

Note:

Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice. The information below is provided as a guide for course selection and is not binding in any form.

MOODY DISTANCE LEARNING

Course Number, Name, and Credit Hours

GSU-1109 Introduction to Literature – 3 semester hours MDL only.

Course Description

This course is a college-level introduction to literature in which the student will learn to think and react to literature in a meaningful manner. Students will be able to distinguish between literary genres and build general and specific interpretive skills that will make them capable and discerning readers of imaginative literature. The structure of this course is two-fold: materials will be presented according to genre; and fewer texts will be examined in order to provide a more in-depth study rather than an extensive sampling. The successful completion of this course will yield recognition of how literature and human imagination play a vital part in the Christian pilgrimage and ministry. The student will learn to evaluate ideas and to apply learning to life situations.

Course Goals

The overall goal of the course is to examine poetry and prose from primarily English and North American writers centering on a Biblical World View. The specific goals are to:

- Understand and define genres
- Develop interpretive skills for literature
- Relate how literature and human imagination relates to a Christian World View and enjoy literature while so doing

Course Objectives

After completing this course you should be able to:

- Distinguish between literary genres of non-fiction, poetry, fiction, and drama, interpreting them appropriately
- Interpret genres of imaginative literature
- Think about and react to literature in a coherent, penetrating, and meaningful manner—especially in writing
- Recognize how literature and the human imagination might play a vital part in Christian pilgrimage (who one is) as well as in Christian ministry (what one does)
- Demonstrate your ability to evaluate ideas and apply learning to life situations by completing specific learning activities

Course Textbooks and/or Supplemental Information

Required textbooks for all Moody Online classes can be found on the [Required Textbooks](#) section of the Moody website.

The following readings are provided within the **Course Resources** section of Blackboard (You do not need to purchase them.)

- "Why Literature Is Good for You" and "Does Literature Tell the Truth?", both by Leland Ryken
- "Personal Narrative" by Jonathan Edwards
- "Literature and Morality" by Leland Ryken

Because this is a literature course, these books and readings are the course. That is to say, they are not "textbooks" in the traditional sense, passing on knowledge about a subject. Rather, the knowledge gained through this course will be exercised upon these books. In other words, they are not aids to study—they are the object of study. Therefore, reading these books completely and carefully is especially important to your success in this course.

Specific instructions concerning reading assignments are found in this syllabus. In order to gain the most benefit from this course, for each lesson you should read the assignment in the textbook or textbooks first, and then read through the Supplement materials for that lesson.

Course Procedures

Class Procedures and Methods

Distance Learning courses are not abbreviated versions of college classroom courses. They are complete courses designed in such a way that the student may participate from locations other than in the college classroom. There is a "distance" between the instructor and the student. However, there is no "distance" between the objectives of the course and the scholarship required to succeed. If anything, more self-discipline is required on the student's part to prepare for each lesson by reading the required materials, understanding what is expected in the way of assignments and submitting work to the instructor on time.

Schedule

You are expected to study the lesson materials as well as complete and/or submit any assignments or exams that are listed for the given week. All assignments are due at midnight (in the student's time zone), on the last day of the week.

Regular Involvement

Each week you are expected to visit the course site a minimum of 2 to 3 times. What specific day or time is really up to you, unless your professor informs you otherwise. Each time you visit the course site you should do the following:

- Read any new Announcements that have been posted
- Read any new messages in the Discussion Boards
- Respond to these new Announcements and Messages appropriately

At some time, each week, you should study the lesson(s) assigned, actively read any reading assignments, complete and submit any exams or assignments if there are any due for that given week. Also, in anticipation of some of the major assignments, you ought to be aware of the next major paper, project or exam so that you are ready to submit that when it is due. If you are ever not going to meet an assignment deadline, you should contact your professor (they may be able to work with you in either arranging makeup or permitting you to submit an assignment late - any late penalties will be determined by your instructor).

Discussion Board Participation:

You are required to participate in regular (usually several times a week) discussions on select topics. You should check the Discussion Board frequently and participate in any active discussions. Your participation in the Discussion Board is crucial to the success of this course and will determine your participation grade for the course.

Simply posting an “I agree/disagree with your comment” or an “I think the same” to someone else’s thoughts is not considered an adequate response. You are expected to write responses that reflect clear, insightful and analytic thinking on the topic.

Successful participation in a course discussion includes the following:

- Due Date/Time: Assigned Discussion Board postings will be due at midnight on either the Wednesday or Saturday of the week in which they are posted.
- Split Responses: For some topics, one half of the class will be asked to submit postings first; the second half will then be asked to respond to those postings.
- Assignment Example: For Discussion Board assignments, the section and due date will follow the listing in parentheses. For example, “Discussion Board (A-Wednesday, B-Saturday)” means that Section A is to post by Wednesday; Section B should respond to those postings by Saturday.

