

PHIL 115: Philosophy in Literature
Tuesday/Thursday 9:00-10:15
AIRC 3004

“When you come tomorrow, bring my football boots. Also, if humanly possible, Irish water spaniel. Urgent. Regards. Tuppy.”

“What do you make of that, Jeeves?”

“As I interpret the document, sir, Mr. Glossop asks you, when you come tomorrow, to bring his football boots. Also, if humanly possible, as Irish water spaniel. He hints that the matter is urgent, and sends his regards.”

Yes, that’s how I read it too.”

P. G. Wodehouse

Instructor: Prof. Thomas F. Pyne

Office Hours: M 300-4:00; T 10:30-11:30; W 10:00-11:00; R 10:30-11:30;
Other times by appointment

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GE Area: GE Area C4: Further Studies in the Arts and Humanities
Writing Intensive

Required Texts: [1] Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles. Penguin, 1997.
[2] *Phil 115 Reader: Philosophy in Literature*.

- Sophocles. *Philoctetes*.
- Johan Spies. *The Faustbuch*.
- Christopher Marlowe. *Doctor Faustus*.
- Johann von Goethe. *Faust*. (Selections)
- Tirso de Molina. *The Playboy of Seville*.
- Lorenzo da Ponte. *The Punished Libertine* (libretto of Mozart’s opera *Don Giovanni*)

- [3] Friedrich Nietzsche. *On the Genealogy of Morals*.
Vintage, 1997.
- [4] Richard Wagner. *The Ring of the Nibelung*.
Translated by Andrew Porter. Norton, 1977.

Catalogue Course Description

Philosophy in Literature. Study of selected works of fiction which focus on philosophically controversial questions, e.g., basic moral dilemmas, the meaning of life, alienation, nihilism, the existence of God. **Prerequisite:** Passing score on the WPE. 3 units.

Course Objectives

This course will investigate one way in which literature can have philosophical content: by embodying philosophical claims in literary characters. We will investigate examples involving literary characters who, for one reason or another, have achieved *mythical* status.

Such characters may pose philosophical problems, or they may represent solutions to philosophical problems which the culture that produced the myths found to be especially pressing.

We shall see that, when the philosophical problems faced by a culture change, the characters change as well - sometimes in revealing ways.

We will investigate what philosophical problems and claims are embodied in a selection of mythical characters from antiquity, the early modern period, and the nineteenth century. We will conclude with some arguments about present-day myths and their content.

Goals

At the end of the course students should:

1. Have an improved understanding of different forms of literature, including novels, plays, and opera.
2. Recognize particular philosophical questions or answers to philosophical questions as they are embodied in literary characters.
3. Distinguish between what is overtly represented in a literary work, and beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, etc., which the work *presents* to the audience.
4. Develop the capacity to write organized, cogent, and well-argued argumentative papers on the philosophical content of literature.

Access to the Course

This course is televised and 'web-assisted.' That is, it will be broadcast on cable (Channel 16), and it will use the SacCT 9.1 course management system. Students may use their Saclink account to log into the course from the [SacCT Login page](http://www.csus.edu/sacct/) (<http://www.csus.edu/sacct/>).

If you do not have a Saclink account yet, refer to the [Setting Up a Saclink Account](http://www.csus.edu/saclink/settingUp.stm) webpage (<http://www.csus.edu/saclink/settingUp.stm>).

To get started using SacCT visit the [Student Resources](http://www.csus.edu/WebCT/student/) webpage (<http://www.csus.edu/WebCT/student/>). There you will find Online Tutorials, Frequently Asked Questions, and other help resources. You can also ask me for help.

Course Delivery***Communications***

The course will use the communication tools built into SacCT:

- Announcements: It's a good idea to check for announcements from time to time
- Mail: You may send me a message using the 'Mail' function in SacCT.
- Discussions: You will be expected to participate in discussions, whether in class or through the 'Discussions' function in SacCT.
- Calendar: Exams and due dates for papers will all appear in the Calendar.

Technical Requirements

To access a course on SacCT you will need access to the Internet and an internet browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, Chrome). To ensure that you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins please run the Check Browser from your SacCT course. Refer to the [SacCT Browser Tune-up](#) page for instructions.

For help or to report a problem with SacCT you can:

- Visit the [Student SacCT FAQ's webpage](#)
- Submit a [SacCT Problem Form](#)
- Contact the University Help Desk at (916) 278-7337

Work for Course

1. Midterm Exam (15%) The midterm will be a combination of multiple-choice, fill-in, true/false questions, plus essay questions. The questions will be on the readings, lectures, and discussions.
2. Final Exam (15%) Same as the midterm. The final will cover all the readings, lectures, and discussions since the midterm.
3. Paper 1 (15%) 4-page paper on assigned topic (see below).
4. Paper 2 (15%) 4-page paper on assigned topic (see below).
5. Paper 3 (15%) 7-10-page paper on topic of your choice (check with me).
6. Paper 4 (15%) Rewrite of Paper 3.
7. Discussion (10%) You will be expected to make regular contributions to discussion either in the class period itself or in the online "Discussion" folder in SacCT.

