

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES  
HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND WRITING PROGRAM  
7 EAST 12TH ST, 7TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10003

**BRILLIANT MINDS**

Course No: LITR1-CE9305, Fall 2018

September 11th – December 4th

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Office hours by appointment

**Course Description.** Literary genius can take innumerable shapes and forms through novels, plays, or poetry. Brilliant minds use their gifts to entertain, inspire, engage, and enlighten us about philosophical and artistic concerns, social trappings, and human conceit. In this course, read examples of genius, including Euripides, *Helen*; Dante, *Paradiso*; Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*; Eliot, *Adam Bede*; Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*; Kerouac, *On the Road*; Allende, *The House of the Spirits*; and Morrison, *Love*. Topics to be discussed include point of view, allusion, symbolism, and theme in poetry, drama, and the novel; literary periods and movements including the Classical, Medieval, Renaissance, Enlightenment, Romantic, Modernist, Postmodern, and Metamodern; and studies of specific genres, such as epic, drama, poetry, and the novel. The course will teach students the value of close reading and the necessity of textual evidence in discussion and debate. No prior knowledge or experience is required for this course.

**Objectives.** Students will be encouraged to analyze the structure and content of the literary work under discussion and to speculate about its author's motivation in including and excluding various techniques. As a result of having taken this course, students will have the skills and confidence to navigate comparably sophisticated and challenging works of literature.

**Requirements, Grading & Policies.** Students will be expected to read (and, ideally, reread) the assigned selections prior to the class period when those works will be studied, and to contribute to the discussion thereon. No tests or quizzes will be given, nor will written work of any kind be assigned. No grades will be given for this class. Students are required to respect one another by attending regularly, arriving on time, and engaging courteously with one another in class discussions.

**Required Texts (available at the NYU bookstore, 726 Broadway)**

Euripides, *Ion, Helen, Orestes*, trans. Svarlien (Hackett)

Dante, *Paradiso*, trans. Hollander (Anchor)

Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, ed. Mowat (Folger)

Eliot, *Adam Bede*, ed. Reynolds (Penguin Classics)

Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, ed. Strachey (Norton)

Kerouac, *On the Road*, (Penguin)

Allende, *The House of the Spirits* (Atria)

Morrison, *Love* (Vintage)

## Reading Schedule

Week 1: Sep 11th

Euripides, *Helen*: History and variants on the mythology of Helen in tragedy.

Week 2: Sep 18th

Euripides, *Helen* (continued): The disastrous Sicilian expedition and the futility of war.

Week 3: Sep 25th

Dante, *Paradiso*: Allegory and the metaphor of ascent.

Week 4: Oct 2nd

Dante, *Paradiso* (continued): Time, place, and the architecture of the soul.

Week 5: Oct 16th

Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*: The emergent self and the problematics of identity.

Week 6: Oct 23rd

Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing* (continued): Gender roles and the question of fidelity.

Week 7: Oct 30th

Eliot, *Adam Bede*: The novel as engaged representation and social critique.

Week 8: Nov 6th

Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*: The immutable tensions between individual and society.

Week 9: Nov 13th

Kerouac, *On the Road*: Spontaneous prose and the beat quest for inherent goodness in America.

Week 10: Nov 20<sup>th</sup>

Kerouac, *On the Road* (continued): Autobiography, Americana, music and influences.

Week 11: Nov 27th

Allende, *The House of the Spirits*: Magic realism and the post-colonial novel.

Week 12: Dec 4th

Morrison, *Love*: Split narrative and the non-linear novel.

**Students with Disabilities.** New York University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity and participation for students with disabilities. Any student who needs a reasonable accommodation based on a qualified disability is required to register with The Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) for assistance.