



World Literature II: Mapping Our World

Candide, stunned, stupefied, despairing, bleeding, trembling, said to himself, "If this is the best of all possible worlds, what are the others like?"

—François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire, *Candide* (1759)

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Texts (best available prices listed here):

- Bashō, *Narrow Road: Spring and Autumn Passages* (\$14.46) ISBN: 9781880656204
- Chekhov, Gogol, Gorky, Turgenev, *Four Great Russian Plays* (\$3.50) ISBN: 9780486434728
- Voltaire, *Candide* (\$1.35) ISBN: 9780486266893
- Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (\$2.25) ISBN: 9780486299921

Other Required Book-Length Texts (available free online or as handout):

- Behn, *Oroonoko* (\$7.63) ISBN: 9780140439885
- Fuzelier, *Les Sauvages* (my translation)
- Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

Course Description:

More than just half of the university's world literature survey, this course is designed to question the idea of a world literature. Just what is Goethe saying when he exclaims that "the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach"? And what does he mean by "world literature" anyway? Further, to invoke *Candide*, what possible worlds are there? This section of the course concerns itself primarily with the idea of "mapping" the world—not merely cartographically, but also as a way of understanding and modeling it. Taking into consideration the concepts of "theory" and "theories," we'll examine multiple texts written in and of a few key places. In doing so, we will also challenge ideas about tradition and hegemony, writers and readers, and culture and periodization.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students will demonstrate

- familiarity in discussing major literary works in world traditions since 1650, including their content, form, and tradition,
- ability to draw conclusions from mapping connections from the physical world to a series of locations between works or within a work,
- understanding of the problems of translation in forming the canon of a world literature.

Expectations:

We will work toward the above objectives by maintaining dialogue with the texts and each other over the semester. To do so means to prepare for and contribute to discussions each week. Sometimes that may mean educating oneself beyond the reading, where necessary.

You can expect me to meet with you to discuss any issues, questions, or problems you are having with the material or with your writing. In addition to office hours, we can schedule appointments by email. I plan to respond to emails within 24 hours; if I don't respond to any urgent requests within that time, please send them again.

NOT final grading breakdown: (this section is still being fine tuned)

- 25% – online writing
- 20% – 2 Exams (midterm and final exam)
- 15% – Geospatial research assignment
- 20% – Major paper (on mapping, translation, or something else)
- 20% – Class attendance, participation and other assignments

Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Nothing will be accepted after the last day of class. If needed, we may have “pop” quizzes in class to be sure everyone's keeping up.

—unfinished—

Geospatial Research:

Each of you will complete a research project mapping one of the texts we read in class, likely either Basho's *Narrow Road* or Voltaire's *Candide*. For this project, students will draw on skills in close reading and a variety of online research techniques to transform key moments using Flickr, Google Maps, and other digital tools. More information on this assignment will follow in the early weeks of the semester.

Films:

There are a couple online films scheduled during the semester. These movies relate both to the texts we read and to the *Classical* category of Goethe's construction of world literature. An essay question on the final exam will ask you to evaluate one of the films using these expectations, so it's advisable to take notes on each of them as you watch in order to be more familiar and better prepared to respond to whatever question you're posed.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance is mandatory unless you have an excusable reason for missing. Students will earn points for attendance, for bringing appropriate reading materials to class, and for positively contributing to discussion. If you are late to class and arrive after role is taken, it is your responsibility to check with me to be counted as present. Any in-class quizzes will start at the beginning of class; if you arrive after I've finished passing out the quiz, you will not have an opportunity to take it.

Emergencies:

If for some unavoidable reason an emergency keeps you from class or from submitting an assignment on schedule, please call or email me *as soon as you can*. I can be flexible—but only if I actually hear from you. Please take names, numbers, and email addresses of two classmates in case you're unable to reach me.

Disability Services for Students:

Grambling State University maintains the Office of Disability Services for Students (DSS) to help assure compliance with the rules and regulations set forth by various congressional acts, i.e., the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 1990. This office has created an atmosphere of opportunity by providing services and mediating considerations for students.

The primary goal of the Office of Disability Services for Students is to ensure access for students with documented disabilities and to contribute to the development of self-advocacy and confidence of students with disabilities. We encourage students to take control of their own learning and to discuss the means for arranging types of appropriate support. In addition, we serve as an advocate for students in determining appropriate considerations.

The Office of Disability Services is located in the GSU Student Counseling Wellness and Resource Center, it is recommend that you read the handbook located on the GSU Webpage, as it will be a useful reference throughout college and beyond or visit and/or call the center on campus 318-274-3277.

English Department Mission:

The Department of English seeks to promote the literary heritage of language and to provide instruction in written and oral communication skills that underlie all disciplines. As such, the Department is dedicated to helping students develop their reading, writing, critical thinking, and information technology skills to facilitate success in all their studies. In so doing, the Department also seeks to help students expand their horizons, clarify their thoughts, develop their imaginations and their abilities while enhancing their ethical sensitivity and promoting an appreciation of diverse cultures through literature. In order to further these goals, exposure to literary masterpieces that reflect the hopes and aspirations, anxieties, frustrations, successes and failures of humanity is an integral part of the curriculum. The English Department promotes diverse modalities of instruction, scholarly research, and community service. Through varied reading and recurrent writing, the development of the literary imagination, the sharpening of intellectual reasoning, and the encouragement of ethical reflection, the Department aspires to prepare students for careers and post-graduate studies.

University Mission:

Grambling State University is a comprehensive, historically-black, public institution that offers a broad spectrum of undergraduate and graduate programs of study. Through its undergraduate major courses of study, which are undergirded by a traditional liberal arts program, and through its graduate school, which has a decidedly professional focus, the university embraces its founding principle of educational opportunity. With a commitment to the education of minorities in American society, the university seeks to reflect in all of its programs the diversity present in the world. The university advances the study and preservation of African American history, art and culture. Grambling State University is a community of learners who strive for excellence in their pursuit of knowledge and who seek to contribute to their respective major academic disciplines. The university prepares its graduates to compete and succeed in careers related to its programs of study, to contribute to the advancement of knowledge, and to lead productive lives as informed citizens in a democratic society. The university provides its students a living and learning environment which nurtures their development for leadership in academics, athletics, campus governance, and in their future pursuits. The university affords each student the opportunity to pursue any program of study provided that the student makes reasonable progress and demonstrates that progress in standard ways. Grambling fosters in its students a commitment to service and to the improvement in the quality of life for all persons. The university expects that all persons who matriculate and who are employed at Grambling will reflect through their study and work that the University is indeed a place where all persons are valued, "where everybody is somebody."