignment per week. Before taking exams, students MUST wait for grades and feedback on assignments, which may take up to three weeks after date of receipt by the instructor.**

ALL assignments and exams must be submitted to receive a final grade for the course.

### Course Materials

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#### Required Course Materials

- Puchner, Martin, et. al. *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, shorter 3rd edition. Vol. 2: 1650 to the present. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013. Print. ISBN-10: 0-393-91961-7; ISBN-13: 978-0-393-91961-5
- Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*, Norton Critical Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008. Print. ISBN-13: 978-0-393-93219-5
- NOTE: A package with both required texts for the course (ISBN 978-0-393-51477-3) is available through the University of Idaho Vandal bookstore. This bundle includes the novel *Things Fall Apart* for free and is only available through the Vandal Store: [vandalstore.com](http://vandalstore.com) (Select "ISI 00" for the term.)

### Recommended Course Materials

- Gardner, Janet E. *Writing about Literature: A Portable Guide*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. Print. ISBN-10: 0-312-60757-1; ISBN-13: 978-0-312-60757-9N- 978-0-321-66256-9

### Course Delivery

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All ISI courses are delivered through BbLearn, an online management system that hosts the course lessons and assignments and other items that are essential to the course.

### Course Introduction

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Designing a course that will provide students a survey of the literature of the entire **world** from the seventeenth century forward, as this course aims to do, is a challenge! Many supposed world literature courses primarily focus on reading selections from the Western world, that is, Europe and the Americas, particularly literature written in English or translated from other European languages. You will encounter or have already encountered many of these works of the traditional English literary canon in other courses. Who decides what texts are true classics, worthy of studying centuries later, when the world is our only boundary?

In this course, our focus will be on texts that give you a better sense of what has been written around the world—from a variety of cultural perspectives—from approximately the year 1650 forward. We will consider some of those “classics,” either in part or by way of comparison to new texts, but we will largely be working to extend and expand our sense of what literature is, who writes it, what its concerns and themes are, and why we should value it—across time and culture.

To situate our readings within the context of important time periods or literary movements, I have followed some of the categories provided by our Norton text and brought in others of my own. However, keep in mind that putting one single label on a writer or a text from many years later is reductive, oversimplifying complex lives and the far-reaching, multi-faceted influence of these writers' works. You'll notice the dates jump around, and a strictly chronological approach is nearly impossible because of the overlapping, even doubling-back, of certain trends and ideas. The idea is that such labels as *realism* or *modernism*, for examples, can reveal common themes and concerns among authors of a certain time. But we simply won't see clear lines between definitive periods with exact dates. This isn't a history course though, so the literary works themselves take the spotlight, not the time period. What's more, I encourage you to find links and connections across periods and cultures, even across languages, as we will consider many of our readings in translation. I like to imagine that many of these authors would prefer to simply be called *artists* and *writers*—or even *world citizens*—rather than to be known only for one moment in history or literature.

If you do find we are considering a literary work you have read before, I encourage you to encounter it from the unique perspective of this course and the lessons I have shaped for our readings.

### Course Objectives

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In this course, students will...

- ✓ Consider the diverse cultures and stories that contribute to world literature from the seventeenth century to the present.
- ✓ Understand what it means to read well and think critically about literature.
- ✓ Write thoughtfully and effectively about literary texts.

- ✓ Understand the importance of literature to a greater understanding of history and human experience.

## Course Structure

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### Assignments

You will submit your assignments as .doc or .docx files through BbLearn. Each lesson has a link for submitting the assignment for that lesson. Each of the twelve self-guided lessons for this course culminates with a written Lesson that you will submit for a grade via our course BbLearn site. Look ahead to the questions I pose in these prompts, **annotate** (take notes and mark your text) while you read, and have a dictionary handy to quickly look up unfamiliar words. Think about the questions I pose within the lectures, as they will prepare you to write thoughtfully in your assignments and on your exams. Pay close attention to the **introductions** to each of these readings. (For convenience, I will refer to our world literature anthology as simply “Norton” and provide the page number for my citations from it.) They provide valuable contextual information on the author and the reading itself, and they give very helpful clues that will guide you through the readings. I will not always assign the introductions to the larger sections in our text, but I will reference them, and you may find additional insights that foster ideas for your writing and help you place what you read within the context of familiar historical events by reading the introductions on your own. (There are also some extensive timelines in the back of our Norton text that you may find helpful.) Please cite any quotes or specific ideas taken from these introductions just as you do for the literature itself.

The assignments ask you to think critically about one or more of the texts you have read for that section, showing **your close reading skills, your analytical thinking, and your ability to articulate your insights in writing**. While these are not lengthy, formal essays that require research, you are expected to present **carefully written, polished work**. To that aim, I recommend that you buy or borrow a copy of Janet Gardner’s *Writing about Literature* (listed above), widely available for under \$10, to consult as you work through this course, particularly if you have never taken a college literature course before. For one example, many students find it challenging to effectively work quotes from literary texts into their own writing. This is a key skill for any literature course, and being able to look at the samples provided in Gardner’s book will prove helpful.

