

Camosun College Course Outline

English 163: From Epic and Romance to Science Fiction and Fantasy

Instructor: Nigel Brooks

Office: Paul 327A

Office Hours:

Phone: 370 3302

E-mail: brooks@camosun.bc.ca

Texts: The Tempest by William Shakespeare

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

Smoke and Mirrors by Neil Gaiman

Course description:

The purpose of this course is to explore the evolution of fantasy fiction and science fiction—broadly termed speculative fiction—from the earliest epic and romantic works beginning with Gilgamesh and the works of Homer through to the different versions of the Arthurian story. We will see how elements of these works have contributed to a large body of literature ranging from Shakespeare to Frankenstein and to Brave New World and have gone on to influence many other works of popular culture which we will also briefly look at.

Assignments and Weighting:

750–1000 word essay: 20%

1500 word essay: 25%

In-class reports: 15%

In-class tests: 15%

Final exam: 25%

Class Schedule:

Week One: Introduction to epic, romance, science fiction and fantasy

Week Two: First three Chapters of Genesis; extract from Paradise Lost by John Milton; “Ulysses” and “Morte D’ Arthur” by Alfred Lord Tennyson.

Week Three: The Tempest by William Shakespeare

Week Four: Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

Week Five: Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

Week Six: Selected short stories from Smoke and Mirrors by Neil Gaiman: “Chivalry”, “Troll Bridge”, “The Goldfish Pool and Other Stories”, “Changes”, “Shoggoth’s Old Peculiar”, Bay Wolf”, “Vampire Sestina”.

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course:

1. Reading and Writing:

- Explain how literary traditions change with time and affect creation of new literary texts;
- Identify different literary forms, genres, and historical periods;
- Describe the complex variety of literary study and literature’s relationship to formal, cultural, social, political and historical contexts;
- Identify various approaches to literary texts and draw connections between different texts;
- Debate canon formation and challenges to the canon;
- Use critical, literary terminology;
- Use a critical approach with appropriate language and terminology;
- Argue for various interpretations;
- Evaluate specific literary techniques;
- Employ close reading and argumentation skills;
- Use a scholarly essay form, including: a thesis; topic sentences; argument and/or analysis; use of quotations; unified, coherent paragraphs and transitions; rhetorical strategies appropriate for purpose and audience; effective introductions and conclusions;
- Produce writing under exam or exam-like conditions;
- Write clear, concise, effective prose, and know how to identify as well as correct common mechanical and grammatical errors.
- Evaluate secondary sources and integrate where applicable;
- Write persuasive arguments in scholarly, academic essay format, using MLA documentation.

2. Information Literacy Skills:

- Determine the nature and extent of the information needed.
- Know and use what information resources are available, in different formats.
- Use print and electronic resources effectively and efficiently.
- Evaluate sources for authority, relevance, reliability, currency and other criteria.
- Incorporate and integrate research through correct use of summary, paraphrase and quotation.

- Document sources fully and ethically, according to specified bibliographic conventions.
3. Discussion/Reflection:
- Discuss and analyze literature in class;
 - Identify a variety of literary approaches and/or theories that can be taken towards a text;
 - Articulate one's position in a critical debate of ideas.
 - Engage respectfully with different interpretations.
 - Reflect on one's own writing for continuous improvement.

Week Seven: Course wrap-up

Grading System:

90– 100% = A+

85–89% = A

80–84% = A–

77–79% = B+

73–76% = B

70–72% = B–

65–69% = C+

60–64% = C

50–59% = D

0–49% = F