Class Sections:

For some activities and Discussion Board assignments, it will be necessary to divide the class in half; this will be done using the class roster. Students listed in the first half of the class roster are in Section A; those listed in the second half of the class roster are in Section B. If there are an odd number of students in the class the middle student would be in Section A. The class roster can be found in the Communication section of Blackboard.

Interaction with Class Partners and Neighbors: For some activities and Discussion Board assignments, it will be necessary for you to interact with your classmates on an individual basis. For these activities, you must refer to the class roster. In each case, one of the following grouping methods will be used:

- Downstream Neighbor: Your “downstream neighbor” is the person listed after you on the class roster.
- Upstream Neighbor: Your “upstream neighbor” is the person listed before you on the class roster.
- Partner: Beginning with the first student on the roster, each adjacent pair of students constitutes a partnership (i.e., the first and second student on the list are partners, the third and fourth are partners, etc.). If there is an odd number of students, the last three students on the list will form a group.

Communication with Instructor:

Communication with your instructor is a critical element and can be done in one of three ways:

- Discussion Board: If you wish to raise an issue about which other class members may be interested, please post it on the Discussion Board.
- E-mail: If you need to reach your instructor, contact information is available under the Staff Information tab on the Blackboard course page. Due to the large number of e-mail messages instructors receive, it is important that you format your message as follows:
 - TO: instructor-email address
 - FROM: student e-mail address
 - SUBJECT: COURSE ID (with a descriptive subject)
 - BODY: Your message with enough information that your instructor can answer your question and/or understand what you are referring to.
 - Sign your message with your first and last name.
- Assignment Manager: Please submit your paper/assignment using either the Assignment Manager link section of the Blackboard course site or by e-mail).

Paper Formatting and Submission Guidelines:

Assignments must be submitted electronically, in a Microsoft Word-compatible file (ending in .doc or docx). Submit your assignment using the Assignment Manager link in each assignment or in accordance with instructions from your instructor. Within the Microsoft Word document, your assignment must be in the following format:

- Prefaced with a separate title page, which should include the title of the paper; the name of the course; the date; your name and address; and your student identification number
- On 8 1/2-by-11-inch paper
- Font size: 12 points
- Double-spaced
- Bordered by a one-inch margin on all sides
- Correct in grammar, punctuation, and spelling (Proofread your paper well. Errors take away from your final grade.)
- Documented in MLA style if citations are necessary (see Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) for MLA resources) <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01>

Research is required for the first paper only. Although researching historical-cultural backgrounds and expert opinions is often valuable, this course is instead primarily focused upon building your own interpretive skills in interacting one-on-one with imaginative literature. (Research is not required, but permitted for the other four papers. If you do research, "Works Cited" listings are required.)

For each paper, a suggested plan (with percentages of content) is given. This plan reflects the purposes of the assignment and is intended to be helpful rather than restrictive. In using the plans to write the papers, then, follow the spirit more than the letter of the assignments.

Additional Resources

A list of resources used in this course is located in this Syllabus. These resources may be helpful in your research as you prepare the papers assigned for this course. You may be able to find these resources from your pastor, a friend, or a library (church, school, or public). If the library nearest you does not have the book you want, they may be able to obtain it through an inter-library loan program. You may even wish to purchase some of these books for your own personal library. You are encouraged to consult outside references, and it is recommended that you also cite other applicable Scriptures.

Assignments

Discussion Board Participation

Your participation in the discussion board is crucial to the success of this course, and it will determine your participation grade for the course. Therefore, your postings should be thorough and thoughtful. Simply posting an "I agree/disagree with your comment" or an "I think the same" to someone else's thoughts is not considered an adequate response. Your overall participation in the discussion board will be graded by the instructor.

E-Journal and Blog

In order to better foster the online community for this course, you will be required to keep an online journal throughout the weeks of the course to share your thoughts with your classmates. This will allow you to share your honest reflections on the reading assignments for this course in an informal way. Each week, you will be required to write at least one post in regards to the reading assignments for the week and read the e-journals of your fellow classmates. You can respond to them in brief or in detail, but your response is the only way for your instructor to know whether you have read their site. Periodically, there may be a prompt in the Announcements section of Blackboard that asks you to write about something specific.

Papers

In addition to the weekly reading and Discussion Boards, you will be expected to complete **five (5)** papers listed below. These five papers will determine the greatest portion of your final grade. The first four papers are academic papers that should maintain a formal tone, style and diction (i.e., avoid using the first person). It should have a formal thesis and consist of an internal structure outlined by topic sentences. Make sure your paper follows the guidelines as outlined above in **Course Procedures** (according to MLA style).

Non-Fiction Paper (4-5 pages)

Research and write an essay about one of three provided topics.

