English 2850: Great Works of Literature II

Fall 2026

Tues/Thurs 9:55 AM-11:35 AM, VC 6-119 (in-person)

Professor: Timothy Aubry

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Office Hours: VC 7280, Monday, 1PM-3PM, Thursday, 4PM-5PM, and by appointment.

Course Description

This course presents a global approach to literature by introducing a variety of narrative, lyric, and dramatic forms representative of different cultures and historical periods, from the seventeenth century to the present. Specific choices depend upon the preference of the instructor, but every class studies examples of fantasy and satire, Romantic poetry, modern plays, and a broad range of narratives. Discussions involve both close reading of selected texts and comparison of the values the texts promote. Students engage in a variety of communication-intensive activities designed to enhance their appreciation of literature and their awareness of the way it shapes and reflects a multicultural world.

Required Texts:

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (ISBN: 9780486282114)

Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Illych* (ISBN: 978-0307951335)

Eileen Chang, *Love in a Fallen City* (ISBN: 978-1590171783)

Tawfiq al-Hakim, *The Essential Tawfiq al-Hakim* (ISBN: 9789774165924)

Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John* (ISBN: 9780374525101)

Oyinkan Braithwaite, *My Sister, the Serial Killer* (ISBN: 9780525564201)

These are available at Akademos and elsewhere. *Students are required to get the hard copy versions of the books listed above*. During in-class writing assignments and essays, students will *not* be allowed to use electronic versions of these books.

Learning Goals:

Students who complete ENG 2850 should be able to:

- interpret meaning in literary texts by paying close attention to authors' choices of detail, vocabulary, and style
- discuss the relationship between different genres of literary texts and the multicultural environments from which they spring
- articulate a critical evaluation and appreciation of a literary work's strengths and limitations
- present their ideas orally
- write critical essays employing: a strong thesis statement, appropriate textual citations, and contextual and intertextual evidence for their idea

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Tutoring and Support

Students who would like to get tutoring support can make an appointment with the SACC (the Student Academic Consulting Center). Those who want assistance with their writing can visit Baruch's Writing Center to brainstorm ideas, get an additional pair of eyes on their work, and receive useful critical feedback.

Requirements/Assignments:

- Quizzes on the assigned reading every Tuesday (total of 12)
- 9 In-class writing exercises (on some, but not all, Thursday classes)
- Oral Presentations introducing the author and relevant contexts
- Two Recorded Reflections
- One major essay drafted in class during several writing sessions
- One personal/critical essay drafted during in-class writing sessions and completed during the final exam session
- Consistent punctual attendance

Grading Breakdown

- **Quizzes: 24 total points**

Each Tuesday, students will take a quiz designed to assess whether they have done the assigned reading. Each quiz will consist of two questions. Each question is worth 1 point. There will be 12 quizzes during the semester and 1 bonus quiz at the end.

Students who have an excused absence can make up the quiz during office hours. Students can also make up a maximum of 2 quizzes without excused absences by coming in and discussing the literary work with me during office hours.

- **In-class Short Essays: 18 total points**

On certain Thursday classes (as listed in the schedule) you will be asked to spend 20 minutes doing an in-class writing exercise in response to a prompt. You will not be allowed to use electronic devices while doing these exercises. You will be allowed to consult a hard copy of the literary work. For each exercise, you will get either 0, 1, or 2 points. You will get 0 points if you fail to submit a response. You will get a minimum of 1 point for turning in a response that is relevant in some way to the assigned reading. You will get 2 points for turning in a response that demonstrates that you have done the assigned reading and given it some careful thought. There will be nine in-class writing sessions that count toward this grade. Students who submit all 9 assignments and receive 2 points for each one will receive all 18 points.

- **Oral Presentations: 10 points**

Students will be asked to give group presentations introducing one of the assigned authors and any relevant cultural contexts. The presentations should include a biography of the author with significant and interesting details, information about the literary culture the author inhabited, including important influences, and information about the larger cultural and historical context. There will be 3-4 students in each group, and you can divide responsibilities for the different areas that you will be covering as you prefer. The presentation will not be assigned a letter grade. All students who give presentations will receive 10 points. If a student is absent on the day they are supposed to present, they can make it up the following class. But please notify me ahead of time via email if you know you are going to be absent.

