

# Comprehensive Course Syllabus

## Literary Explorations III

### Course Description:

Students continue to develop their skills in reading, writing, discussion, and performance. Juniors will explore readings of aesthetic and cultural significance from early modern to late Victorian British literature (c.1590-1890), focusing in particular on their thematic and historical connections. Commonly taught works include William Shakespeare's *Othello*, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

### INSTRUCTOR:

- Name: Tracy Townsend (pronouns: she/her)
- Office Number: A115C (all days by appointment, see sign-up sheet at door)
- Telephone number: 630.907.5954
- Email address: ttownse@imsa.edu

### Meeting Days, Time and Room(s)

**A113 Mod 1 (8:00-8:55) A, B, D days**

**A113 Mod 7 (2:20-3:15) A, B, D days**

### Text(s) / Materials:

Margaret Atwood, *Hag-Seed*; William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*; Seamus Heaney (trans.), *Beowulf*; David Damrosch, ed., *The Longman Anthology of British Literature*; William Shakespeare, *Othello*; John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (selections); Johnathan Swift, "A Modest Proposal"; Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*; selections from Romantic poetry and Victorian literature

### Essential Content:

- Students will understand conventions of poetry, drama, and fiction as genres and be able to explain their uses and effects [English A.1, B.4].

- Students will evaluate the influence of historical context on form, style, and point of view [English A.5].
- Students will work collaboratively to come to an understanding of readings [English E.1-2, E.4-5].
- Students will develop greater autonomy as readers and writers by generating and responding to their own substantive questions about authors and literary works [English A.3-7, B.1, C.1, D.1].
- Students will experience writing as an incremental and recursive process by drafting, critiquing, and revising expository works [English B.2-3, C.3-5, D.2, D.4, E.3].
- Students will use research to provide an historical perspective on readings and to relate readings to contemporary issues [English A.8-9, C.2, D.1-4].
- Students will reflect upon literacy learning as a lifelong endeavor and set goals for themselves as literacy learners based on their strengths, needs, and aspirations [English C.1, D.1, E.3, E.5].

### **SSLs and Outcomes:**

- I.A: Develop automaticity in skills, concepts, and processes that support and enable complex thought.
- I.B: Construct questions which further understanding, forge connections, and deepen meaning.
- II.B: Find and analyze ambiguities inherent within any set of textual, social, physical, or theoretical circumstances.
- III.A: Use appropriate technologies as extensions of the mind.
- III.B: Recognize, pursue, and explain substantive connections within and among areas of knowledge.
- III.C: Recreate the beautiful conceptions that give coherence to structures of thought.
- IV.A: Construct and support judgments based on evidence.
- IV.B: Write and speak with power, economy, and elegance.
- IV.D: Develop an aesthetic awareness and capability.

- V.B: Make reasoned decisions which reflect ethical standards, and act in accordance with those decisions.

### **Instructional Design and Approach:**

In this course, we will further develop the critical thinking and critical reading skills introduced in the sophomore year. We will examine a variety of genres within foundational British literature, including poetry, drama, and fiction. Research-based student presentations will complement our readings and explore a range of historical topics related to the course. Because we are a community of learners, everyone's full participation in regular collaborative work is integral to the course.

Language is a central concept of the course, both as it is embodied in the texts we read and as we use it as a vehicle for response, analysis, and self-expression. We will practice various forms of writing, formal and informal, critical and creative. Students will produce a variety of creative works (e.g., sonnets, self-portraits, directorial visions for stage plays) using conventions and techniques modeled after our readings. Other writing assignments will focus on literary analysis and the creation of clear, unique thesis statements. At least one assigned essay will ask students to consider a text through the lens of another discipline (e.g., philosophy, history, or science). Students will have opportunities to revise written work for a higher grade.

### **Student Expectations:**

#### **Paper, Revisions, and Error and Comment Logs:**

When you get your papers back from me, I'll include comments on grammar, organization, content, and so forth. You may choose to revise any work you write at any point in the quarter it is assigned for an improved grade, unless I indicate the assignment is *not* revisable.

