

Literature and Psychology, level 9

Year: Senior (12)
Course Code: W237439

Prerequisite: English 3
Course Code (Short): LitPsy9

Description: Our relationships with one another and with the world are more mysterious than we care to admit. This elective is designed for students who are interested in better understanding the mysteries of the human psyche by approaching literature from a psychological perspective. Topics include the complexity of the human mind, anxiety and defense mechanisms, mental illness and society, and our personal and collective search for meaning.

Students who register for this course will study characters in literature as “case examples” in which the psychological dimensions of their conflicts are examined. Class time is structured around activities and discussions that emphasize critical thinking through a psychological lens.

The literature of this course will address some mature and sensitive issues such as grief, suicide, abuse, racism, and mental illness.

Core texts and films: *Basic Freud* (Kahn), *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Stevenson), *Class Trip* (Carrere), and *Man’s Search for Meaning* (Frankl), *The Bluest Eye* (Morrison) and *The Educated* (Westover)

Students will be expected to produce a variety of kinds of writing including personal, academic, and research-based essays. In addition, students will be expected to be active participants in small groups and whole class discussions using both personal reflections and reactions to readings.

WRITING EXPECTATIONS

SEMESTER 1:

- Three essays/writing projects total, with at least one being an in-class essay

SEMESTER 2:

- Three essays/writing projects total, with at least one being an in-class essay

READING EXPECTATIONS:

SEMESTER 1:

- Core texts in bold plus a range of short stories and poetry from the syllabus

SEMESTER 2:

- Core texts in bold plus a range of short stories and poetry from the syllabus
- Independent reading

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READING LIST
Bold are core texts

SEMESTER 1: Trauma and Defenses

SUMMER READING:

- Unit 1. Summer Reading, Introducing Concepts
- Novel (**core**):
Highsmith, Patricia. The Talented Mr. Ripley.
 - Poetry (supplemental):
"Sunday at the Mall" by Tony Hoagland
 - Nonfiction (supplemental):
Prologue to Love's Executioner by Irvin D. Yalom
- Unit 2. College Essay Materials
- Unit 3. Duality and the Unconscious Mind
- Novel:
 - **Stevenson, Robert Louis. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Core)** - Choose either this or Class Trip in next unit) Vintage Classics
 - Short Stories:
 - "The Black Cat" by Edgar Allan Poe
 - "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe
 - "The Terrapin" by Patricia Highsmith
 - Nonfiction:
 - **Kahn, Michael. Basic Freud. (Core)** 978-0-465-03716-2. Basic Books.
 - The Unconscious
 - Poetry:
 - "The Brain is Wider Than the Sky" by Emily Dickinson
 - "Eating Poetry" by Mark Strand
 - Film
 - Thelma and Louise (1991)
- Unit 4. Complexes and Defenses
- Novel: (Choose One)
 - **Carrere, Emmanuel. Class Trip (Core)**: Choose either this or Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in Unit 3.
 - Kesey, Ken. One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. 978-0-14-118122-6. Penguin.
 - Shakespeare, William. Hamlet. 978-1-4516-6941-1. Folger.
 - Shakespeare, William. The Tempest. 978-0-7434-8283-7. Folger.
 - Sophocles, Oedipus Rex. 978-0-1404-4425-4. Fagles.

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- Short Stories:
 - "Lamb to the Slaughter" by Roald Dahl
 - "Along the Frontage Road" by Michale Chabon
 - "The Romance of Certain Old Clothes" by Henry James
 - "The Rocking-Horse Winner" by D.H. Lawrence
 - "The Kite" by W. Somerset Maugham
 - "The Use of Medicine" by Joe Meno
 - "The School" by Donald Barthelme
- Nonfiction:
 - Kahn, Michael. Basic Freud. 978-0-465-03716-2. Basic Books.
 - Grief and Mourning
 - Guilt
 - Defense Mechanisms
 - Anxiety
 - Oedipus Complex
 - Excerpts from On Death & Dying, Kubler-Ross
- Drama (Core: Choose at least one below OR Shakespeare Semester two)
 - Sophocles, Oedipus Rex.
 - Sophocles, Antigone
- Poetry:
 - "Daddy" by Sylvia Plath
 - "The Colossus" by Sylvia Plath
 - "And One For My Dame" by Anne Sexton
 - "Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty)" by Anne Sexton
 - "Neurasthenia" by A. Mary F. Robinson
 - "The Love Song J. Alfred Prufrock" by T.S. Eliot
 - "We Were All Odysseus in Those Days" Amorak Huey
 - "Mental Cases" by Wilfred Owen
- Film:
 - The Snake Pit (1948)
 - Ordinary People (1980)
 - Hamlet (1990)
 - The Tempest (2010)

Unit 5.

