

ENGLISH 221

Survey of World Literature II (Class # 30913)

English 221 is a course that attempts to steer a path through the incredible wealth and variety of global literary production. We will attempt to read all texts by keeping their specific cultural and historical context in mind as well as paying attention to their specific literary features. Since literature is the stories a culture tells itself about itself (to re-phrase literary critic Lennard J. Davis), we can ask a number of questions of the texts we will read: How do cultures or nations define themselves? What themes and topics does their literature focus on? How do cultures record, celebrate, justify, and rationalize their own existence and/or expansion? What is the role of the individual or the collective? How do the texts define gender roles? Are there recurring features in the texts? In what relations do cultures see themselves to “others,” both internally and externally? These are just some of the questions we might ask of a number of the texts we will read. At the same time, we will be sensitive to the unique features of the texts and of regional histories and traditions, and we must try to suspend our own cultural assumptions and biases in order to “hear” what texts are telling us across distances of time and geography, since literature remains one of the best entryways into cultures.

Instructor: Dr. Martin Japtok

Days & Times: Tue & Thu, 12:45 – 2:10pm

Place: Humanities 308

This course is transferable to the UC/CSU systems, and it satisfies Area 2 for IGETC and Area C for CSU General Education.

For more information, contact me via:

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