- **Recorded Reflections: 4 points**

Twice during the semester, you will be asked to record yourself talking for roughly 3-8 minutes about one of the assigned texts in response to a prompt posted on Brightspace. You will get 2 points for each reflection.

- **First Major Essay: Critical/Interpretive: 15 points**
  The first major essay will be a traditional critical/interpretive essay. Students will draft the essay entirely in class over several writing sessions and will have a full class period to complete and revise their essay before they submit it.
- **Second Major Essay: Critical/Personal: 15 points**

For the second essay, students will have the opportunity to draw comparisons between the text and their own life experience. Like the first essay, this one will be drafted entirely in class. Students will be able to revise and finish their essays during the final exam session.

Grades and their numerical equivalents for the two essays are as follows:

A: 15

A-: 14

B+: 13.2

B: 12.75

B-: 12.15

C+: 11.7

C: 11.25

C-: 10.65

D+: 10.2

D: 9.5

F: 8

- **Attendance: 14 points**

Students will receive 0.5 points for every class they attend. Since there are 28 class days, perfect attendance will result in being awarded 14 total points. Students will lose 0.5 points from the total for every unexcused absence. If you have a valid excuse for missing class, such as an illness, family emergency, or a very important commitment that cannot be rescheduled, please email *before* the day you are absent, and I will excuse you. Coming to class late multiple times may also result in point deductions.

For Students with Disabilities:

It is college policy to provide Accommodations and Academic Adjustments to students with disabilities. Any student who has a disability who may need accommodations in this class should register with Student Disability Services which is located in VC2-272 (https://studentaffairs.baruch.cuny.edu/student-disability-services/). All discussions will remain confidential. As your professor, I am happy to make whatever accommodations are necessary for you to feel comfortable and succeed in this class.

Plagiarism policy:

Plagiarism is not permitted at Baruch College. To plagiarize is to steal or pass off the language or ideas of another writer as your own. Anyone caught plagiarizing will be given an automatic F for that essay and will be asked to meet with the dean.

You are allowed, of course, to use the language and the ideas of other writers, but you must acknowledge your sources. When you are repeating another writer's language verbatim you must use quotation marks and cite your source with a parenthetical citation (including the last name of the author and the page number) and an entry in your works cited list. When you are paraphrasing another writer—putting that writer's ideas into your own words—you also must include a parenthetical citation and an entry in your works cited list.

AI Policy:

Artificial intelligence text generators like ChatGPT are powerful tools that are becoming more prevalent with every passing day. While they can be useful for some tasks, they are not a replacement for critical thinking and writing. Artificial intelligence text generators are "large language models"—they are trained to reproduce sequences of words, not to understand or explain things. Learning how to use artificial intelligence well is a skill that takes time to develop. Moreover, there are many drawbacks to using artificial intelligence text generators for written work. Here are some considerations to think about:

- Artificial intelligence text generators like ChatGPT are sometimes wrong. If the tool gives you incorrect information and you use it in your writing, you can be held accountable for it.

- Copying an AI text verbatim or borrowing AI ideas without acknowledging your source is a violation of Baruch's Academic Honesty policy, and constitutes plagiarism.

You may want to use AI to help you brainstorm ideas, plan the structure of your paper, or get other kinds of suggestions. This is fine, as long as you explicitly acknowledge that you did so. If you use AI in working on a written assignment, please include a note at the end of the paper describing exactly how you used it and for what purpose and indicate any ideas you borrowed. *In your note, please include all of the exact prompts/questions you used when you were asking the AI for assistance*. Even when you use AI to help you think through your interpretation, *you should never copy and paste the language from AI and put it in your paper*. The sentences in your essay, aside from quotations from the text, must be your own.

Mental Health Resources

For students dealing with mental health challenges, Baruch offers a variety of services, including individual and group counseling and crisis intervention. To find out more or to make an appointment to speak to someone, students can visit the Baruch Counseling Center Website.