Assignment Submission Instructions

Papers: Papers will be submitted in SacCT.

In writing the essay, follow the instructions for analytical essay found in the Philosophy Department website. Look under "Guidance" for "How to Write an Analytical Essay."

Here's the URL:

<http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/How%20to%20Write%20an%20Analysis.htm>

You will find another document there that will be helpful, since it gives you some hints as to what we look for. It's called "Guidelines for Writing Philosophy Papers":

<http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/WritingGuidelines.html>

In addition, look carefully at the rubric by which the essays will be graded. The rubric can be found on the page for each writing assignment. Click on the box "View Rubric." Keep it in mind as you write, since that forms the standards by which I will be grading them.

To submit an essay in SacCT:

- Enter SacCT at <http://csus.edu/sacct/>

- Open the main page for PHIL 115;
- On the Course Menu select 'Assignments';
- Open the correct assignment. That page will say "Preview Upload Assignment: Paper 1."
- Clicking the little triangle next to "*Type Submission*" opens a box in which you can write your essay. (You'll probably want to produce it in your own word processing software first and then copy-and-paste it in. Be sure to revise it once you do, since you may lose some editing.)
- Once you are satisfied with how your essay looks in that box, click 'Submit' (Important);
- A green "success" message should appear: "This assignment is complete. Review the submission history." *It's not submitted until you see that message.*
- Late papers will be lowered a grade increment for every day past the due date. I leave the window open for submitting papers for five days past the date.

Discussions

Philosophy involves discussion and argument. It's the best way to explore philosophical questions, the best way to learn how to philosophize. So I will expect you to participate in the discussions. You will either receive full credit for participation (10%) or no credit, depending on how seriously you take your responsibility to make contributions. If I notice that you are not participating, I will let you know that I expect more.

To participate in an online discussion:

- Enter SacCT;
- Open 'Discussions' (under 'Course Tools' on the left margin);
- Click on one of the topics; you will be able to read the other contributions;
- You can contribute to the discussion by clicking 'Create Message'.

Online Quizzes/Exams

Exams: The exam window will open a week before it is due. You must take the exam during that time.

You will have 75 minutes to take the Midterm, two hours (120 minutes) to take the Final.

Grading

Exams: Exams will receive numerical grades; your score will be 'out of' 100.

Essays: Each essay will receive a numerical grade out of 20. The basis for the grade will be the 'Rubric' found in SacCT.

| Essay Score | Grade Equivalent |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 20 - 17 | A |
| <17 - >13 | B |
| <13 - >8 | C |
| <8 - >4 | D |
| <4 - | F |

Discussion: Discussion participation will receive either complete credit (100), half credit (50), or none (0). Periodically I will post progress reports in the form of a grade. *That grade is not final and will not count toward your final grade.* It is merely an indication of the grade you will receive if you contribute at your current rate.

Final Grade: The final grade for the course will be determined by the weighted sum of the exams, papers, and discussion.

Grading Criteria

| Scaled Score | Letter Equivalent |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 100-94 | A |
| 93-92 | A- |
| 91-90 | B+ |
| 89-84 | B |
| 83-82 | B- |
| 81-80 | C+ |
| 79-74 | C |
| 73-72 | C- |
| 71-70 | D+ |
| 69-64 | D |
| 63-62 | D- |
| 61- | F |

Viewing Grades in SacCT

For exams, and papers I will post the grades as soon as I have finished grading them. You can see your grades during the semester by going to 'MyGrades' in SacCT.

Course Policies

Attendance

I expect attendance at every class meeting. If for some excellent reason you cannot make class, let me know – preferably in advance. If this is impossible let me know by 5:00 on the day you miss. I will lower you a grade increment for every unexcused absence.

Class meetings will begin at 9:00 with a calling of the roll. Be on time. Anticipate. Excuses don't cut it: I will treat a pattern of late arrival as an unexcused absence.

I expect silent attention during class periods. If there is a class discussion I will serve as moderator; please wait to be recognized before making a contribution.

Make-Up Exams

Since you may take exams at your convenience over a period of a week, there will be no make-up exams. The opening and closing dates and times for exams will be listed in the calendar.

Late Work

For papers, I will leave the assignment window open for five days after the due date. The grade will be lowered a grade increment for every day it's late.

University Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to be familiar with the University's Academic Honesty, Policy & Procedures. The policy on Academic Honesty and other information regarding student conduct can be accessed from the [University Policy Manual](http://www.csus.edu/ummanual/index.htm) (<http://www.csus.edu/ummanual/index.htm>).

The University Library has a helpful treatment of plagiarism at <http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353>

Originality is an over-rated virtue in undergraduate papers, ranking well below unity, clarity, and cogency of argument. You can borrow other people's ideas and arguments all you like. You just need to *cite* them when you do. Use any method of citation you find comfortable and convenient. (I like MLA myself.) Don't borrow their *words*: you mustn't submit a paper consisting of a bunch of quotations. Since you can borrow ideas, you have no excuse for plagiarism except laziness.

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). For more information please visit the [SSWD website](http://www.csus.edu/sswd/) (<http://www.csus.edu/sswd/>). They are located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice) (916) 278-7239 (TDD only) or via email at sswd@csus.edu.

Please discuss your accommodation needs with me *early* in the semester – within the first week. It is difficult and time-consuming to make certain accommodations in SacCT. If you wait until the first quiz or paper is due to announce your disability it may simply not be *humanly* possible to make the accommodation. You will then have to do as best you can.

A tendency to procrastinate is not a recognized disability.

University Resources***The CSUS Writing Center***

The Writing Center provides encouraging, focused, and non-judgmental one-to-one tutorials in writing. Their tutors can help with writing at all points in the process, from initial planning and organizing through developing and revising a paper. You can bring the assignment to them for help.

Sac State Library

The Sac State Library's webpage is <http://library.csus.edu>.

To find a book or periodical, click on "Eureka: Library Catalogue" under "Resources and Collections" or go directly to <http://eureka.lib.csus.edu/>

For an undergraduate library Sac State's philosophy holdings are pretty good.

I particularly recommend Sac State librarian Lisa Roberts' website "Philosophy: Resources." Two ways to find it: through "Research Guides" under "Resources and Collections", or go directly to <http://library.csus.edu/guides/robertsl/philoguide.htm>

Student Computing Labs

To access SacCT from campus, or use any of the other campus online resources, you can use the IRT managed student computer labs on campus. See [University Labs website](http://www.csus.edu/uccs/labs/generalinfo/about.stm), that is, <http://www.csus.edu/uccs/labs/generalinfo/about.stm> for information about locations, hours, and resources available.

SacCT

SacCT is the course management system used on the Sac State campus for web-assisted courses. To access a course on SacCT, you must login from the [SacCT Login Page](https://online.csus.edu) (<https://online.csus.edu>).

To learn more about SacCT visit the [Student Resources](http://www.csus.edu/WebCT/student/) webpage (<http://www.csus.edu/WebCT/student/>) where you can view online Tutorials, FAQ's and other help resources.

Course Schedule

The contents of square brackets indicate the source of the reading assignment for that class. If there is no reading material assigned you will see [Lecture] instead.

If something is due for a given day the "Due Date" box will indicate so. The SacCT calendar will also show due dates.

| Week | Topic | Readings | Due Date |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| I. Classical Antiquity: Odysseus Whoever approaches the Olympian gods with another religion in mind, searching among them for moral elevation, even for sanctity, for disincarnate spirituality, for charity and benevolence, will soon be forced to turn his back on them, discouraged and disappointed. - Nietzsche | | | |
| Week 1 T 1/28 | T: The Nature of Philosophical Problems Characters as embodiments of philosophical problems and of solutions to those problems The function of myths | T: [<i>Odyssey</i> , Bks. 5-10] | T: |
| R 1/30 | R: Who Put the 'Diss' in 'Odysseus'? | R: [<i>Odyssey</i> , Bks. 11-17] | R: |
| Week 2 T 2/4 | T: Odysseus as a Trickster | T: [<i>Odyssey</i> , Bks. 18-24] | T: |
| R 2/6 | R: The Career of Odysseus After Homer | R: [<i>Philoctetes</i>] | R: |
| Week 3 T 2/11 | T: Philosophy and the <i>Deus ex</i> | T: [<i>Philoctetes</i>] | T: Paper 1 due in |