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments should be **written essays of 550-650 words** (about 2 pages). You do not need a formal heading, title, or works cited page, but you should use simple parenthetical citations with the corresponding page number from our textbook after quoted material. For examples, see how I employ quotes and use citations in our lectures in this course guide.

The instructor puts careful time and thought into the specific **feedback** provided on each of your written assignments. You are expected to review this feedback carefully and put the comments you receive into practice on future assignments. Even on an A essay, the grader will often suggest a few helpful pointers that will make you a more effective writer as you continue to study and engage with literature.

Assignments are graded with an eye to **1) how effectively you answer the question posed by the specific prompt**, and **2) how you show you have considered prior feedback on your literary writing—that is, showing improvement and development from lesson to lesson**.

It is best to contact the instructor **before** submitting an assignment if you aren’t sure you fully understand the prompt or have other concerns about your approach to the assignment. You will typically not have the opportunity to revise these assignments; however, you are encouraged to contact the instructor if you have questions on a graded assignment. On rare occasions, a revision may be permitted.

## Exams

The exams are designed to primarily focus on the work you do for the lessons in each respective section. However, the exams are worth a bit more each time (see Grading below), so they are also designed with the aim to see your skills in critical thinking and writing about literature improve, as well as giving you the opportunity to make connections across works that span different time periods and cultures. While I won't ask you for specifics on a work studied for Exam 1 on a later exam, you will see how certain themes resonate throughout the lessons, from beginning to end, and you are expected to be able to speak to these ideas on later exams. All three exams are proctored, and no notes or books should be used.

I provide a list of important terms at the beginning of each lesson. Being familiar with these will help you prepare for the exams. While I may not always explicitly define these terms right in the lecture, your assigned readings will help you construct a full definition of the terms and how they play out in the literary texts. Jot down your own working definitions of these terms as you work your way through the lessons. Understanding them in your own words will help you think critically and write thoughtfully on the exams.

As it is the policy of the program that actual exams are not returned to ISI students, your instructor will contact you electronically (via BbLearn) with your grade and specific feedback on your exam.

## Grading

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Your total course grade is calculated as follows:

<b>Lessons 1-12</b>	40% (a little over 3% each)
<b>Exam 1</b>	15%
<b>Exam 2</b>	20%
<b>Exam 3</b>	25%

**A** = 90% and above    **B** = 80 to 89.9%    **C** = 70 to 79.9%    **D** = 60 to 69.9%    **F** = below 60%

Assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale, with numerical percent grades entered for each assignment. Exams will be graded on the same scale, with the value for each section of the exam clearly marked to help you budget your time.

Acts of academic dishonesty, including cheating or plagiarism are considered a very serious transgression and may result in a grade of F for the course.

## About the Course Developer

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My name is Kelly Meyer, and I am very pleased for you to be joining this course. I completed my Ph.D. in English and the Teaching of English from Idaho State University in 2014. The specific areas of focus for my study of literature are multi-ethnic literatures, postcolonial literature, and the representations of women in world literature, so I am excited to apply my interests to designing this course for ISI's world literature students.

As I read for pleasure and for study, I find myself consistently seeking out the stories of authors and characters who haven't typically been included in the anthologies for traditional literature courses. These narratives—from and about the marginalized, the disenfranchised, and the often-silenced—are incredibly valuable to the study of literature at any level. They show minority students the voices of people they know, and they show other students the voices of people they want to know, who can illuminate for them a world bigger than their own. Such stories indeed portray diverse cultures and

experiences, but they also expand our sense of the human experience. We encounter difference, but we also encounter themes and emotions that feel so close to home, so close to ourselves.

I believe the most important work we can accomplish in courses like this comes through a joint venture, as a classroom community, to become more responsible, insightful, empathetic world citizens by our reading, writing, and discussion. Whatever your personal stake is in this course, I hope you find a unique place for yourself—beyond simply passing the course and earning the credits—as you encounter the readings I have selected for English 2258.

### **Instructor Contact Information**

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Instructor contact information is posted in the *Course Rules* document on your BbLearn site.



## Lesson 1

### The Foundation of the Enlightenment: Sor Juana, Pope, and Wollstonecraft

#### Objectives

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Through our reading and study in this lesson, we will seek answers to the following questions:

- ✓ *What concerns and debates characterized the Enlightenment movement? What questions and dichotomies (this v. that) ruled the time period?*
- ✓ *How did gender figure into the issues of the day? How did Sor Juana and Wollstonecraft challenge the status quo of women's subordination, particularly on an intellectual level?*
- ✓ *How are **prose** (essay form) and **verse** (poetic form) used for the writers' purposes? How do they employ satire?*
- ✓ *How do the readings for this section reveal the struggle between ration/reason and emotion/passion?*

