

**ENGL 215-04: Histories and Cultures
Morality and Heroism in World Literature
Longwood University
Fall 2018**

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Web Page: <http://www.longwoodshakespeare.net>
Class meets: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:15 in Grainger G16

ἦ ῥα, καὶ Ἴκτορα δῖον ἀεικέα μῆδετο ἔργα.
ἀμφοτέρων μετόπισθε ποδῶν τέτρηγε τένοντε
ἔς σφυρὸν ἐκ πτέρνης, βοέους δ' ἐξῆπτεν ἱμάντας,
ἐκ δίφροιο δ' ἔδησε, κάρη δ' ἔλκεσθαι ἔασεν

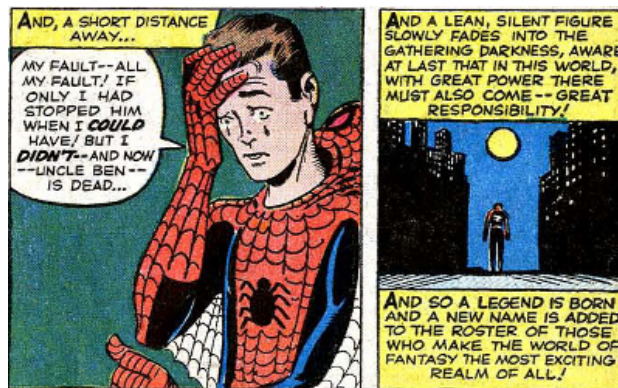
["So he triumphed
and now he was bent on outrage, on shaming noble Hector.
Piercing the tendons, ankles to heel behind both feet,
he knotted straps of rawhide through them both,
lashed them to his chariot, left the head to drag" (Homer, *Iliad* 22.395-398).]

*tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento;
hae tibi erunt artes; pacisque imponere morem,
parcere subiectis, et debellare superbos.*

["Remember, Roman, as you rule the world, these
will be your arts: To impose peace, to battle down the proud,
and to spare the vanquished" (Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.851-853).]

"Ici des vieillards criblés de coups regardaient mourir leurs femmes égorgées, qui tenaient leurs enfants à leurs mamelles sanglantes; là des filles éventrées après avoir assouvi les besoins naturels de quelques héros"

["Here old men riddled with wounds or lead shot looked on as their wives lay dying, their throats cut, clutching their children to their blood-stained breasts; over there lay young girls in their last agonies, disemboweled after having satisfied the natural urges of various heroes" (Voltaire, *Candide*, ch. 3)]



"Even the worst movie becomes instantly better if it has Spider-Man in it." --Howard Stern

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

ENGL 215. An introduction to the historical analysis of literary and cultural texts, which may include works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama, film, and other creations. Students will develop skills in assessing texts as evidence of continuity and change in one or more contemporary or historical cultures using relevant techniques of reading and research. May be repeated for credit when topic changes. Fulfills the Foundations Student Learning Outcome in Historical and Contemporary Cultures. 3 credits. G03; FHCI, WI.

Course topic: Morality and Heroism. What is a hero? What are a hero's moral obligations to his nation, to his family, and to himself? Who decides what is moral and what is not? How is our understanding of heroism defined by customs, religious belief, and historical contingency? This course addresses these questions as they are reflected in the literary works of various cultures.

CORE Foundation Requirements:

- Students will engage in creative inquiry and cultivate curiosity.
- Students will develop foundational knowledge and skills in the discipline.

Course Student Learning Outcomes: At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- describe and analyze historical and cultural continuity and change over one or more periods of time;
- identify and interpret evidence from primary sources (such as historical documents, works of art and literature, material artifacts, or oral traditions and interviews) and/or scholarly sources;
- construct evidence-based arguments that connect specific historical and cultural changes to regional, national, and/or global processes.
- create and deliver writing appropriate to audience, purpose, and context

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the Longwood University Bookstore; if you buy them elsewhere, make sure you get these editions and translations)

- Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. E. V. Rieu (Penguin). [\[ISBN: 9780140445923\]](#)
- Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Mandelbaum (Bantam). [\[ISBN: 0553210416\]](#)
- *The Bhagavad Gita*, trans. Miller (Bantam). [\[ISBN: 0553213652\]](#)
- Dante, *Inferno*, trans. Mandelbaum (Bantam) [\[ISBN: 0553213393\]](#)
- *Two Spanish Picaresque Novels* [incl. *Lazarillo de Tormes*], trans. Alpert (Penguin, rev. ed.). [\[ISBN: 0140449000\]](#)
- Voltaire, *Candide*, trans. Theo Cuffe (Penguin, 2005). [\[ISBN: 0143039423\]](#)

Other texts will be available on Canvas under "Files." It is essential that you bring the assigned readings to class; if the readings are on Canvas, make sure you print them out and bring them with you. A note about using digital editions of these works: Use them at your peril. Works written in verse may not appear as verse (which sort of ruins the point of verse), they probably won't contain line numbers I've indicated on the syllabus, and the page numbers will be useless. Students who use digital texts tend not to mark them up as they would a physical text, and they therefore have a less meaningful interaction with that text, and this tends to result in poor grades. If you insist on using digital editions, you'll need to figure out on your own how your edition corresponds to the assignments on the syllabus. You'll also need to find bound editions when you need to cite them for your work in this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

- Final exam, 30%
- Three papers, ca. four pages each, 20% each.
- Class preparation and participation, 10%. In order to encourage class participation, I will regularly call on random students to contribute ideas. Come to class prepared with notes about major characters and episodes in the readings, and at least one question about something you don't understand. You should be prepared to answer the relevant discussion questions on the course Study Guides (on my web page, with a link in Canvas) in an imaginative and thoughtful way. Bring all relevant books and readings to class. Students will be asked to read passages out loud. Failure to bring reading materials to class on a regular basis will result in a 0 for this portion of your grade. The instructor may administer unannounced quizzes to quantify this portion of your grade.