In order to receive credit for your revision, you must acknowledge that you have paid attention to my comments on your previous draft(s) by recording what I had to say about it in an error and comment log. Write a summary paragraph on what my concerns were; after that paragraph, note the passages where you made grammatical or stylistic errors. Use a grammar or style guide to find the rule(s) to repair your mistakes, write the rule(s) down, and a correction of your error. **Every time you turn in a revision, you need to turn in one of these Error/Comment Log entries. Please check the course page for a document titled "How to Write an Error and Comment Log for further instructions on how to write and submit a revision.**

I will average together the point value of the original grade and the subsequent revision grade for your new recorded grade. Remember to use all the resources this

school makes available to help you do the best job you can when you first start writing: The Writing Center can provide one-on-one tutoring sessions, from brainstorming through proofreading; the Center also offers satellite tutoring in the halls and the IRC on select days of the week.

Your quarter and semester grades are based on a running total of calculated category weights, which are as follows:

Papers: 60%  
Presentations/Projects: 20%  
Homework: 10%  
Quizzes: 10%

Any late work will receive a penalty of one half-letter grade per calendar day it is turned in late. One week after the original deadline, late work will no longer be accepted for grading.

### **Policies and Expectations:**

*What I will require from you –*

- Consistent **attendance** and significant **participation** in class (both in person and online). If you come unprepared, are disruptive to the class, or are unwilling to speak when called upon, I reserve the right to mark you absent for the day. If you didn't bring your brain with you, or didn't do the work expected of you, you don't count as being here.
- Civilized behavior. The success of this class relies upon students treating their peers and their ideas with courtesy and respect. You should challenge each other, argue points, and of course be willing to challenge me, but remember to do so in a way that reflects your own dignity and intelligence.
- Timeliness and honesty. All assignments should be turned in on time. Late work will be marked off one half-letter grade per day late. I do not tolerate plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty. Expect academic consequences and potential disciplinary action for any acts of deception you may attempt, per the student handbook.

*What you should expect from me -*

- Accessibility and clarity. I am happy to meet with you during my office hours, to speak to you over the phone, or to exchange e-mails with you (it is always easier to get me over email than on the phone).
- Flexibility and respect. Just as I expect you to treat each other with interest, compassion, and civility, I strive to do the same for you.
- High standards. I don't toss around A's lightly in my class – students who wish very high grades will need to work hard to earn them. But they'll also find me an avid supporter and guide as they strive to improve their work. I am happy to

spend time with you helping you improve your performance and meet the standards you set for yourself.

**Please Note: *It is the policy of this instructor, and the policy of the English department at IMSA, not to round quarter or term grades. Do not ask to have your grade rounded, as the instructor cannot ethically comply with that request.***

### **Assessment Practices, Procedures, and Processes:**

Literary Explorations III includes at least four major written assessments (two per quarter). These assessments are grounded in our readings and discussions and follow IMSA's core competencies (competency-driven, problem-centered, inquiry-based, and integrative).

Grades are to be interpreted in the following manner:

A (90-100%) = Exceeds course requirements

B (80-89%) = Meets course requirements

C (70-79%) = Credit awarded, needs improvement

D (<70%) = Does not meet course requirements; no Academy credit awarded

I = Incomplete

WF = Withdrawal from course with failing grade; no Academy credit awarded.

W = Withdrawal from course; no Academy credit awarded

### **Sequence of Content:**

- *The Tempest* and *Hagseed*: the problems of adaptation; *The Tempest* as a colonial narrative; "monsters" vs. civilization.
- *Beowulf*: early northern Europe and England's many cultural identities; "monsters" as cultural unifiers; more problems of adaptation.
- *Othello*: was Shakespeare "woke"?
- *The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries*: the politics of poetry, *Paradise Lost*, political satire with "A Modest Proposal," and (of course) and revolution.
- *Frankenstein*: "monsters," redux; the battle between science and Romanticism; failure and responsibility.
- **"Choose Your Own Adventure"** in the 19<sup>th</sup> century