Poetry Paper (4-5 pages)

Study thoroughly and write an essay about one of three provided poems.

Fiction Paper (4-5 pages)

Write an essay on one of three provided topics in *The Scarlet Letter*.

Drama Paper (4-5 pages)

Write an essay on one of two provided topics in *Measure for Measure*.

Personal Synthesis Paper (3-5 pages)

This paper is intended to be more reflective and personal than the other assignments. It gives you the opportunity to synthesize and respond to all this course has been teaching you about becoming a skilled Christian reader of imaginative literature. (It is recommended that you review Lesson 1 before writing this paper.) The key questions are: During this course, what points have surfaced as most important for you regarding the human imagination and Christian faith? Why? What difference might this make in your life—especially in your family and in your ministry—following the completion of this course? Why?

The guidelines for this paper are more open-ended. You may formulate your own thesis and outline in order to fulfill the assignment. You must illustrate your discussion with references to readings from every lesson of the course. This paper must follow the MLA style for short papers.

Quizzes

The quizzes are designed to test your knowledge of the information contained in the course supplement. They are located in the **Quizzes/Exams** section of Blackboard. Each lesson, except for lesson 8, contains one or two quizzes. Quizzes are open book, but once you enter the quiz, they must be completed at that time. If for some reason you are locked out of a quiz and do not complete it, please contact your instructor to reset it.

Assessments

Your grade for this course will consist of:

Discussion/Participation	10%
E-Journal/Blog	10%
Non-Fiction Paper	15%
Poetry Paper	15%
Fiction Paper	15%
Drama Paper	15%
Personal Synthesis Paper	15%
Quizzes	5%
TOTAL	100%

Letter grades are determined by the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent	Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent
A	96% or higher	C	73 - 76.9%
A-	90 - 95.9%	C-	70 - 72.9%
B+	87 - 89.9%	D+	67 - 69.9%
B	83 - 86.9%	D	63- 66.9%
B-	80 - 82.9%	D-	60 - 62.9%
C+	77 - 79.9%	F	Below 60%

Course Resources

Online students have access to the Moody Library. Though students may wish to check out books via inter-library loan, the online database has a number of articles and reviews available for download. You can access the online database by logging into your account at my.moody.edu. If you have not previously accessed the library database you may wish to complete the database tutorial at <http://www.moody.edu/GenMoody/default.asp?sectionID=69C97E398A6249D9AC3859B4CBF81926>.

In addition to the resources available at the Moody Library, you may wish to visit <http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk> or www.bible.org. These sites contain content on various topics written by competent biblical scholars. It is also suggested that you download a free version of the NET Bible at bible.org.

Course Copyright Statement

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Annotated Course Bibliography

The following are supplemental materials if students want to dig deeper.

- Baker, Tamela. *"The Lost Arts."* *Moody* June, 1995, 13-18. Basic, wide-ranging introduction to Christianity and the imagination.
- Blamires, Harry. *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* Ann Arbor, MI: Vine Books, 1997. Classic introduction to the general discipline of "thinking Christianly."
- Clowney, Edmund P. "Living Art: Christian Experience and the Arts." *In God and Culture: Essays in Honor of Carl F. H. Henry*. Edited by D. A. Carson and John Woodbridge, 235-253. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993. A professor of practical theology discusses God's view of beauty as opposed to the world's deification of art.
- Cowan, Louise, and Os Guinness. *Invitation to the Classics: A Guide to Books You've Always Wanted to Read*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. Organized by author, in chronological order.

