

Western University  
Department of Languages and Cultures  
2022-2023

**CompLit 1010**  
***World Literatures and Cultures:  
East to West and North to South***



**Please note: this syllabus is provisional and subject to change**

**Instructor**

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University College, UC 4307  
Office Hours: TBA

Class Time and Location: Tuesday 12:30-2:30 & Thursday 1:30-2:30, TC 343

**Course Content and Aims**

In this course you will take an exciting journey of discovery across continents and civilizations, from Europe to Asia, from Africa to the Americas. Along the way you will explore a selection of writers and works that have changed, challenged, and connected cultures from antiquity to the present. The focus of the course is on the major role that storytelling from around the world has played and continues to play in enhancing our lives by illuminating our experience and understanding of love, justice, power, happiness, and other aspects of the human condition. To further enrich your journey, you will be introduced to the relationship between verbal and visual art in some crucial historical periods.

The masterworks from various epochs and cultures that you will study include *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Thousand and One Nights*, Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of*

*Genji*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Goethe's *Faust*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, and many more.

**N.B. The course material will be available on Owl through the *Course Readings* tool**

**Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, you are expected to be able to:

- Identify cross-cultural patterns of similarity and difference as evidenced in the circulation of themes and the exchange of stories across time and space
- Recognize the roots of today's globalizing world in a number of literary works.
- Understand how literature, from around the world, has historically contributed to generate, disseminate, and transgress cultural assumptions and values.
- discuss the role that literature has played, and continue to play, in exploring how the meaning of universal human concerns – such as love, friendship, power, justice and happiness – evolves in time.
- show awareness of some of the basic questions regarding adaptation.
- appreciate the role of cultural networks that cities have played throughout history.
- demonstrate basic critical skills in discussing topics and in analyzing works



**Course Requirements**

1) Reading Responses (4 x 8 each)	32%
2) Writing Project	15%
3) Midterm	15%
4) Participation	8%
5) Final Exam	30%

**Reading Responses**

You will write four reading responses (two per term) based on questions that will be posted on Owl one week before each submission date. The questions will address specific aspects of works and topics covered throughout the year. Each reading response should be no less than 750 words in length (about three double-spaced pages).

**Writing Project**

A list of topics will be uploaded on Owl at least one month before the due date for the submission of the project (around mid-March; check the lecture schedule that

you will receive in September, when classes start). You will write on one of the topics of your choice from the list. The purpose of the writing project is for you to build research skills while developing, in combination with the reading responses, proper familiarity with academic writing. You are expected to use no less than two secondary sources. Keep in mind that secondary sources are important, as they are supposed to help you in constructing and supporting your argument.

**Midterm (1 hour)**

It will consist of identification questions to be answered in short-paragraph form. The questions will focus on the reading material covered in class up to that point.

**Participation**

You are expected to maintain regular attendance and to complete all readings for each class. Participation is assessed on the basis of day-to-day preparation and contribution to class-discussions.

**Final Exam (2 hours)**

The final exam will consist of questions to be answered in short paragraph and short essay form. It is cumulative, i.e., it covers the entire year. Please note that all final examinations are timetabled by the Office of the Registrar without any input from the Department. Since your exam may be scheduled for any date during the April examination period, and since students must write at a scheduled time, you should not make any plans which might run into conflict with the examination timetable.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Antirequisite:** Clc 1040, Clc 1050E