

## WORLD LITERATURE II: WORDS MISUNDERSTOOD

COLI 111, Spring 2008  
FA 245 T, Th 10:05 am -11:30 am

Instructor: Natallia Beliakova  
Office: LT 1505  
Office Hours: Th 12:50 pm-2:50 pm  
E-mail: [nbeliak1@binghamton.edu](mailto:nbeliak1@binghamton.edu)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, full of devastating events, left the world with the feeling of disillusionment and spiritual poorness, as well as a deep realization of hopelessness of a modern individual. This semester we will undertake a demanding reading of a few canonical authors who explore possible reasons for a modern man's isolation and loneliness through a careful examination of existential problems. Our recurrent themes will be the contemporary crisis of language and communication, the relation between the self and the world, the question of identity and self-discovery, the division between public and private aspects of modern life. Also, we will take a moment to consider the question of gender differences, the problem of sanity, and a fine line separating madness from genius. We will use our study to explore other crucial topics such as the purpose of art and literature, the function of language, the nature and meaning of narrative, the role of the reader in a text.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

**Participation:** Since it is a discussion-based course, attendance and active participation will be major factors in determining your final grade.

**Class policy:** Students are expected to come to class having completed the reading assignment. Failure to do this will be equal to a student's absence. More than **three absences** will lower your final grade one notch down (e.g. A to A-).

**Essays/ Response Papers:** This course meets the "writing" or "C" general education requirement. It is designed to cultivate your writing, reading, and thinking skills and enable you to articulate them both in written assignments and class discussions.

Two substantial papers will be due throughout the semester. Paper assignments will be announced in class and posted on the Blackboard. Writing is an acquired skill one must practice in order to succeed. A "rewrite" is required on the five page paper. "Rewrite" means not a mechanical correction of grammatical mistakes and typos but a significant *re-writing* of the paper. You will receive a separate grade for a "rewrite."

Five one page response papers to a question about a text will be due. Response papers are aimed to help you discover and express your own opinion on the themes discussed in class and to open up a question/ problem you find difficult/engaging in the assigned readings. **No late papers will be accepted!**

All the papers must be typed double-spaced pages and should aim at the critical explanation of your position with regard to the text. Plot summaries, restatement of ideas discussed in class will not be accepted. All papers are due at the beginning of the class on the date they are due. *Always proof-read your writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation) before turning it in. Remember to include page numbers if you cite the original text.* **All plagiarism cases will be punished and sent to the Dean.**

**Blackboard:** I will often post announcements, discussion questions and other information relevant to the course on the Blackboard. It is students' responsibility to consult Blackboard.

**Evaluation:**

Attendance and Participation	30%
Response Papers	10%
5 page paper essays	25%
Final paper	35%

**Required Texts:**

1. **Dostoevsky**, Fyodor. *Notes from the Underground*
2. **Kafka**, Franz. *The Trial*
3. **Beckett**, Samuel. *Waiting for Godot*
4. **Woolf**, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*
5. **Woolf**, Virginia. "How Should One Read a Book?"
6. **Gilman**, Charlotte. "The Yellow Wallpaper"
7. **Eliot**, Thomas. *The Love Song Of J. Alfred Prufrock*
8. **Hesse**, Hermann. *Steppenwolf*
9. **Nabokov**, Vladimir. *The Defense of Luzhin*
10. **Nabokov**, Vladimir "Good Readers and Good Writers"
11. **Kundera**, Milan. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*

**Wk.1:**

1/29 Course Introduction.

1/31 Woolf, "How Should One Read a Book?", Nabokov, "Good Readers and Good Writers"

**Wk.2:**

2/5 Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*

2/7 Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground* \*\*\*Response Paper

**Wk.3:**

2/12 Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*

2/14 Kafka, *The Trial*

**Wk.4:**

2/19 Kafka, *The Trial*

2/21 Kafka, *The Trial*

\*\*\*Response Paper

**Wk.5:**

2/26 Kafka, *The Trial* (film version)

2/28 Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

**Wk.6:**

3/4 Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*  
3/6 Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (play)

**\*\*\*Response Paper****Wk.7:**

3/11 Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*  
3/13 Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

**Wk.8:**

3/18 Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*  
3/20 Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"

**\*\*\*5 page Paper****Wk.9:**

3/25 Spring Recess  
3/27 Spring Recess

**Wk.10:**

4/1 Eliot, *The Love Song Of J. Alfred Prufrock*  
4/3 Hesse, *Steppenwolf*

**Wk.11:**

4/8 Hesse, *Steppenwolf*  
4/10 Hesse, *Steppenwolf*

**\*\*\*Response Paper****Wk.12:**

4/15 Nabokov, *The Defense of Luzhin*  
4/17 Nabokov, *The Defense of Luzhin*

**Wk.13:**

4/22 Nabokov, *The Defense of Luzhin*  
4/24 Nabokov, *The Defense of Luzhin*

**\*\*\*Response Paper****Wk.14:**

4/29 Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*  
5/1 Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*

**Wk.15:**

5/6 Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*  
5/8 TBA

**\*\*\*Final Paper**