- Gallagher, Susan V., and Roger Lundin. *Literature Through the Eyes of Faith*. San Francisco: Christian Harper & Row, 1989. Part of a series of books integrating various academic disciplines and Christian faith.
- Jeffrey, David Lyle, general editor. *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992. How the literary tradition has made use of biblical stories and images. This ambitious reference work also contains a number of valuable bibliographies on biblical interpretation.
- Larsen, David L. *The Company of the Creative: A Christian Reader's Guide to Great Literature and Its Themes*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999. A wide-ranging exploration, organized by nation and genre.
- Lewis, C. S. *An Experiment in Criticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1961. On being or becoming a discerning Christian reader or literary critic. As a professor of English at Cambridge and Oxford, Lewis published numerous books and essays relevant to the topic of Christianity and literature.
- "Literature and Ministry." Theme issue from *Theology, News & Notes*, December 1991. Most articles for this issue are by seminary professors, pastors, and religious editors—not literature professors.
- Lundin, Roger. "Offspring of an Odd Union: Evangelical Attitudes Toward the Arts." In *Evangelicalism and Modern America*. Edited by George Marsden, 135-149. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984. From a Reformed perspective, the essay critiques the Christian appropriation of Romantic attitudes to the imagination. Includes analysis of fundamentalist/evangelical attitudes to the arts through American individualism and cultural history.
- O'Connor, Flannery. *Mystery and Manners*. Edited by Sally and Robert Fitzgerald. London: Faber and Faber, 1972. Essays by a novelist about the interaction of Christian faith and literary creativity.
- Ryken, Leland "Literature in Christian Perspective." In *God and Culture: Essays in Honor of Carl F. H. Henry*. Edited by D. A. Carson and John Woodbridge, 215-234. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993. A balanced apologetic for the how-and-why importance of literature in the Christian life.
- _____. *Realms of Gold: The Classics in Christian Perspective*. Wheaton, IL: Shaw, 1991. A Christian argument for reading "the best" that culture has produced. Most chapters focus on a particular work of literature.
- _____. *The Liberated Imagination: Thinking Christianly About the Arts*. Wheaton, IL: Shaw, 1989. The thinking is similar to that of the two volumes above, with the scope going beyond literature to culture and the arts generally.
- _____. *Triumphs of the Imagination: Literature in Christian Perspective*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979. Similar to
- _____. *Windows to the World: Literature in Christian Perspective*. 2d ed. Dallas: Probe Ministries, 1990. Written specifically for general education-level students. As it is currently out of print, several chapters have been excerpted in this Study Guide.
- Ryken, Leland, ed. *The Christian Imagination: Essays on Literature and the Arts*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981. Collection of essays (both new and reprinted) by various authors covering philosophy, literary genres, visual arts, and music. Includes a classic essay by T. S. Eliot, "Religion and Literature."
- Ryken, Leland, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, general editors. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998. An encyclopedic exploration of the images, symbols, motifs, metaphors, figures of speech, and literary patterns of the Bible. This is a truly outstanding resource in every way.
- Sayers, Dorothy L. *The Mind of the Maker*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1987 (originally 1941). Sayers is concerned with two basic questions: What does the fact of God as Creator tell us about human creativity? What does the human experience of creativity suggest about the nature of God? She is particularly concerned with applying Trinitarian thinking to the question of creativity.
- Schaeffer, Francis. *Art and the Bible*. Vol. 2, bk. 5 of Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1982 (originally 1973). Many fine insights, more keyed to the visual arts.
- Stott, John. *Your Mind Matters: The Place of the Mind in the Christian Life*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1972. Discusses generally the place of the mind in the Christian life, or how to love God with all your mind.

- Taylor, Daniel. "In Pursuit of Character—Scripting Our Lives by the Stories We Choose: What's Missing from the Character Debate." *Christianity Today*, 11 December 1995, 29-36. Focuses on the role of literature and the imagination in character formation and decision-making.
- _____. *The Healing Power of Stories: Creating Yourself Through the Stories of Your Life*. New York: Doubleday, 1996. The purpose is similar to that of his article above, but this is a book-length treatment written for a secular audience.
- Tippens, Darryl L., Stephen R. Weathers, and Jack Welch, editors. *Shadow & Light: Literature and the Life of Faith*. Abilene: ACU Press, 1997. An anthology for classroom or personal use that includes literature with strong spiritual and ethical themes.
- Tozer, A. W. "The Value of a Sanctified Imagination." Compiled by Warren W. Wiersbe, 49-51. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978. Good, common sense perspective, and in just three pages!
- Veith, Gene Edward, Jr. *The Gift of Art: The Place of the Arts in Scripture*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990. Surveys the place of the arts in Scripture.
- _____. *Reading Between the Lines: A Christian Guide to Literature*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1983. Wide-ranging perspectives on how Christians should interact with imaginative literature.
- _____. *State of the Arts: From Bezalel to Mapplethorpe*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991. Part of a series on the Christian worldview.
- Whitworth, Louis. *Literature Under the Microscope. A Christian Case for Reading*. Dallas: Probe Publications, 1984. Succinct and to the point with many useful questions and ideas.
- Wiersbe, Warren W, ed. *Developing a Christian Imagination: An Interpretive Anthology*. Wheaton: Victor, 1995. "Creative Resources for the Christian in Ministry" is the 2nd subtitle. The book has both "examples of and "essays about" and aims to spur thinking about the relationship between imagination and ministry.
- Wilkinson, Loren. "'Art as Creation' or 'Art as Work'?" *Crux*, March 1983, 23-28. An excellent essay, seeking a synthesis between sacramentalist (emphasizing creativity) and Reformed (emphasizing stewardship) perspectives on the arts.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Art in Action: Toward a Christian Aesthetic*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980. Discussing the arts in general from a philosopher's perspective, Wolterstorff critiques a Romantic/creation aesthetic and instead focuses on the social/community activities surrounding art. The key truth is that the artist is the steward of a gift.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "Evangelicalism and the Arts." *Christian Scholar's Review*, June 1988, 449-473. Many of the same ideas as in his book, but in more condensed form.