Identity Formation

- Novel:
 - Morrison, Toni. **The Bluest Eye. (core)** 978-0-307-27844-9. Vintage International.
- Nonfiction:
 - Excerpts from Reviving Ophelia, Thompson

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- Excerpts from The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma, van der Kolk
- Short Stories:
 - "Drinking Coffee Elsewhere" by Z.Z. Packer
 - "The Moustache" by Robert Cormier
 - "Tiny Smiling Daddy" by Mary Gaitskill
- Poetry:
 - "I Am!" by John Clare
 - "The Self-Unseeing" by Thomas Hardy
 - "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley
 - "Ariel" by Sylvia Plath
 - "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou
 - "Brown Girl in Therapy" by Jessica Helen Lopez
- Film:
 - Imitation of Life (1934)

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SEMESTER 2: Meaning and Healing

Unit 1: People's Search for Meaning

- Novel/Memoir:
 - Frankl, Viktor. **Man's Search for Meaning (core)**
- Nonfiction:
 - "There's More to Life Than Being Happy" by Emily Esfahani Smith
 - "The Spoils of Happiness" by David Sosa
 - TED Talk by Rabbi Manis Friedman: The Meaning of "Life"
 - TED Talk by Dan Gilbert: "The Surprising Science of Happiness"
 - Excerpts from The Happiness Advantage by Shawn Achor
- Short Stories:
 - "Runaway" by Alice Munro
 - "What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank" by Nathan Englander
- Poetry
 - "Summer" by Chen Chen
 - "The Summer Day" by Mary Oliver
 - "Sonnet 29" by William Shakespeare
- Drama
 - Shakespeare, William. Hamlet. Folger.
 - Shakespeare, William. Tempest. Folger.
- Film:
 - Little Miss Sunshine (2006)

Unit 2: Journeys Towards Healing

- Novels/Memoir:
 - Westover, Tara. **Educated (core)**
- Nonfiction:
 - "How Gaslighting in Fiction Can Reflect the Realities of Psychological Abuse" by Jennifer Baker
- Short Stories:
 - "The Yellow Wall-Paper" by Charlotte Perkins Stetson
- Poetry
 - "Sonnet 171" by Edna St. Vincent Millay
- Film:
 - Gaslight (1944)
 - Whiplash (2014)

Unit 3: Book Clubs (Independent Reading)

- Suggested Titles:

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- Maybe You Should Talk to Someone by Lori Gottlieb
- The Price of Salt by Highsmith, Patricia
- The Silent Patient by Alex Michaelides
- Blood Sugar by Sascha Rothchild
- The Other Black Girl by Zakiya Dalila Harris
- Everything Here is Beautiful by Mira T. Lee
- The Push by Ashley Audrian
- Convenience Store Woman by Sayaka Murata
- All Systems Red AND Artificial Condition, by Rosemary Wells (novellas)
- My Sister the Serial Killer, by Oyinkan Braithwaite

SELECTIONS:

A. Poetry:

Title	Author	Note
The Ariel poems—"Daddy," et. al.	Plath	

B. Short Stories:

Title	Author	Note
"Tiger Mending"	Bender	"Tiger Mending"
"Silver Water"	Bloom	"Silver Water"
"Little Things"	Carver	"Little Things"
"Along the Frontage Road"	Chabon	"Along the Frontage Road"
"Lamb to the Slaughter"	Dahl	"Lamb to the Slaughter"
"The Fat Girl"	Dubus	"The Fat Girl"
"Jeffty is Five"	Ellison	"Jeffty is Five"
"The Yellow Wallpaper"	Gilman	"The Yellow Wallpaper"
"The Terrapin"	Highsmith	"The Terrapin"
"The Romance of Certain Old Clothes"	James	"The Romance of Certain Old Clothes"
"Rocking Horse Winner"	Lawrence	"Rocking Horse Winner"
"Until Gwen"	Lehane	"Until Gwen"
"That Only a Mother"	Merrill	"That Only a Mother"
"Jane"	Molen	"Jane"
"How to Tell a True War Story"	O'Brien	"How to Tell a True War Story"
"The Tell-Tale Heart"	Poe	"The Tell-Tale Heart"
"The Fallen Curtain"	Rendell	"The Fallen Curtain"
"Sleeping"	Weber	"Sleeping"

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C. Essays:

Title	Author	Note
"The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria"	Cofer	
"Roadkill"	Krautkramer	
"Laura"	Lindner	
"America Made Me a Feminist"	Porizkova	

D. Film Clips:

Title	Director	Year	Studio	Rating
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