

POLITICS AND LITERATURE

Political Science
Tuesdays, 6:00-8:30
Professor Matthew Holbreich
professorholbreich@gmail.com
317-445-4637

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a course in the humanities, political philosophy, and political science. The course looks at modern political life through the lens of great works of political philosophy and literature. The course is divided into three sections: literature and the birth of modern politics, literature and contrasting visions of the modern political dystopia, and literature and democratic life. The course asks such questions as: how are pieces of literature (including novels, poetry, essays, and short stories) commentaries on, interventions into, and resistance to politics; what is the relationship between the development of the novel and modern political movements like capitalism, individualism, and democracy; how does literature describe the effect of totalitarianism, communism, and democracy on our everyday lives; can literature give us insight into politics that treatises, news, theoretical commentaries, and articles do not; how does political life influence the production and distribution of literary works; can literature make a unique contribution to democratic life; and how does literature help us cope with, and resist, political oppression, racism, and ostracism?

GRADING

Class Participation: 10%

Response Papers: 20%

Midterm Paper: 25%

Memorization: 15%

Final Paper: 30%

Response Papers

You will be expected to write four brief response papers (one page single spaced each) during the course of the semester. The response papers should raise questions and observations about the text to be discussed during the class period. In the sessions in which you write a response paper you will be expected to take the lead in class discussion. Each of your response papers must be

on a different book. The response papers must be submitted by midnight the day before the class meeting. The paper should be emailed to me via email, indicated above.

Memorization Assignment

You will be expected to memorize at least seven to ten lines of a piece of literature, poem, or short story that we read in class. You will recite what you have memorized before the class, and then analyze it according to a rubric that I will provide.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY and DISABILITIES

All students are expected to be aware of and abide by Yeshiva University's academic honesty policy. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrative material, or statements of someone else, without full and proper acknowledgment, and presenting them as one's own. Please just simply remember to cite your work.

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations should make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, rkohn1@yu.edu during the first week of class. Once you have been approved for accommodations, contact me to ensure the successful implementation of those accommodations.

READINGS

Please purchase the following books:

Johann Wolfgang Goethe, The Sorrows of Young Werther, Oxford World Classics (2012)

Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary (Penguin Classics, 2011), Lydia Davis Translation

Tolstoy, Anna Karenina, Pevear Translation

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Week 1:

Readings on the birth of the novel (provided by the instructor)

Week 2:

Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Part 1

Week 3:

Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Part 2

Week 4:

Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, Part 1

Week 5:

Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, Part 2

Week 6:

Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, Part 3

Week 7:

Anna Karenina, Part 1

Week 8:

Anna Karenina, Part 2

Week 9:

Anna Karenina, Part 3

Week 10:

Anna Karenina, Part 5

Week 11:

Anna Karenina, Part 6

Week 12:

Anna Karenina, Part 7

Week 13:

Anna Karenina, Part 8

Emerson, *Essays* (Self-Reliance, History, Experience, the American Scholar)