| Week | Topic | Readings | Due Date |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| | <i>Machina</i> | | SacCT, Tuesday, February 11, 11:30 PM. |
| Part II. The Early Modern Period: Faust I pray to God that he may relieve me of God. - Meister Eckhart | | | |
| R 2/13 | R: The Nutty Professor | R: [<i>Faustbuch</i>] | R: |
| Week 4 T 2/18 | T: The Naughty Professor | T: [<i>Faustbuch</i>] | T: |
| R 2/20 | R: "...(A) Mortal God" | R: [<i>Doctor Faustus</i>] | R: |
| Week 5 T 2/25 | T: Stage Fire and Rhetoric | T: [<i>Doctor Faustus</i>] | T: |
| R 2/27 | R: Romantic Epistemology | R: [<i>Faust</i> , Part I] | R: |
| Week 6 T 3/4 | T: "Make good use of your time! It hurries past..." | T: [<i>Faust</i> , Part I & Part II] | T: Paper 2 due in SacCT, Tuesday, March 4, 11:30 PM. |
| R 3/6 | R: The "Eternal Feminine" | R: [<i>Faust</i> , Part II] | R: |
| Part III. The Early Modern Period: Don Juan Grief for the discovery of some defect of ability is SHAME, or the passion that discovers itself in BLUSHING, and consists in the apprehension of something dishonorable; and in young men is a sign of the love of good reputation and commendable; in old men it is a sign of the same, but, because it comes too late, not commendable. The contempt of good reputation is called IMPUDENCE. - Thomas Hobbes | | | |
| Week 7 T 3/11 | T: The Dilemma of the Chivalric Code | T: [<i>The Playboy of Seville</i>] | T: Midterm Exam Window Opens, Tuesday, March 11, 10:00 AM. |
| R 3/13 | R: "Plenty of Time for That" | R: [<i>The Playboy of Seville</i>] | R: |
| Week 8 T 3/18 | T: Music and Meaning | T: [Lecture] | T: Midterm Exam Window Closes, Tuesday, March |

| Week | Topic | Readings | Due Date |
|---|--|--|--|
| R 3/20 | R: "But in Spain, a thousand and three" | R: [Viewing of <i>Don Giovanni</i> , Act I, Scenes 1-3] | 18, 9:00 AM R: |
| Week 9 T 3/25 | T: Spring Recess | T: | T: |
| R 3/27 | R: Spring Recess | R: | R: |
| Week 10 T 4/1 | T: The Net Closes Around the Don | T: [Viewing of <i>Don Giovanni</i> , Act I, Scene 4 – Act II, Sc. 2] | T: |
| R 4/3 | R: More Stage Fire (The Guest of Stone) | R: [Viewing of <i>Don Giovanni</i> , Act II, Scenes 3-5] | R: |
| Week 11 T 4/8 | T: Problems with Presentation (The Don's Further Career) | T: [Lecture] | T: Paper 3 due in SacCT, Tuesday April 8, 11:30 PM. |
| Part IV. The Nineteenth Century: Brünnhilde Nature is a pander, Time a wrecker, and Death a murderer. I have always preferred to stand up to these facts, and build institutions on their recognition. You prefer to propitiate the three devils by proclaiming their chastities, their thrift, and their loving kindness; and to base your institutions on these flatteries. Is it any wonder that the institutions do not work smoothly? - George Bernard Shaw | | | |
| R 4/10 | R: The Nietzschean Turn | R: [<i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i> , First Essay] | R: |
| Week 12 T 4/15 | T: Wagner's Project | T: [Lecture] | T: |
| R 4/17 | R: <i>The Ring of the Nibelung</i> : The Ring | R: [Viewing of <i>Reingold</i> , Scenes 1 and 2] | R: |
| Week 13 T 4/22 | T: The Spear | T: [<i>Reingold</i> , Scenes 3-4] | T: |
| R 4/24 | R: The Sword | R: [<i>Walküre</i> , Act I] | R: |
| Week 14 T 4/29 | T: The Sword Shattered | T: [<i>Walküre</i> , Acts II, III] | T: |
| Part V. The Nineteenth Century: Siegfried And it is the great noontide, when man in the middle of his course between animal and Superman celebrateth his advance to the | | | |

| Week | Topic | Readings | Due Date |
|---|--|---|---|
| evening as his highest hope, for it is the advance to a new morning. - Nietzsche | | | |
| R 5/1 | R: The Sword Reforged | R: [<i>Siegfried</i> , Acts I, II] | R: |
| Week 15 T 5/6 R 5/8 | T: The Hero's Journey R: A New Hope | T: [<i>Siegfried</i> , Acts II, III] R: [<i>Götterdämmerung</i> , Acts I-II] | T: Paper 4 due in SacCT Tuesday, May 6, 11:30 PM. R: |
| Week 16 T 5/13 R 5/15 | T: The New Morning of the World R: The Fat Lady Sings | T: [<i>Götterdämmerung</i> , Act III] R: | T: Final exam window opens Tuesday May 13, 10:00 AM. R: |
| Week 17 T 5/20 R 5/22 | T: R: | T: R: | T: Final exam window closes Tuesday, May 20, 12:15 PM. R: |

The descriptions and due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.

Have a good semester!