General Education Literature Elective

Through the study of literary texts, students become attentive readers as they explore enduring questions and issues regarding the human condition. By navigating multiple perspectives, generic conventions, and historical/cultural contexts, students are able to craft informed written responses and arguments.

Literature Course Criteria

Courses that qualify for literature credit will:

- Focus primarily on helping students become competent in reading and analyzing works of imaginative literature*;
- engage students with a substantial body of literature;
- involve students in formal literary analysis **;
- situate readings in relevant historical, cultural and literary contexts, and
- require formal writings that demonstrate competence in literary analysis and interpretation.

Student Learning Outcomes:

As a result of their work in literature courses, students will be able to:

- Read complex texts with understanding and respond critically;
- recognize and identify the features of literary texts and genres;
- frame questions and observations that illuminate a text and relevant historical, cultural and literary contexts, and
- develop coherent written arguments about complex texts.

*“imaginative or creative writing; belles-lettres” (American Heritage Dictionary 2) in genres such as long and short narratives, poetry and drama, and other writings such as essays and epistles when considered primarily for their imaginative content, as opposed to “the body of written work produced by scholars or researchers in a given field” (American Heritage Dictionary 4).

** instruction in recognizing the formal features of literary texts—rhetorical devices such as rhyme, alliteration, metaphor, simile, irony, understatement, hyperbole, and other “uses of language which depart from customary construction, order, or significance in order to achieve special effects or meanings” (Harmon/Holman Handbook to Literature).

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