



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

MASTERPIECES OF WORLD LITERATURE - I - 10510

Last update 06-10-2024

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: School of Ancient & Modern Literatures

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr Talia Ariav

Coordinator Email: talia.ariav@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tuesday, 14:30

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Ariav Talia

Course/Module description:

The aim of the course is to offer a survey of a variety of literary masterpieces from ancient cultures and up to later Middle Ages. We will read different genres (epics, plays, poetry and more) from different times and places through a comparative lens, and in so doing we will inspect the politics of the making of the canon of world masterpieces. In each class, we will focus on one or more literary masterpiece and encounter its historical and literary contexts. Among the themes we shall focus on in our analysis are: the human condition, literature and ethics, identity and gender, and the reflection offered by the works themselves on reading and writing literature.

Course/Module aims:

- To expose first year students of literary programs and the "corner stone" program to representative works of world literature
- To provide students with basic tools for a deep, comparative and critical analysis of literary works.
- To encourage critical thought on the politics of formation of world literature and canon, and hence on the role and function of literature in societies.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Following this course, students will be able to discuss central literary masterpieces that shaped the world intelligently and informedly.

They will have a basic knowledge of key moments in the development of world literature from antiquity to the early modern age.

They will be able to analyze literary works based on main themes that dominate them, the historical contexts in which they were shaped, and the dialogue formed with the literary tradition in which they developed.

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Frontal

Course/Module Content:

Section one: epics in comparison.

1. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

2. *Homer's Iliad*

3. *The Mahabharata*

Section two: stage plays in comparison

4. *Greek Tragedy - Aeschylus, Agamemnon*

5. *The Sanskrit Nataka - Kalidasa, Urvasi and Pururavas.*

Section three: poetry, desire and love.

6. *Plato, The Symposium.*

7. *Sappho, Catullus, Horace*

8. *Song of Songs.*

9. *Sangam poetry and the Tamil grammar of love.*

Section four: literature as a religious act.

10. *Ancient Buddhist Poetry*

11. *Tamil devotional songs.*

12. *Dante's Divine Comedy*

Section five: framed collections.

13. *A Thousand and One Nights*

14. *Boccaccio's Decameron*

Required Reading:

Epic of Gilgamesh, plate 1,4,5,10.

Homer, *Iliad*, Books 1, 18, 24.

The Mahabharata, Book one, *The Book of The Beginning*, translation: Van Buitenen (Chicago, 1980), chapters 1.56-7 and

The Mahabharata, Book two, *The Book of the Assembly*, translation: Van Buitenen (Chicago, 1981) chapters 2.43-65.

Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*

Kalidasa, *Urvashi and Pururavas (Vikramōrvaśīyam)*.

Plato, *The Symposium*.

Sappho, poems 1, 2, 16, 23, 31, 47, 48, 55, 58, 94

Catullus, poems 1,2,3,5,7,11, 35, 50, 51, 52

Horace, *Odes*, poems A1, A13, A33, B5, B12, C29, C30

Song of Songs.

Sangam poems (selections)

Buddhist poetry (selections)

Therigatha: Poems of the first Buddhist Women. Translated by Charlie Hallisey (Cambridge, 2015), p 3-71.

Endless Song (Tiruvaymoli)

by Nammalvar. From *Tamil: Archana Venkateshan*. (Penguin India, 2020).

First 40 songs. See also select verses in performance:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=&lul_UYJpWOA&t=&420s&ab_channel=C&harsurArtsFoundation.

Dante, *Inferno*, cantos 1-5, 26

A Thousand and One Nights. Selections: introduction and first night, and the tale of the three sisters (nights 9-19).

Boccaccio, *Decameron*, Day 1 Intro; Day 1 stories 1-3; Day 2 story 5; Day 3 Story 10; Day 4 Intro and story 1; Day 10 story 10

Additional Reading Material:

Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 70 %

Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports
/ Forum / Simulation / others 20 %

Attendance / Participation in Field Excursion 10 %

Additional information:

NO