#### Readings

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- Introduction: "The Enlightenment in Europe and the Americas" (pages 3-11)
- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: introductory material (pages 68-69) and "Poem 145," "Poem 164," and "Philosophical Satire: Poem 92" (pages 83-86)
- Alexander Pope: introductory material and "An Essay on Man" (pages 86-97)
- Mary Wollstonecraft: introductory material and excerpt from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (pages 160-63)

#### Important Terms

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Enlightenment, reason, ration, individualism, prose, verse, satire

#### Lecture

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Harmon and Holman's *A Handbook to Literature* (which I will cite frequently in this course to define literary terms) describes the **Enlightenment** as "a philosophical movement of the eighteenth century, particularly in France, but effectively over much of Europe and America . . . [which] celebrated reason, the scientific method, and human beings' ability to perfect themselves and their society" (199). Indeed, the principles that were shaped during the Enlightenment contributed to the French Revolution and the American Revolution, so it is a crucial moment in history to look to when attempting to get a sense of what influenced modern literature as we know it.

According to our Norton introduction to this section of readings, a modern drive for autonomy (self-rule) and self-fulfillment through education and knowledge characterized the Enlightenment, but traditional thinkers of the time feared that progress wasn't necessarily a good thing and that **individualism** could "lead to social alienation, unscrupulous self-seeking, and lack of moral responsibility" (3). It is helpful to think of the Enlightenment as a time period defined by just such challenging philosophical questions, ones that time has proven to be ultimately unanswerable. Our text tells us that Enlightenment thinkers shaped a lasting legacy that is evident in modern times, including the valuing of individual human **reason**, the pursuit of knowledge as a counterpart to blind faith, and "a new sense of the equality of all human beings" (5).

Indeed, the philosophies of the Enlightenment levered open the door of opportunity for marginalized thinkers and writers. While men dominated the bulk of the written work that emerged from the Enlightenment, in this lesson we consider readings from two women, **Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz** and **Mary Wollstonecraft**, who offer valuable points-of-view that give us a more well-rounded sense of this moment in history. In her prose and poetry, Sor Juana (pictured in a painting by Miguel Cabrera in the glossy color insert in the middle of our Norton text) puts forth the argument that women have the right to a full intellectual life, which was an incredibly forward-thinking idea for her time. The introduction to Sor Juana’s work deduces that “she became a nun in search of a safe environment in which to pursue her intellectual interests” (68). As we can see, her work, particularly the poem “Philosophical Satire,” shows a deep frustration with the sexual politics of the time, the “sexual hypocrisy” (69), as the introduction calls it, of men who expect women to be willing sexual beings but simultaneously condemn them for being so. As she portrays it, such reasoning isn’t reasonable or rational at all. As effective *satire* does, Sor Juana’s poem “calls attention to the powerful presence of the irrational” (Norton 11). It’s no wonder that such an intelligent, articulate woman sought solace away from the secular world and its maddening sexual politics, which hampered the ability for women to write and think freely.

Wollstonecraft, on the other hand, lived very much *in* the world, which yielded her the “experience and reflection” upon which she draws to critique a sexist society in her 1792 essay *A Vindication of the Right of Woman* (161). As our Norton introduction to this piece tells us, it is not until almost two hundred years later that Wollstonecraft is recognized as “the great founder of feminism” (160). In her essay, Wollstonecraft expresses her fear that women will never be considered equal in mind to men if they do not “resign the arbitrary power of beauty” and surrender the “intoxicating” measure of power that comes with such feminine beauty (161). How does Wollstonecraft argue that this isn’t real power at all? Consider especially the final paragraph of this reading. Linking Sor Juana and Wollstonecraft together regarding the themes of feminine power and sexual politics makes an insightful case for how *unenlightened* views on women remained during the Enlightenment.

Perspectives that we may take for granted in our time, these new avenues of thinking and being and seeing ourselves as humans in relation to society, to nature, to the universe, and to ourselves defined the Enlightenment. With all its anxieties and questions, this time period—and the writers who articulated the spirit of the Enlightenment as we know it today—is aptly characterized by the work of **Alexander Pope**, to which our text attributes “complex dualities of humankind, at once godlike and animal, fallen and saved, capable of happy triviality and grim seriousness” (89). For this lesson, we read Pope’s *An Essay on Man* (1733-34), a “philosophical poem that reflects on the role of human beings in the universe” (Norton 87).

While many of the Enlightenment’s thinkers and writers attempted to answer history’s great questions, such as what it means to be human, by applying *ratiōn* and reason to the project, the *questioning* itself is arguably another of the Enlightenment’s most last legacies. This spirit of intellectual and philosophical inquiry makes a valuable foundation for our study of world literature from the seventeenth century onward.

### **Assignment: Following Reason**

In a short essay (see guidelines above), apply the idea of *reason* as a foremost concern of the Enlightenment to our readings. What great questions do the authors we considered in this lesson address, and what lines of reasoning do they apply to grapple with such questions? Consider at least two out of three of our writers for this section. Reference specifics and use applicable quotes from the texts to support your assertions.