POLICY MATTERS

This course requires a substantial amount of reading, much of it in verse. It is essential that you read thoroughly and carefully, [and this means marking up your book with underlining, comments, and questions](#). Think of it as “texting the book.” You'll need to identify characters and quotations we discuss in class on the exams, so it will be useful to find some way of highlighting them in your books during class discussion. Keep in mind that college students are generally expected to spend a minimum of two to three hours preparing for each hour of classroom instruction—you should expect to spend a minimum of six to nine hours per week preparing for this class. Feel free to visit me in my office at any time during the semester if you are having difficulty with the readings or discussions.

Please arrive on time, and be prepared to listen, to think, and to contribute. Please turn off wireless phones, headphones, and other electronic devices that might disrupt class—and put them away, out of sight, and beyond the reach of your hands. Please treat other students and your instructor in a civil and respectful manner. About taking notes on laptops or tablets: I urge you not to do this. [Taking notes by hand forces you to process information in a more productive way than transcribing comments into a word processor does.](#) [Laptops not only present you with numerous distractions \(e-mail, Facebook, etc.\), but they are also a distraction for other students, especially those sitting behind you.](#) Students who take notes on laptops or tablets tend to do poorly in this course.

The Longwood University attendance policy in the *Undergraduate Catalog* will be the attendance policy for this course. You will receive an F on work missed because of unexcused absences. Your grade will be lowered by one letter grade if you miss 10 percent of the scheduled class meeting times for unexcused absences. You will receive an F if you miss a total (excused and unexcused) of 25 percent of the scheduled class meeting times. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to check with me at the end of class to make sure that I've counted your late arrival. Three late arrivals will be counted as an absence. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a classmate (as well as announcements about syllabus changes or other matters; it's also your responsibility to pick up papers or exams that might have been handed back). Exams can be made up only under the most grave of circumstances, and with documentation from an MD or a Longwood University official. If you foresee a conflict, I expect you to discuss it with me beforehand. If you expect a prolonged absence from class because of illness or emergency, you should inform the Dean of Students. Written assignments handed in late will lose one letter grade for each class day late. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of intellectual dishonesty will result in an F for the course and referral to the Longwood University Office of Student Conduct and Integrity.

Note: the syllabus may be changed at any time if necessary. The online version of this syllabus is the most current one.

CALENDAR

- 21 Aug.: Course introduction.
23 Aug.: Homer, *Iliad* 1, 2 (lines 1-583 only), 3.
28 Aug.: -----
30 Aug.: -----
4 Sep.: Homer, *Iliad* 4, 5, 6.
6 Sep.: *Iliad* 8 (lines 1-90, 566-654 only), 9, 16.
11 Sep.: Homer, *Iliad* 18, 19 (lines 333-356 only), 22, 24.
13 Sep.: Vergil, *Aeneid* 1-2.
18 Sep.: Vergil, *Aeneid* 4, 6, 8 (lines 775-955).
20 Sep.: No Class
25 Sep.: Vergil, 7 (lines 1055-1072), 10 (lines 593-1248),
11 (lines 698-1210), 12 (lines 928-1271).
27 Sep.: **Paper 1 due.** *The Bhagavad Gita*.
2 Oct.: *The Bhagavad Gita*, continued.
4 Oct.: The New Testament, Sermon on the Mount
(King James Version) (Matthew 5-7); selections
from Augustine's *Confessions*; selections from
Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*. On
Canvas under "Files."
5 Oct.: *Paradise Lost* marathon reading—this is a Friday;
attendance required for at least 30 minutes.
9 Oct.: Dante, *Inferno* 1-4.
11 Oct.: Dante, *Inferno* 5-6, 10.
16 Oct.: Fall break, no class.
18 Oct.: Dante, *Inferno*, 13-15, 26-27.
23 Oct.: Dante, *Inferno*, 32-34.
25 Oct.: **Paper 2 due.**
30 Oct.: Introduction to the Renaissance.
1 Nov.: Petrarch, "The Ascent of Mount Ventoux," "Letter
to Posterity," and selections from the *Canzoniere*
(on Canvas).
6 Nov.: *Lazarillo de Tormes*, Prologue-ch. 2
8 Nov.: No class.
13 Nov.: *Lazarillo de Tormes*, chs. 3-end.
15 Nov.: Voltaire, *Candide*.
20 Nov.: Voltaire, *Candide*, continued.
22 Nov.: Thanksgiving break, no class
27 Nov.: Native American literature, selections on
Canvas.
29 Nov.: **Paper 3 due.**

4 Dec.: 3:00-5:30 FINAL EXAM

BRING A BLUE BOOK TO THE EXAM.

Grading Scale

94-100 = A, 90-93 = A-, 87-89 = B+, 84-86 = B, 80-83 = B-, 77-79
= C+, 74-76 = C, 70-73 = C-, 67-69 = D+, 64-66 = D, 60-63 = D-,
0-59 = F.

Grading rubrics are available on my course web page:
<http://www.longwoodshakespeare.net>